

Agenda Item	Committee Date	Application Number 09/00686/CU
<p align="center"><b>Application Site</b></p> <p align="center">Bay View Holiday Park (Previously Known As Detron Gate Caravan Park)</p> <p align="center">Bolton Le Sands Carnforth</p>	<p align="center"><b>Proposal</b></p> <p align="center">Change of use of land to allow relocation of touring caravan pitches (no increase in number of pitches)</p>	
<p align="center"><b>Name of Applicant</b></p> <p align="center">Mr M Holgate</p>	<p align="center"><b>Name of Agent</b></p> <p align="center">Mr Rob Barrs</p>	
<p align="center"><b>Decision Target Date</b></p> <p align="center">11 September 2009</p>	<p align="center"><b>Reason For Delay</b></p>	
<p><b>Case Officer</b></p>	<p align="center">Mr Andrew Holden</p>	
<p><b>Departure</b></p>	<p align="center">Yes</p>	
<p><b>Summary of Recommendation</b></p>	<p align="center">Approval subject to section 106 Agreement</p>	

## **1.0 The Site and its Surroundings**

1.1 The application site forms part of the larger Bolton Homes Farm which is located adjacent to Detrongate Farm they are located between the A6 main road and the foreshore of Morecambe Bay just north of the village of Bolton-le-Sands. Access to both farms can be gained directly off the A6 or via the residential highway network leading to the foreshore immediately south of the site. The main access road running from the classified A6 is currently an unclassified adopted highway and is frequently used by pedestrians linking from the nearby Lancaster Canal and highway network to the shoreline footpath (Lancashire Coastal Path). The overall land holding includes the now renamed Bay View Holiday Park and approximately 100+ acres of agricultural land. The remaining land outside the caravan site is currently let out on an agricultural lease.

The site is split into two distinct elements, part of the site lies to the east of the caravan site on rising land facing the A6 and the west coast railway. The other part of the site lies to the west of a ridge generally running north-south through the site within an area of relatively flat land bounded by mature hedgerows.

## **2.0 The Proposal**

2.1 The proposal is seeking to change the use of agricultural land to the west of the ridge and rising ground to allow the siting of touring caravans. The land to the east of the ridge which forms part of the rising land visible the A6 which is currently use for the siting of touring caravans is to be restored to agricultural use. A lower, flatter area which has play equipment installed and has a kick around area is to remain. The total number of touring caravans is to remain unchanged.

## **3.0 Site History**

3.1 Background to the Application

The overall site has been used as a small cattle and sheep farm for a considerable period. The static and touring caravan site providing additional income to these small units and alongside the day to day farming activities. Bolton Holmes Farm and its neighbour, Detrongate Farm which also has a camping and caravanning operation has recently been bought by Holgates Caravan Park Ltd. The current caravan site licence combined operation over the two farm units allows for 90 static caravans, 220 touring and a small area for tents. The location of both the static caravans and touring units are in clearly defined areas via historical planning consents. In addition to the land made over to leisure/caravanning the current land ownership includes 44.5 hectares (110 acres) made over to summer grazing serving other farms in the locality.

Since purchasing the sites, the applicant has already undertaken a series of site improvements, upgrading the road network, improving pitches and layouts. Recent applications relating to the development of the site include:-

Application Number	Proposal	Decision
08/00252/VCN	Variation of original site condition (Bolton Homes Farm only) to allow for an extended season - 22 December to 7 November the following year.	Approved May 2008
08/00255/VCN	Similar variation application for Detrongate Farm only	Approved May 2008
08/00823/CU	Change the use of land within the farm group to allow the siting of 27 holiday static caravans.	Approved Oct 2008
08/00921/CU	Conversion of stone barns within the farm group into restaurant, reception, bar and shop area	Approved Sept 2008

#### **4.0 Consultation Responses**

4.1 The following responses have been received from statutory consultees:

Statutory Consultee	Response
Environmental Health	Views awaited
County Highways	Views awaited
Parish Council	Views awaited

#### **5.0 Neighbour Representations**

5.1 None to date, any comments will be reported directly to committee.

#### **6.0 Principal Development Plan Policies**

6.1 The application needs to be considered against the following policies: -

The North Lancashire Green Belt - Development of new buildings and changes in land use are resisted other than for agricultural/forestry purposes or essential facilities for outdoor sport and recreation and for other uses which preserve the openness of the Green Belt. The re-use of existing buildings is permitted providing that the conversion does not have a materially greater impact than the present use on the openness of the Green Belt and the purpose of including land within it

##### Lancaster District Local Plan -

E4 – Countryside Area, permits development within the area which is in scale and keeping with the landscape, is appropriate to its surroundings and makes adequate arrangements for access, servicing and parking.

E5 - Seeks to resist development on the open coastline within the Countryside Area unless it is

essential for coastal protection, improved public access, informal recreation/amenity and does not have a significant adverse impact upon nature conservation.

T07 - Proposals to extend existing touring caravan sites are permitted providing the development would not result in significant adverse impact on the appearance of the surrounding countryside, does not give rise to significant traffic congestion, make satisfactory arrangements for access and servicing and is readily accessible from surrounding roads.

#### Lancaster Core Strategy -

SC5 - Seeks to maintain and improve the quality of development in The North Lancashire Green Belt by ensuring new development reflects and enhances the positive characteristics of its surroundings.

E1 - Seeks to safeguard and enhance the Districts Environmental Capital by protecting the North Lancashire Green Belt.

## **7.0 Comment and Analysis**

7.1 The application proposals are simple in what they are seeking to achieve both for the applicant and the wider public. The applicant has indicated that the current location for the touring pitches is substandard in nature of the pitches (on a rising hillside) and are difficult to service probably from their day to day management and the provision of requisite amenity blocks. It is also noted that this side of the site is very visible to the wider public aspect from the A6 and the mainline railway as well as the canal towpath. The alternative site is better located from a management view point and given its relatively flat nature provides for much improved pitches for individual caravans.

It is acknowledged from a public aspect that the relocation of touring caravans to the west side of the hillside will remove the caravans from the main public aspect of the site. The new location for the touring caravans will also be wholly screened from the shore line aspect given the topography of the site, existing and proposed landscaping and the presence of existing buildings and static units within the complex.

The development site is currently an agricultural field given over to pasture and is bounded by mature hawthorn hedgerows. The overall caravan complex, including the application site falls within The North Lancashire Green Belt and the proposal needs to be considered in respect of this policy. Green Belt policy seeks to ensure that the openness of the Green Belt is not affected by the development proposals. Whilst the total number of pitches is to remain unchanged, the new site area, as originally submitted was to significantly increase (approx. 80%). This was considered to contradict the aims of the policy by enlarging the developed area of the caravan site and thereby reducing the openness of the Green Belt. Following discussions with the applicant, the site area has been reduced to be marginally greater than the area currently occupied by touring pitches. In addition, the planting of a short section of new hawthorn hedgerow has been secured to separate the caravan site from the adjacent agricultural land.

Developing new areas of Green Belt land to be used for the siting of touring caravans would be considered inappropriate development within the Green Belt and a departure from the Development Plan as the development would undermine the principles for development within the Green belt as defined in paragraphs 3.1 to 3.6 of Planning Policy Guidance 2 - Green Belts. However, the approach taken with this application in seeking to effectively swap similar areas of land currently under development as a touring site and return these to agricultural use is considered appropriate and would not undermine or conflict with Green Belt policy/aims. This arrangement would need to be subject to strong control to ensure that the land swap is undertaken and the previously developed land is return to open agricultural purposes.

The area currently occupied by touring pitches is to be returned to agricultural use. However an area to the east of this land is to be maintained as recreational space. This area is relatively flat and already contains play equipment and a well mown kickabout area. The eastern boundary comprises mature trees and hedgerow effectively screening the area from wider public view. An indoor games room and staff accommodation is also contained within the neighbouring converted barn. The site appears a little remote from the remaining site but in practice the topography of the site provides little opportunity for other locations and given the presence of the indoor facilities alongside and the

natural desire to separate the use from the main site area, maintaining the location is not considered inappropriate. Again a new length of hawthorn hedgerow is proposed to delineate between the newly transformed agricultural land and the play area.

Overall, it is considered that the relocation of the touring pitches to the west side of the hill will have demonstrable benefits for the applicant and the wider public aspect and is not considered to conflict with planning policy seeking to protect the rural landscape or North Lancashire Green Belt. This translocation needs to be controlled to ensure that the site area and number of units do not increase and that the original land is returned to and maintained in agricultural use. In addition, to maintain the commercial viability of the site as a whole, the phasing of translocation needs to be addressed to allow the development of the new caravan pitches to be undertaken whilst maintaining the original area but only in the short-term. It is considered that the area of the site and the number of units can be controlled via planning condition. However, the loss of planning consent for touring caravan use on part of the original caravan site and its change/continuation to agricultural use together with the phasing of the development is considered to be better controlled via entry into a Section 106 legal agreement.

## **8.0 Conclusions**

- 8.1 It is anticipated that the revised plans will be available for consideration by the planning committee. The amended plans will incorporate a reduction in the site relocated site area, landscaping/hedgerow details and confirmation of the agreement to a Section 106 Legal Agreement to control the future use of the land and the potential phasing of the relocation. . Subject to receipt of appropriate revised plans the development is considered to be acceptable and not to conflict with development plan policy.

## **Recommendation**

Subject to no significant objections being raised, Planning Permission be granted in principle subject to the following conditions with the determination delegated to the Head of Planning Services to allow time for the expiration of the site notices and entry into a Section 106 Agreement in respect of future land use and phasing of the development

1. Standard 3year time limit
2. Development to be undertaken in accordance with the approved plans
3. Amended plans (date to be confirmed)
4. Number of units to be controlled -
5. Caravans for holiday accommodation only
6. Season to be linked to the main site (22 Dec and 7 Nov the following year)
7. Precise details of the landscaping to be agreed and implemented
8. As may required by the consultees.

## **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**

1. None