

Agenda Item A8	Committee Date 6 April 2018	Application Number 18/00028/CU
Application Site Castleview Caravan Parks Castle View Park Borwick Road Capernwray	Proposal Change of use of land for the siting of 36 static caravans/lodges including retrospective raising of land levels, creation of a new road and installation of a sewage treatment plant	
Name of Applicant Mr J McCarthy	Name of Agent Mr H R Wheatman	
Decision Target Date 20 April 2018	Reason For Delay None	
Case Officer	Mrs Eleanor Fawcett	
Departure	None	
Summary of Recommendation	Approval, subject to the receipt of satisfactory information in relation to alternative sites.	

1.0 The Site and its Surroundings

- 1.1 This application relates to a large static caravan site located off Borwick Road within the dispersed settlement of Capernwray. It is a long established site with a total of 280 static caravan pitches for holiday use. The pitches are located within two distinct groups as it was previously two sites under different ownerships. Closest to the application site is the former Capernwray Caravan Park which appears to have been purchased by the applicant in 2007. Part of this extends up to Borran Lane to the northwest and has an access from Hobsons Lane to the southwest. It is also served by the access from Borwick Road and there is a road linking the two main parts of the caravan site which are separated by slightly sloping fields. Crossing these fields is a public footpath, extending from Borwick Road to Gamekeepers Tower on a raised area of land to the south.
- 1.2 The application site relates to land adjacent to the northwestern part of the caravan park, which separates the two distinct sections. There are three main parts of the application site. The one to the southwest of the access road is grassed but the site levels have been increased by the use of hardcore. To the northeast of this is an area which has been hard surfaced and is used to display caravans for sale. The largest section relates to an undeveloped field and extends adjacent to the access road, to the southeast. It does contain a package treatment plant associated with existing caravans to the south. Adjacent to this is a group of trees, with a woodland area extending up to Borwick Road which are protected by a Tree Preservation Order. To the northeast of the site is an equestrian centre and dwelling, which are also owned by the applicant.
- 1.3 The site is located within the Countryside Area, as identified on the Local Plan Proposals map.

2.0 The Proposal

- 2.1 Planning permission is sought for the change of use of land for the siting of 36 static caravans or lodges. The proposal also includes the raising of levels on part of the site and the creation of a new access road, both of which have already been undertaken. The new road runs adjacent to the south eastern edge of the field boundary, where the caravans are proposed, and links the existing road serving the caravan site to that of the equestrian centre. As part of the scheme, additional

landscaping is also proposed.

3.0 Site History

3.1 There is an extensive planning history in relation to the caravan site. The most relevant, in relation to the application site, is set out below.

Application Number	Proposal	Decision
17/01363/CU	Change of use of land for the siting of 44 static caravans/lodges including retrospective raising of land levels	Withdrawn
17/00813/PRETWO	Siting of 44 caravan/lodges on vacant land	
10/00185/CU	Change of use of land for extension to existing caravan park, erection of an office building, provision of a new treatment plant and reed bed pond	Approved
08/00485/FUL	Creation of a new private access road	Approved

4.0 Consultation Responses

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

Consultee	Response
Parish Council	Object. Existing high concentration of caravans in this area; detrimental impact of further vehicular movements on the existing roads; concerns about accuracy of transport statement; need to ensure they are occupied for holiday use;
Environmental Health	No objection subject to standard contamination condition.
Tree Protection Officer	Comments. Concerns in relation to the poor quality of the raised area of land and ability for new landscaping in this area to establish and provide long term screening.
County Highways	No objection. Advise an occupancy restriction to limit length of stay and use as a family home.
Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service	Comments. It should be ensured that the scheme fully meets all the requirements of Building Regulations Approved Document B, Part B5 'Access and facilities for the Fire Service'.

5.0 Neighbour Representations

5.1 No representations have been received.

6.0 Principal National and Development Plan Policies

6.1 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Paragraphs 7, 14 and 17 – Sustainable Development and Core Principles
 Paragraph 28 – Supporting economic growth in rural areas
 Paragraph 32 – Access and Transport
 Paragraphs 56, 58 and 60 – Requiring Good Design
 Paragraph 109 – Protecting valued landscapes and minimising impacts on biodiversity
 Paragraph 118 – Conserving and Enhancing Biodiversity

6.2 Local Planning Policy Overview – Current Position

At the 20 December 2017 meeting of its Full Council, the local authority resolved to publish the following 2 Development Plan Documents (DPD) for submission to the Planning Inspectorate:

- (i) The Strategic Policies and Land Allocations DPD; and,
- (ii) A Review of the Development Management DPD.

This enables progress to be made on the preparation of a Local Plan for the Lancaster District. The

DPDs will be published in February, after which there will be a 6 week period for representations prior to the submission of the documents to the Planning Inspectorate for independent Examination. If an Inspector finds that the submitted DPDs have been soundly prepared they may be adopted by the Council, potentially in late 2018.

The Strategic Policies and Land Allocations DPD will replace the remaining policies of the Lancaster District Core Strategy (2008) and the residual 'saved' land allocation policies from the 2004 District Local Plan. Following the Council resolution in December 2017, it is considered that the Strategic Policies and Land Allocations DPD is a material consideration in decision-making, although with limited weight. The weight attributed to this DPD will increase as the plan's preparation progresses through the stages described above.

The Review of the Development Management DPD updates the policies that are contained within the current document, which was adopted in December 2014. As it is part of the development plan the current document is already material in terms of decision-making. Where any policies in the draft 'Review' document are different from those adopted in 2014, and those policies materially affect the consideration of the planning application, then these will be taken into account during decision-making, although again with limited weight. The weight attributed to the revised policies in the 'Review' will increase as the plan's preparation progresses through the stages described above.

6.3 Lancaster District Core Strategy (adopted July 2008)

SC1 – Sustainable Development
SC5 – Achieving Quality in Design
ER6 – Developing Tourism

6.4 Lancaster District Local Plan - saved policies (adopted 2004)

E4 – Countryside Area

6.5 Development Management Development Plan Document (DM DPD)

DM7 – Economic Development in Rural Areas
DM14 – Caravan Sites, Chalets and Log Cabins
DM20 – Enhancing Accessibility and Transport Linkages
DM21 – Walking and Cycling
DM27 – Protection and Enhancement of Biodiversity
DM28 – Development and Landscape Impact
DM35 – Key Design Principles
DM39 – Surface Water Run-Off and Sustainable Drainage

7.0 Comment and Analysis

7.1 The main issues to be considered in the determination of this application are:

- Principle of the proposal
- Landscape and Visual Impact
- Highway Safety Issues
- Ecological Issues
- Drainage

7.2 Principle of the proposal

7.2.1 The proposal is for an extension to an existing caravan site to accommodate 36 additional static caravan/lodges. Policy DM14 of the Development Management DPD sets out that extensions to existing static or touring caravan sites will be supported in principle within the district, and outside areas of designated landscape importance and to an appropriate scale, subject to the following criteria:

- Priority is given to previously developed sites and, where greenfield sites are identified, it should be demonstrated that no alternative, suitable brownfield sites exist in the locality;

- The proposal has no adverse impact on landscape character or significant detrimental impact on the visual amenity of the locality, and includes satisfactory proposals for additional landscaping where required;
- The layout retains onsite features and provides compensatory planting and other nature conservation measures;
- The proposal maintains and enhances existing areas of recreational open space or creates new areas which are proportionate in scale;
- The proposal does not have an adverse impact on biodiversity;
- The proposal does not have an adverse impact on surrounding residential amenity; and
- The proposal is in an accessible location and has no adverse impact on the capacity of the highway network, or on highway safety.

7.2.2 Whilst some of the application site contains hardstanding, this does not benefit from planning consent and as such all of the site is greenfield. It lies immediately alongside the current caravan site and is within the ownership of the applicant. It does not appear that there are any suitable alternative locations to provide an expansion to this site which are previously developed. However, this evidence has been requested from the agent and will be updated at the meeting. Subject to satisfactory information being provided as to the lack of any suitable alternative locations for the expansion of the site, the principle is considered to be acceptable, subject to the proposal meeting the criteria listed above.

7.3 Landscape and Visual Impact

7.3.1 The existing caravan site, which comprises two distinct separate areas, benefits from established planting and existing woodland for screening. The main public view of the application site is from a public footpath which crosses one of the fields to the southeast. Otherwise, it is partly visible from the access into the caravan park from Borwick Road. The caravans would be seen against those to the northwest, particularly as the land rises. However, from aerial photographs, it appears that these would have benefitted from a significant amount of screening when viewed from the public footpath which would have reduced their visual impact within the landscape. It is not clear when this was removed or exactly how much screening it would have provided. However, a detailed and robust landscaping scheme is considered to be important if an expansion is to be approved, extending into the open area which separates the main sections of the caravan site.

7.3.2 Concerns were raised at the pre-application stage in relation to the proposed density of the caravans and the large amounts of hardstanding proposed with limited landscaping. Unfortunately, these concerns were not fully taken into account by the previous submission, which led to this application being withdrawn. The current application has reduced the number of proposed caravans by 8 and an additional amenity area has been proposed which will also help to provide additional screening to the raised area. This is in addition to the amenity area proposed in the centre of the largest section of the site. Overall, areas of hardstanding have been reduced with some additional green spaces to the front of pitches and around the three areas. There are concerns in relation to the ability for trees to establish within the raised area of land, given the poor quality of the ground. It is also considered that more landscaping could be provided to help break up views of and soften the appearance of the caravans.

7.3.3 An amended landscaping scheme has now been submitted and the Tree Officer consulted. This also provides details in relation to ground works proposed to ensure that the trees can establish and mature. The response will be reported at the meeting, however, if sufficient details have not been provided, it may be the case that these can be agreed through a condition. Additional landscaping has already been put in place adjacent to the new access road. Whilst some of this is outside the application site, it is considered important to be included within the landscaping scheme to ensure that it is maintained and retained in order to provide additional screening to the site, particularly from the footpath. Unfortunately it does not appear to have been included within the amended scheme, but has been requested from the agent.

7.3.4 Overall, subject to a robust landscaping scheme, it is considered that the proposal will not have a significant adverse landscape and visual impact, particularly as it will be viewed against existing caravans and will still retain an open green space between the two main sections of the caravan park.

7.4 Highway Safety Issues

7.4.1 The application will increase the number of caravans/lodges at the caravan site which will increase the number of vehicle movements. The Highway Authority has raised no objections to the proposal but has suggested that the length of stay in a unit by a single occupier and the continuous use of the units as family homes be restricted. A legal agreement is proposed, in addition to a condition, to ensure that the lodges are used for holiday purposes only. However, the rest of the site is already used on a 12 month basis, and period of stay is not usually limited for caravans as these are often individually owned. As such, it is considered that the use for holiday purposes can be adequately controlled without restricting the length of stay by a single occupier.

7.5 Ecological Issues

7.5.1 An ecological appraisal has been submitted with the application and was undertaken in August 2017. In relation to the site, it sets out that this is mostly semi-improved grassland which is grazed by sheep and horses with low species diversity and ecological value. There are no records of great crested newts within 2 kilometres of the site, though there are three ponds within 250 metres. One of these is approximately 5 metres from the southern edge of the site, and the report sets out that this has been constructed relatively recently and is fed solely by surface water run-off and dries on a regular basis. The other two are large fishing ponds stocked with coarse fish and were seen to support large numbers of waterfowl such as mallard which would exert a strong predatory pressure on newts and are considered sufficient to preclude their occurrence in these ponds. As a result, the potential for great crested newts to inhabit the ponds and forage or hibernate on the site is considered to be low.

7.5.2 In relation to bats, the report sets out that these are highly unlikely to rely on the site for feeding but may occur in the local area. The additional planting proposed, which includes hedgerows is likely to improve habitat for both bats and birds. No other protected species are likely to be impacted by the proposal. Some precautionary mitigation has been proposed for amphibians, badgers, bats, birds, invertebrates and reptiles. It is considered that the proposal should not have a significant impact on biodiversity and there should be some benefits from the proposed landscaping.

7.6 Drainage

7.6.1 Two package treatment plants have been proposed to serve the development which will drain to an existing watercourse to the north of the site. Subject to any necessary consents, separate to planning, this is considered to be acceptable to serve the development.

8.0 Planning Obligations

8.1 A Unilateral Undertaking is required in order to ensure that the caravans are used wholly for holiday accommodation given that the site will be operated on a 12 month basis.

9.0 Conclusions

9.1 The application proposes an extension to an existing caravan site and will help to promote tourism within the area. Subject to confirmation that no alternative previously developed sites exist in the locality, the principle of the proposal is considered to be acceptable. The site will be seen in the context of existing caravans and will maintain an open green area separating the two main sections of the caravan park. Providing that sufficient landscaping details are provided, it is considered that the proposal will not have a significant adverse landscape and visual impact. It is also considered that the scheme is acceptable in terms of impacts on highway safety, ecology and residential amenity.

Recommendation

That Planning Permission **BE GRANTED** subject to the receipt of satisfactory information in relation to alternative sites, and signing and completing of a Unilateral Undertaking to ensure that the caravans are used wholly for holiday accommodation, and the following conditions:

1. Standard 3 year timescale
2. In accordance with plans

3. Assessment/ remediation of contamination
4. Ecology mitigation
5. Landscaping scheme
6. Implement drainage in full prior to first occupation/being brought into use
7. Implement amenity spaces in full prior to first occupation/being brought into use
8. Restriction of number of units and layout as on submitted plans
9. Restriction of use to holiday units

Article 35, Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015

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 taken having had regard to the impact of development, and in particular to the relevant policies contained in the Development Plan, as presented in full in the report, and to all relevant material planning considerations, including the National Planning Policy Framework, National Planning Practice Guidance and relevant Supplementary Planning Documents/ Guidance.

Background Papers

None