

<b>Agenda Item</b> A5	<b>Committee Date</b> 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2019	<b>Application Number</b> 18/01356/CU
<b>Application Site</b>  Greendales Caravan Park Carr Lane Middleton Morecambe		<b>Proposal</b>  Change of use of agricultural land for the siting of 26 static holiday caravans, camping area, erection of a bicycle rack, formation of mini golf course, amenity/dog walking area and associated landscaping and creation of an extension to existing internal access road.
<b>Name of Applicant</b>  Mr M McCarthy		<b>Name of Agent</b>  Mr HR Wheatman
<b>Decision Target Date</b>  23 January 2019		<b>Reason For Delay</b>  Awaiting amended layout
<b>Case Officer</b>		Mrs Petra Williams
<b>Departure</b>		No
<b>Summary of Recommendation</b>		Approval

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

- 1.1 The site that forms the subject of this application is an existing caravan site which is located to the south of Carr Lane. The site lies approximately ½ mile west of the village of Middleton and is accessed via a road running south approximately 200 metres from Carr Lane. Greendales Caravan Site is established as a mixed static and touring caravan site. There is a separate parallel access leading to Greendales Stables which lies to the west. The proposed site is well screened from Carr Lane by mature hedge boundaries. The curvature of the land to the south of Carr Lane and existing planting within the site also helps to minimise the visual impact of the site.
- 1.2 The caravan site includes areas of hardstanding, landscaping and tree and hedgerow boundary planting. This application relates to the south-eastern part of the site which is an area of poor semi-improved grassland currently used as an informal camping area.
- 1.3 There are pastoral fields to the north, east and south of the site with mature hedgerows forming the boundaries to the neighbouring fields and nearby highways. The site is partly within Flood Zones 2 and 3 and is within the Countryside Area. Carr Lane Meadows Biological Heritage Site is situated 250m to the west of the site and the Lune Estuary Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) known as Morecambe Bay, which is designated as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC), Special Protected Area (SPA) and Ramsar Site, is located approximately 1km to the west. A Public Right of Way (FP2) runs along the eastern edge of the site. This path provides connectivity between Middleton and Carr Lane to the south-west which ultimately leads to the shore.

## **2.0 The Proposal**

- 2.1 The application proposes a change of use of agricultural land for the siting of 30 static caravans, 3 camping pods, 2 camping areas, erection of a bicycle rack, formation of mini golf course and associated landscaping and creation of an extension to existing road

## **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
<b>19/00003/EIR</b>	Screening opinion for the change of use of agricultural land for the siting of 30 static caravans, 3 camping pods, 2 camping areas, erection of a bicycle rack, formation of mini golf course and associated landscaping and creation of an extension to existing road	EIA not required
<b>17/01528/CU</b>	Change of use of land to site 10 static holiday caravans, extension to toilet block and creation of a dog walking/amenity area.	Approved
<b>16/01339/FUL</b>	Change of use of land to relocate 10 existing touring pitches and siting of 10 additional static caravans, demolition of existing toilet block, erection of a toilet block and associated new access, internal road and landscaping	Approved
<b>15/01530/CU</b>	Change of use of land to allow the siting and use of holiday caravans for 12 months of the year	Approved

## **4.0 Consultation Responses**

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

Consultee	Response
<b>County Highways</b>	<b>No objections</b> – Suggests conditions to ensure occupancy of the caravans are restricted for holiday use and the provision of cycle storage facilities.
<b>Public Right of Way Officer</b>	<b>Neither supports nor objects</b> but advises that the grant of planning permission would not provide the option of obstructing a public right of way. Comments will be provided as advice to the applicant.
<b>Environment Agency</b>	<b>No objections</b> - Recommend that the applicant updates their existing Flood Warning Evacuation Plan.
<b>Tree Officer</b>	<b>No objections</b> – subject to conditions to ensure implementation of landscaping scheme and details of species and planting densities.
<b>Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service</b>	No observations to make – advice notes provided.
<b>British Pipeline Agency</b>	Comments that the application site is not within a zone of interest.
<b>Dynamo Cycle Campaign</b>	<b>Objection</b> – This is another small development in this area which, when taken with all the others (residential, industrial, tourism), adds up to a lot more traffic without any improvement for sustainable transport.

## **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)

Paragraph 48 – Weight of emerging plan

Paragraphs 83 and 84 – Supporting a prosperous rural economy  
Paragraphs 124 and 127 – Achieving well-designed places  
Paragraphs 170,175 and 176 – Protecting and enhancing biodiversity

## 6.2 Local Planning Policy Overview – Current Position

On 15 May 2018, and in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended), Lancaster City Council submitted the following documents to the Secretary of State (Planning Inspectorate) for examination:

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

The Examination Hearing Sessions are due to commence in April 2019.

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.

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.

Given the current stage of both DPDs, it is considered that significant weight can be attributed to the policies contained therein.

## 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 (adopted July 2014)

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  
DM29 – Protection of Trees, Hedgerows and Woodland  
DM35 – Key Design Principles

## **7.0 Comment and Analysis**

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

- Principle
- Landscape and Visual Impacts
- Trees and Ecology
- Highways
- Flood Risk and Drainage

### 7.2 Principle

#### 7.2.1 The proposal is for an extension to an existing caravan site to accommodate 26 static holiday caravans. 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 The site is a greenfield site immediately alongside the current caravan site and in the ownership of the applicant. The site expansion will utilise the main site access, and all the facilities currently available within the existing site. Whilst not previously developed land, expansion into the area proposed (currently used for camping purposes) will limit the need for additional infrastructure to support the tourism development as it is provided within the site's boundaries. Subject to the consideration of the more detailed issues, the principle of the development is considered to be acceptable.

### 7.3 Landscape and Visual Impact

7.3.1 Planning policy seeks to ensure that development of the site has no adverse impact upon the landscape character or visual amenity of the area. The site is well screened from wider public aspect from Carr Lane due to the distance involved, topography as well as the mature tree/hedgerow planting along the highway. The existing site is visible from the Public Right of Way (PRoW) along the eastern site boundary. While the development would clearly be observed from the PRoW it would be seen in the context of the existing site. Importantly the submission includes additional landscape along the eastern part of the site which would provide a degree of intervening screening between the development area and the PRoW and a general visual enhancement to the area. Subject to a condition to ensure implementation of the proposed landscaping scheme, it is considered that the visual impact of the development will be limited and would not impact unduly on the area.

### 7.4 Trees and Ecology

7.4.1 There are no proposals to remove existing trees or hedges in order to accommodate the proposed development and the Tree Protection Officer is satisfied that the existing tree/hedge stock can be satisfactorily retained and adequately protected during the course of the development. The proposed landscaping scheme will include silver birch, oak and rowan in addition to a new native woodland, various shrub plantings and wildflower grassland throughout the site. As highlighted within paragraph 7.3.1, it is considered that the proposed landscaping will offer a visual enhancement to the area and additional tree and planting cover is welcomed as it would encourage a wider variety of wildlife to the site.

7.4.2 The application has been accompanied by an Ecological Appraisal which highlights the surrounding fields as being poor semi-improved grassland which is heavily grazed by horses to the south of the site. Although amphibians, bats and nesting birds are known to occur in the local area, there was no conclusive evidence of any specifically protected species regularly occurring on the site or the surrounding areas which would be negatively affected by site development following the mitigation proposed. The limited vegetation on site has a low ecological significance in the local area and the protection of trees and hedgerows on the site boundary along with new hedgerow and shrub planting will ensure the structural and species diversity over the site is increased post development. Standing water on and in proximity to the site was found to offer poor potential habitat for great crested newts. Reasonable avoidance measures will be followed in order to ensure that the risk to amphibians crossing the site is minimised.

7.4.3 The Ecological Appraisal sets out that the development will have no undue impact on statutory or non-statutory sites. The Appraisal makes recommendations in respect of compensatory habitat enhancement which has been factored into the landscaping scheme. Mitigations measures are also outlined in the event that any evidence of protected species is found. Overall it is considered that the development will not result in adverse ecological impacts.

## 7.5 Highways

7.5.1 The application will increase the number of caravans at the 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 static caravans 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.

7.5.2 The comments made by the Dynamo Cycle Campaign Group are noted and they raise concerns regarding the approval of small and medium sized applications in Heysham and Middleton without a requirement for a contribution towards an overarching scheme to mitigate the impacts of the extra traffic. However, there are no policy requirements (nationally or locally) which would justify the request of such a contribution, nor warrant a refusal of permission. Carr Lane between the site and Middleton is rural in nature and as such does not contain pedestrian footways. However, this is not a through-road and it is considered to accommodate relatively low traffic volumes. Policy DM20 acknowledges the importance of enhancing and promoting environmentally friendly transport modes including cycling. The submission includes provision of cycle storage facilities and this is acceptable. In addition the site is ideally placed close to a network of PRowS with the closest one running along the eastern site boundary. This footpath will be unaffected by the proposal and therefore connectivity with the wider network of pedestrian routes will not be unduly impacted by the scheme.

## 7.6 Flood Risk and Drainage

7.6.1 The eastern part of the application site falls within Flood Zones 2 and 3 and during the course of the application the plans have been revised in order to remove static caravans from this area. This has resulted in the number of units being reduced from the 30 originally proposed down to 26 and the omission of camping pods from the scheme. The scheme has been considered by the Environment Agency who are satisfied that proposed development will not be at an unacceptable risk of flooding or exacerbate flood risk elsewhere.

7.6.2 It is proposed that foul drainage will be directed to the existing mains sewer which runs across the site. Surface water drainage will be dealt with via soakaways and it is considered that these can be incorporated satisfactorily into the site given the degree of grassed areas proposed along with the gravel internal access track and parking areas. Details will be conditioned.

## 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 holiday caravan site and will help to promote tourism within the area and the principle of this is considered to be acceptable. The site will be viewed in the context of existing caravans and will provide additional landscaping which will enhance the site itself and act to minimise landscape and visual impacts from the wider area. It is also considered that the scheme is acceptable in terms of impacts on highway safety, ecology and flood risk.

## **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 three year timescale
2. In accordance with amended plans
3. Details of covered and secure cycle storage facilities
4. Ecology mitigation
5. Implementation of hard and soft landscape scheme
6. Development carried out in accordance with Arboriculture Implications Assessment and Tree Protection Plan
7. Foul and surface drainage details
8. Implement amenity spaces in full prior to first occupation/being brought into use
9. Development carried out in accordance with FRA
10. Restriction of number of units and layout as on submitted plans
11. 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