

<b>Parish:</b>	Methwold	
<b>Proposal:</b>	Retention of caravan for temporary residential use	
<b>Location:</b>	Cherry Tree Farm Thornham Road Methwold Norfolk	
<b>Applicant:</b>	Tracy Peckham	
<b>Case No:</b>	18/01730/F (Full Application)	
<b>Case Officer:</b>	Mrs C Dorgan	<b>Date for Determination:</b> 22 November 2018 <b>Extension of Time Expiry Date:</b> 8 February 2019

**Reason for Referral to Planning Committee** – Called in by Councillor Lawrence

**Neighbourhood Plan:** No

**Case Summary**

This is a retrospective application to gain temporary planning consent for the siting of a caravan for residential use on agricultural land.

The site is located outside the development boundary for the village of Methwold, which is categorised as a joint Key Rural Service Centre (with Northwold) in the adopted Local Plan (specifically the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Plan (SADMP)).

This application sits alongside application 18/001729/CU for the Change of Use of land from agricultural to leisure (D2), and application 18/01791/F for Retention of access track.

**Key Issues**

- \* Principle of development
- \* Form and Character
- \* Highways/ Access
- \* Other material considerations.

**Recommendation**

**APPROVE**

## **THE APPLICATION**

The site is located outside the development boundary for the village of Methwold, approximately 1 mile to the north west of the built extent of the village. Methwold is categorised as a joint Key Rural Service Centre (with Northwold) in the adopted Local Plan (specifically the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Plan (SADMP)).

This is a retrospective application to gain temporary planning consent for the siting of a caravan for residential use, on agricultural land.

The residential caravan is required on site to enable the applicant to establish and manage the proposed site as a leisure use. The intention of the applicant is to provide 6 log cabins for use as holiday lets with special intention to provide facilities, on site, to families who care for sufferers of dementia/ alzheimers. There will be two fishing lakes stocked differently to appeal to a range of fisherman. In addition there will be a petting farm consisting of goats, ponies, sheep and alpacas/ lamas. There will also be a camp site at the venue.

The cabins will be a range of sizes, all be built with the disabled and dementia sufferers in mind. They will have a small garden area and fishing pegs for each. The applicant is a trained dementia carer, and the intention is to offer rest bite and assistance for dementia carers and families. The petting farm will complement the accommodation offer, bringing joy to those with disabilities/ dementia sufferers.

A detailed business plan, with financial projections, has been submitted as part of the application and this makes clear the intention of the applicant. It provides a business plan for the next three years showing how the business will be developed over this time, and projections of the likely income to be generated. The applicant makes the case that the two accommodation types, alongside the fishing lake and petting farm, will all complement each other and generate sufficient income for the business to be a successful enterprise.

This application sits alongside application 18/01729/CU for the Change of Use of land from agricultural to leisure (D2), and application 18/01791/F for Retention of access track.

## **SUPPORTING CASE**

Cherry Tree Farm is currently agricultural land, used for animal grazing. There is an existing caravan sited on the land, which is used for animal feed storage and as a shelter and toilet when working at the farm. This caravan has been in existence on the site for over twelve years.

The applicant wishes to expand the rare breed animal husbandry, currently comprising goats and sheep, to include rescue chickens, alpacas and rescue ponies. These animals will eventually form a petting farm, as part of the proposed tourism use of the site, which is being applied for at the same time as this application.

In order to care for the animals, supervise the establishment of the tourism site and to provide site security during that time, it is proposed to use the existing caravan siting for temporary residential use. It is hoped that a period of three years will be sufficient to see the site in operation, should the application be successful. It is necessary to reside on the site during this period because of its remote nature. In the past few years the site has been subject of six reported cases of burglary and three unreported. This has resulted in considerable financial loss to the applicant because it has been impossible to insure against theft with no residence on the site, no address and secure gateway. The address has now been formalised and a secure gateway is in the course of construction.

Planning Committee  
4 February 2019

The existing caravan is now in a poor state of repair and a new caravan has been moved to the site, ready to replace the old one, which will be scrapped and removed from the site.

The applicant has also provided a detailed business plan for the next three years the contents of which is detailed above.

## **PLANNING HISTORY**

18/01791/F: Retention of access track - Cherry Tree Farm, Thornham Road, Methwold

18/01729/CU: Change of Use of land from agricultural to leisure (D2) - Cherry Tree Farm

18/01730/F: Retention of caravan for temporary residential use - Cherry Tree Farm

## **RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION**

**Parish Council: SUPPORT**

**Highways Authority: OBJECT**

I observe from the application form that this caravan is to be used on a temporary basis during the hoped establishment of the site for Tourism. In this respect I would suggest that its consideration is directly linked to the consideration and findings of planning application 18/01729/CU. I therefore refer you to my comments and recommendation made for that application which will also apply to this.

As a stand alone unit I would additionally suggest that the site is remote from schooling; town centre shopping; health provision and has restricted employment opportunities with limited scope for improving access by foot and public transport. The distance from service centre provision precludes any realistic opportunity of encouraging a modal shift away from the private car towards public transport. It is my view that the proposed development is likely to conflict with the aims of sustainable development and you may wish to also consider this point within your overall assessment of the site.

**Cadent Gas: NO OBJECTION** to the proposal in principle.

- There is a high pressure pipeline local to the proposal, the pipeline has a 19.7m 'Building Proximity Distance' (BPD) applicable, Cadent Gas will object to any building that is sited within this distance of the pipeline.
- The high pressure pipeline is classed as a 'Major Accident Hazard Pipeline - High Pressure' and is sited within the HSE consultation zones.

The application has been put through the HSE Land Use Planning (LUP) process, and consequently the HSE does not advise, on safety grounds, against the granting of planning permission in this case.

## **REPRESENTATIONS**

**8** letters of **SUPPORT** have been received for the proposed change of use.

## **LDF CORE STRATEGY POLICIES**

**CS06** - Development in Rural Areas

Planning Committee  
4 February 2019

**CS08** - Sustainable Development

**CS11** – Transport

## **SITE ALLOCATIONS AND DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT POLICIES PLAN 2016**

**DM2** – Development Boundaries

**DM6** - Housing Needs of Rural Workers

**DM15** – Environment, Design and Amenity

## **NATIONAL GUIDANCE**

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)  
Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)

National Planning Policy Framework – sets out the Government’s planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied.

National Planning Practice Guidance - Provides National Planning Practice Guidance, in support of and in addition to the NPPF

## **PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

### **Principle of Development**

The applicant is seeking to justify the application as an exception to the general approach of restraint in the open countryside by referring to planned leisure/ tourism activity on the wider site.

Policy DM6 (Housing needs of rural workers) of the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Plan sets out criteria for the siting of an occupational dwelling. The policy states that if a new dwelling is essential to support a new rural based activity, it should normally, for the first three years, be provided by a caravan or other temporary accommodation.

The criteria to be met include a clearly established existing need, requiring occupants to be adjacent to their enterprises day and night; and that this need could not be met by existing dwellings within the locality. The application should be supported by clear evidence of intention and ability to develop the business; and supported by clear evidence that the enterprise has been planned on a sound financial basis.

Policy DM11 (Touring and permanent holiday sites) sets out the Council’s location requirements for any new holiday sites, and the conditions to be applied to such sites. Requiring a business plan demonstrating how the site will be managed and will support tourism in the area, a high standard of design, safely accessed, and in accordance with policies on flood risk.

The agent states that the applicant wishes to develop accommodation on the site, fishing lakes and a petting farm, as part of the leisure/ tourism use of the site, and that these uses would require someone to live on the site. This would also provide security for the site, given its isolated location. The three years temporary consent would enable the site to become

Planning Committee  
4 February 2019

established as a tourism/ leisure use. The applicant has provided detailed financial information to support the application, which identifies a business plan and financial projections for three years. The applicant has demonstrated that significant personal funds would be invested in the business which along with the business plan, demonstrates a firm intention and ability to develop the enterprise. The information provided meets the requirements of that required by policies DM6 and DM11.

The agent does state that a caravan has been sited on the land for in excess of 12 years, however there is no evidence provided of this. The caravan has recently been replaced due to its poor state of repair.

In conclusion, the applicant has on balance met the criteria set out in policy DM6 and DM11. It is accepted that there may be a need for the applicant to be on the site day and night, and having surveyed the housing market in the immediate locality there is little likelihood of the housing need being met by existing dwellings close to the site. The applicant has provided sufficient evidence of their intention and ability to develop a rural enterprise, and detailed financial planning for the business to support the need for the residential caravan.

### **Form and Character**

The form and character of the locality is rural in nature, with fishing lakes and log cabins forming a tourism use located on the adjacent site. This proposal, for a temporary residential caravan, would not be out of keeping with the locality, although the siting of the caravan could be more discreet. There are on site currently some fenced animal pens and an animal shelter, all of which are small scale and permitted development.

### **Highways/ Access**

The Local Highway Authority has objected to this proposal on the grounds that it is directly linked to application 18/01729/CU for the Change of Use of agricultural land to Leisure (D2). Thornham Road is not considered to be suitable for habitual increases in traffic. It is of single track width, with no formal passing provision for the significant majority of its length and is of poor construction with narrow verges and ditches to its sides. The applicant has not demonstrated an ability to provide any new formal passing area to help mitigate against their development. Cars when meeting would therefore need be required to reverse in some cases long distances to locate an area to pass or squeeze past each other on unstable verges.

The applicant puts weight on the principle that Thornham Road is not in high demand which was the basis on which a previous application in connection to neighbouring fishing lakes was approved. The Local Highway Authority were not in agreement with this approval. However the holiday use was already established and the Planning Committee made reference to the fact that this was the expansion of a rural enterprise which is to be encouraged. There are also two routes to the site, Thornham Road and Severalls Road, both of which have informal passing points.

Furthermore the Local Highway Authority state that the remote nature of the site means that it is an unsustainable location for residential development.

### **Other material considerations**

The site is within Flood Zone 1 and therefore a FRA is not required. The application site is also within the vicinity of a high pressure gas pipeline, although Cadent Gas and HSE have no objections to the scheme. There are no further objections raised from consultees.

Planning Committee  
4 February 2019

## CONCLUSION

The proposed scheme would result in the retention of a new, temporary, dwelling located within the countryside. The temporary siting and use of the caravan is to provide the applicant with an opportunity to build a business and live on site for a period of up to 3 years. Based on the evidence provided as part of this application, it is the officer's view that the applicant has on balance made a case that there is a clear established need, with clear evidence of a firm intention, and ability to develop the business which has been planned on a sound financial basis.

While the Local Highway Authority has objected to the scheme this is on the grounds that the proposal is associated with application 18/01729/CU which they also object to. They also question the suitability of the location as it conflicts with the aims of sustainable development. On balance it is considered that given the fact that Thornham Road is not in high demand, there are some informal passing points along the most likely route to the site, and the application is for a new rural enterprise which is to be encouraged, officers believe that an approval can be recommended.

Consequently the proposal is in line with the National Planning Policy Framework, Policies CS06, CS10 and CS11 of the King's Lynn and West Norfolk Adopted Core Strategy 2011 and Policies DM2, DM11, and DM15 of the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Plan 2016. Accordingly Members are duly recommended to approve the application.

## RECOMMENDATION:

**APPROVE** subject to the imposition of the following condition(s):

- 1 Condition: This permission shall expire on 05.02.2022 and unless on or before that date application is made for an extension of the period of permission and such application is approved:
  - (a) the mobile home shall be removed from the site,
  - (b) the use of the land for that purpose shall be discontinued, and
  - (c) there shall be carried out any work necessary to reinstate the application site to its condition prior to the mobile home being brought onto the site.
- 1 Reason: In order that the Local Planning Authority may retain control over the development and allow the applicant to establish a viable rural enterprise in accordance with Paragraph 55 of the NPPF, Core strategy policy CS06 of the LDF and emerging Policy DM6 of the SADMPD.
- 2 Condition: The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans (Drawing No. 13175).
- 2 Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.
- 3 Condition: The occupation of the caravan hereby permitted shall be limited to a person solely or mainly working, or last working in connection with the approved business relating to the accommodation, fishing lakes and petting farm outlined in blue on drawing number 13175.

Planning Committee  
4 February 2019

- 3 Reason: The site lies in an area where the Local Planning Authority would not normally grant permission for new dwellings. This permission is granted in recognition of the special need for the dwelling in connection with a rural enterprise in accordance with the NPPF.