

AGENDA ITEM NO: 8/1(d)

Parish:	Heacham	
Proposal:	Proposed Extension to an existing established static caravan site	
Location:	Meadows Caravan Park Lamsey Lane Heacham King's Lynn	
Applicant:	McDonnell Caravans	
Case No:	19/02115/F (Full Application)	
Case Officer:	Mrs N Osler	Date for Determination: 3 February 2020 Extension of Time Expiry Date: 6 March 2020

Reason for Referral to Planning Committee – The views of the Parish Council are contrary to the Officer recommendation and referred by Sifting Panel.

Neighbourhood Plan: No

Case Summary

The application seeks full planning for the extension to an existing caravan park to accommodate 10 holiday caravans at Meadows Caravan Park, Lamsey Lane, Heacham. The site is shown to measure c.0.66ha.

The site lies outside of the development boundary for Heacham and therefore within land designated as countryside.

The site lies within Flood Zone 1 (the lowest risk of flooding).

Key Issues

Principle of Development
Form and Character and Impact on the Countryside
Neighbour Amenity
Highway Safety
Protected Sites and Species
Other Material Considerations

Recommendation

APPROVE

THE APPLICATION

The application is for an extension to an existing Caravan Park to accommodate a further 10 x 2/3-bed caravans. The site measures 0.66ha. The existing Park has a license for 42 holiday caravans and measures approximately 2.2ha.

The site lies outside of the development boundary for Heacham and therefore within land designated as countryside.

The site lies within Flood Zone 1 (the lowest risk of flooding).

SUPPORTING CASE

None submitted at time of writing report

PLANNING HISTORY

No recent relevant history

RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION

Parish Council: OBJECT as this is outside the village boundary and is contrary to our emerging Neighbourhood Plan

Highways Authority: NO OBJECTION subject to condition relating to parking provision

Community Safety and Neighbourhood Nuisance: NO OBJECTION recommend conditions relating to drainage and lighting

Environmental Health & Housing - Environmental Quality: NO OBJECTION in regard to contaminated land or air quality

Natural England: NO OBJECTION The development is unlikely to impact on Heacham Pit SSSI, and any pressure on other designated sites in the locality is likely to be mitigated by the £50 per unit Habitat Mitigation Fee

Arboricultural Officer: NO OBJECTION the proposed landscaping is appropriate for this type of site

REPRESENTATIONS

One letter of concern has been received which doesn't object to the current extension but raises concerns if the Park were to expand further in terms of neighbour amenity.

LDF CORE STRATEGY POLICIES

CS01 - Spatial Strategy

CS02 - The Settlement Hierarchy

CS06 - Development in Rural Areas

CS08 - Sustainable Development

CS10 - The Economy

CS11 - Transport

CS12 - Environmental Assets

SITE ALLOCATIONS AND DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT POLICIES PLAN 2016

DM1 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

DM2 – Development Boundaries

DM11 – Touring and Permanent Holiday Sites

DM15 – Environment, Design and Amenity

DM17 - Parking Provision in New Development

NATIONAL GUIDANCE

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

National Design Guide 2019

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

The main issues for consideration in the determination of this application are:

- Principle of Development
- Form and Character and Impact on the Countryside
- Neighbour Amenity
- Highway Safety
- Protected Sites and Species
- Other Material Considerations

Principle of Development

The site lies within countryside where development is generally restricted. However, both the NPPF and Local Plan acknowledge the importance of supporting the rural economy and the importance of tourism.

The NPPF states, at paragraph 83, that: *'Planning policies and decisions should enable:*
a) the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings;
b) the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses;
c) sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments which respect the character of the countryside; and

d) the retention and development of accessible local services and community facilities, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship.'

It adds at paragraph 84: *'Planning policies and decisions should recognise that sites to meet local business and community needs in rural areas may have to be found adjacent to or beyond existing settlements, and in locations that are not well served by public transport. In these circumstances it will be important to ensure that development is sensitive to its surroundings, does not have an unacceptable impact on local roads and exploits any opportunities to make a location more sustainable (for example by improving the scope for access on foot, by cycling or by public transport). The use of previously developed land, and sites that are physically well-related to existing settlements, should be encouraged where suitable opportunities exist.'*

Core Strategy Policy CS06 generally restricts development in the countryside unless it is essential for a rural enterprise. Core Strategy Policy CS10 likewise seeks to direct employment uses to within development boundaries whilst recognising that some tourism uses are appropriate outside of these boundaries where:

- They are located in or adjacent to the boundaries
- Are of a high standard of design
- Will not be of detriment to the landscape and
- Mechanisms are in place to permanently retain the tourism related use.

Local Plan Policy DM11 expands on the above strategic policies and is particularly relevant to the proposed development as it relates specifically to holiday accommodation. It states: *'(NOTE - For the purposes of this policy the term 'holiday accommodation' is used to describe caravan-based accommodation, including touring and permanent sites / units, as well as permanent buildings constructed for the purpose of letting etc.)*

Proposals for new holiday accommodation sites or units or extension or intensification to existing holiday accommodation will not normally be permitted unless:

- . The proposal is supported by a business plan demonstrating how the site will be managed and how it will support tourism or tourist related uses in the area;
- . The proposal demonstrates a high standard of design in terms of layout, screening and landscaping ensuring minimal adverse impact on visual amenity and the historical and natural environmental qualities of the surrounding landscape and surroundings;
- . The site can be safely accessed;
- . It is in accordance with national policies on flood risk;
- . The site is not within the Coastal Hazard Zone indicated on the Policies Map, or within areas identified as tidal defence breach Hazard Zone in the Borough Council's Strategic Flood Risk Assessment and the Environment Agency's mapping.'

In relation to the above:

The extension is an extension of the existing Park and will be run in association with it; an appropriate and proportionate business plan has been submitted. The existing Park is well operated and maintained with no recorded complaints. Clearly the proposal supports tourism with the benefit of being at low risk of flooding. The layout, screening and landscaping is of an appropriate standard and there are no long public views suggesting any impact on the visual amenity of the locality would be limited. This issue is expanded upon below. There are no nearby designated or non-designated heritage assets that would be affected. The site can be safely accessed.

It is therefore considered these objectives are met.

Policy DM11 goes on to state that '*Small-scale proposals for holiday accommodation will not normally be permitted within the Norfolk Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) unless it can be demonstrated that the proposal will not negatively impact on the landscape setting and scenic beauty of the AONB or on the landscape setting of the AONB if outside the designated area. Proposals for uses adversely affecting Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) or European Sites will be refused permission.*'

The proposal is not within the AONB and the site cannot be viewed from the AONB (which is the other side of the A149). The impact on SSSIs and other European Sites is covered later in this report.

Policy DM11 requires conditions to be applied to new holiday accommodation to ensure they are genuine and will be operated and maintained as tourist facilities in the future. To achieve this aim occupancy conditions will be placed on future planning permissions requiring that:

- . The accommodation is occupied for holiday purposes only and shall be made available for rent or as commercial holiday lets;
- . The accommodation shall be for short stay accommodation only (no more than 28 days per single let) and shall not be occupied as a person's sole or main place of residence; and
- . The owners / operators shall maintain an up-to-date register of lettings / occupation and shall make these available at all reasonable times to the Local Planning Authority.

Impact on the Countryside

The existing Caravan Park is very well maintained and there is no reason to consider the extension would not be kept to the same high standard. The layout is low density which enables landscaping between caravans as well as on the outer boundaries. Your officers are satisfied that the proposed planting is appropriate for the site and its wider setting in terms of landscape impact, although a stronger boundary treatment around the perimeter of the site is considered necessary to both add additional screening to the site and to provide a definitive boundary between the site and the wider countryside.

In relation to the impact on the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, there are no long public views from the A149 to the east or the AONB beyond, limited views if any from the south (glimpses through existing hedgerows); from the east the views would be primarily of the existing caravans; and from the north the views are private rather than public and still not significant.

Neighbour Amenity

There would be no overlooking, overbearing or overshadowing impacts to any non-associated residential uses.

The main impact on neighbour amenity would be via vehicular activity; given the distance from the site to the nearest non-associated residential property it is considered any impact from the use of the site itself would be negligible. However, this is via the existing access and through the existing caravan park and as such would not be material.

Highway Safety

The Local Highway Authority raises no objection on the grounds of highway safety with the existing access being satisfactory and parking provision is in line with current standards.

Protected Sites and Species

In relation to Protected Sites, consideration has been given to the impact from increased recreational disturbance from occupiers of the caravan to the following protected sites:

The Wash and North Norfolk Coast Special Area of Conservation
The Wash Special Area of Conservation
The Wash Ramsar
The Wash Site of Special Scientific Interest and
Heacham Brick Pit Site of Special Scientific Interest.

Natural England consider the £50 Habitat Mitigation Fee per unit is sufficient to mitigate any impact that occupiers of 10 additional caravans would have on these protected sites.

In relation to Protected Species, the Ecological Report carried out by Norfolk Wildlife Services that accompanied the application concludes:

Bats

There is no roost potential within the site or on the adjacent boundaries.

Badgers

No signs or setts were seen on site or adjacent to the proposed development.

Hedgehogs

No signs or evidence of hedgehogs were present at the time of survey however the grassland provided excellent foraging habitat for hedgehogs.

Birds

Trees and hedgerows on the boundary of the site provided high potential nesting habitat for breeding birds, and therefore any development should be carried out using best practice measures (works to be undertaken outside of the bird breeding season, or where this is not possible suitable pre-development surveys should be undertaken).

Reptiles

Terrestrial habitat within the survey area was considered as being of negligible suitability for supporting reptiles.

Great crested newts

There are no ponds within the site and the terrestrial habitat on site does not appear to provide suitable refuge potential.

The Ecology Report concludes that no further surveys or European Protected Species licenses are required.

Enhancements are proposed and these could be suitably conditioned if permission is granted.

Other Material Considerations

Foul drainage is proposed via main sewers and surface water via soakaway. It is not necessary therefore to condition drainage.

External lighting could have a significant impact on the visual amenity of the locality / countryside. As such it is considered necessary and reasonable to condition external lighting if permission is granted.

In relation to the Parish Council's objections, the site's location outside of the development boundary is covered above; and the Neighbourhood Plan it is not sufficiently advanced for its policies to carry any significant weight in the planning balance in accordance with Paragraph 48 of the NPPF.

Crime and Disorder

There are no specific crime and disorder issues arising from the proposed development.

CONCLUSION

The application is for the expansion of an existing tourism / business use within the countryside. No objections have been raised from statutory consultees or third parties on technical grounds and the proposal is considered to accord with the overarching policy considerations relating to such development. The development would not result in any material impact on visual or neighbour amenity or highway safety. It is therefore recommended that the application be approved subject to the following conditions.

RECOMMENDATION:

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

- 1 Condition The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.
- 1 Reason To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act, 1990, as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act, 2004.
- 2 Condition Prior to the first use of the development hereby permitted the proposed on-site car parking and turning areas shall be laid out, demarcated, levelled and surfaced in accordance with the approved plan and retained thereafter available for that specific use.
- 2 Reason To ensure the permanent availability of the parking/manoeuvring areas, in the interests of satisfactory development and highway safety.
- 3 Condition The development hereby permitted shall be limited to 10 caravans as defined in the Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960 and the Caravan Sites Act 1968.
- 3 Reason For the avoidance of doubt and to define the terms of the permission.
- 4 Condition The caravans hereby permitted shall only be used for short stay holiday accommodation (no more than 28 days per single visit) and shall not be occupied as a person's sole or main place of residence. The owners / operators shall maintain an up-to-date register of visits / occupation and shall make these available at all reasonable times to the Local Planning Authority.
- 4 Reason The site lies within in an area in which the Local Planning Authority would not normally permit residential development. This permission is granted because

accommodation is to be used for holiday purposes only in accordance with the NPPF and Local Plan Policy DM11.

- 5 Condition All hard and soft landscape works shall be carried out in accordance with approved plan drawing no: MCD02.02.03 Rev.A. The works shall be carried out prior to the occupation or use of any part of the development or in accordance with a programme to be agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority. Any trees or plants that within a period of 5 years from the completion of the development die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased, shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species as those originally planted, unless the Local Planning Authority gives written approval to any variation.
- 5 Reason To ensure that the work is carried out within a reasonable period in accordance with the NPPF.
- 6 Condition Notwithstanding the details approved under Condition 5, prior to the first occupation/use of the development hereby permitted, a plan shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority detailing a green perimeter boundary using native planting. The boundary treatment shall be completed before the first occupation/use hereby permitted or before any caravan is occupied or in accordance with a timetable to be approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.
- 6 Reason To ensure that the development is compatible with the amenities of the locality in accordance with the NPPF.
- 7 Condition Prior to the installation of any external lighting, a detailed outdoor lighting scheme shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall include details of the type of lights, the orientation / angle of the luminaries, the spacing and height of the lighting columns, the extent / levels of illumination over the site and on adjacent land and the measures to contain light within the curtilage of the site. The scheme shall be implemented in accordance with approved scheme and thereafter maintained and retained as agreed.
- 7 Reason In the interests of minimising light pollution and to safeguard the amenities of the locality in accordance with the NPPF.
- 8 Condition The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in full accordance with the Mitigation proposed under paragraphs 5.3.1 to 5.3.3 inclusive and Enhancements proposed at paragraph 6 of the Ecological Report that accompanied the application (undertaken by Norfolk Wildlife Services; Ref. 2019/113; dated October 2019).
- 8 Reason To reduce the impacts on Protected Species in accordance with the NPPF and Development Plan.