



PLANNING COMMITTEE: 27<sup>th</sup> July 2023

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**Report of:** Corporate Director of Transformation, Housing & Resources.

**Contact for further information:**

**Debbie Walkley (Extn. 5342) (E-mail: [debbie.walkley@westlancs.gov.uk](mailto:debbie.walkley@westlancs.gov.uk) )**

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**SUBJECT:** Planning Application 2023/0030/FUL

**PROPOSAL:** Siting of 2 static caravans for holiday use

**ADDRESS:** Caravan Site, Newbridge Farm, Stopgate Lane, Simmonswood, L33 4YB

**REASON FOR CALL IN:** Application has been called in by Councillor Ian Rigby for issues concerning the impact on the Green Belt and character and appearance of the area.

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**Wards affected:** Bickerstaffe

## **1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 The report advises Planning Committee on an application which seeks permission for the installation of two additional static caravans within an established Caravan Site- Newbridge Farm Residential Park in Simmonswood

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATION TO PLANNING COMMITTEE**

2.1 That planning permission be GRANTED subject to conditions

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## **3.0 THE SITE**

3.1 The application relates to a square parcel of land located towards the northern end of an established Caravan Site complex which has authorised use for 19 static caravans (12 in full residential use and 7 for holiday use). There is one existing Residential Caravan already located in this area with the remainder laid to gravel and grass and utilised for ancillary parking for the wider site and fishing lake.

3.2 The application site is immediately flanked by the parks internal access road and existing caravans, whilst to the east are two large lakes and a cluster of original residential and agricultural buildings (Newbridge Farm) which are now associated with the Fishing Lake Business. To the north, south and east are open agricultural

fields with mature established boundaries. The wider site is accessed off a long private track approx. 90m to the east of Stopgate Lane and is located within the Green Belt.

#### **4.0 THE PROPOSAL**

- 4.1 Planning permission is sought for the siting of two static caravans for holiday use on an area of existing ancillary car parking which is situated centrally within the main developed area of the complex. There is an existing single caravan unit already in situ which will be re-orientated to align with the additional two units to ensure adequate amenity space between the occupants is maintained.
- 4.2 Each of the units would be 3.6m x 12.4m with a dual pitched roof and have space to the sides and rear for parking, private external amenity space (and decking option) and bin storage. The perimeters of the area are already well established with mature planting which would not be affected by the proposal.

#### **5.0 PREVIOUS RELEVANT DECISIONS**

- 5.1 **2020/0679/FUL** GRANTED (19.11.2020) Use as a caravan site comprising up to 12 caravans for full residential occupancy, up to 7 static caravans for holiday purposes and associated amenity grassland plus trees/ additional landscaping with year round open seasons (including those already deemed lawful for use by 12 caravans allowed to be occupied residentially, 5 allowed for season use and the storage of caravans)
- 5.2 **2018/1159/LDC** REFUSED AND APPEAL ALLOWED (01.06.20) Use of part of caravan park (identified on drawing number L4) by residential static caravans without restriction on the layout of the site or the number of units on the site at any one time up to a maximum of 12 caravans
- 5.3 **2018/1228/LDC** REFUSED AND APPEAL ALLOWED (01.06.20) Certificate of Lawfulness - Use of land for the storage of caravans
- 5.4 **2018/0862/LDP** REFUSED AND APPEAL DISMISSED (01.06.20) Certificate of Lawfulness - Proposed use of part of the caravan park adjacent to and including the main developed part of the site (identified on drawing number L2P) by residential static caravans without restriction on the layout of the site or the number of units on the site at any one time up to a maximum of 15 caravans
- 5.5 **2018/0861/LDP** REFUSED AND APPEAL ALLOWED (01.06.20) Certificate of Lawfulness - Proposed use of part of the caravan park approved on appeal under planning permission reference 8/6/454 by five caravans over summer without restriction on their position within the site identified on drawing number L1P.
- 5.6 **2018/0860/LDC** REFUSED AND APPEAL ALLOWED (01.06.20) Certificate of Lawfulness - Use of land for the storage of caravans
- 5.7 **2015/1267/LDC** REFUSED AND APPEAL ALLOWED IN PART (06.02.2016) - Certificate of Lawfulness - Use of part of the caravan park approved on appeal under planning permission reference 8/6/454 as a residential static caravan site
- 5.8 **2015/0879/LDP** REFUSED APPEAL DISMISSED (20.11.2015) - Certificate of Lawfulness - Use of part of the caravan park approved on appeal under planning

permission reference 8/6/454 by residential static caravans without restriction on the layout of the site or the number of units on the site at any one time.

- 5.9 **2015/0390/LDP** REFUSED (10.06.2015) Certificate of Lawfulness - Proposed use of part of the caravan park approved on appeal under planning permission reference 8/6/454 by residential static caravans without restriction on the layout of the site or the number of units on the site at any one time.
- 5.10 **2014/1373/LDC** REFUSED (12.02.2015) - Certificate of Lawfulness - Proposed use of part of the caravan park approved on appeal under planning permission reference 8/6/454 by residential static caravans without restriction on the layout of the site or the number of units on the site at any one time.
- 5.11 **2014/1133/LDC** WITHDRAWN (11.12.2014) - Certificate of Lawfulness - Use of part of the caravan park approved on appeal under planning permission reference 8/6/454 as a residential static caravan site.
- 5.12 **2014/0734/LDP** APPROVED (18.09.2014) - Certificate of Lawfulness - Proposed use of part of the caravan park approved on appeal under planning permission reference 8/6/454 by residential static caravans without restriction on the layout of the site or the number of units on the site at any one time.
- 5.13 **2014/0163/LDP** REFUSED AND APPEAL DISMISSED (31.05.2014) - Certificate of Lawfulness - Proposed use of part of the caravan park approved on appeal under planning permission reference 8/6/454 by residential static caravans without restriction on the layout of the site or the number of units on the site at any one time
- 5.14 **2002/0272** REFUSED AND APPEAL DISMISSED (26.09.2002) – Variation of condition attached to planning permission PP/93/00308 dated 20 January 1994 to allow the storage of 50 caravans.
- 5.15 **1994/0830** REFUSED (29.09.1994) – Variation of condition 2 of planning permission 93/00308 to allow the storage of 50 caravans
- 5.16 **K/APP/93/00308** GRANTED BY KNOWSLEY MBC (20.01.1994) Storage of 25 caravans
- 5.17 **K/APP/11423** GRANTED BY KNOWSLEY MBC (20.03.1989) Siting of Caravan for residential use
- 5.18 **K/APP/8934** REFUSED AND DISMISSED ON APPEAL (05.08.86) Storage of 30 Caravan
- 5.16 **K/APP/5497** REFUSED AND DISMISSED ON APPEAL (10.08.81) Storage of 30 Caravan
- 5.17 **8/6/8294** REFUSED AND DISMISSED ON APPEAL (23.06.1967) Extension to Caravan Site
- 5.18 **8/6/454** ALLOWED ON APPEAL (26.05.1950) Use of field as a site for not more than 5 caravans during the summer months

## **6.0 CONSULTEE RESPONSES**

- 6.1 **LCC Highways** (28.02.2023)

- The site is served by an existing vehicular access off Stopgate Lane. There are no new accesses proposed with this application therefore LCC Highways has no objections. Parking provision should be to West Lancashire Local Plan Recommendations

## 6.2 **WLBC Principal Drainage Engineer (09.03.2023)**

- No objections in principle to the application as I estimate the impact on flood risk due to the proposed development to be negligible

## 7.0 **OTHER REPRESENTATIONS**

### 7.1 **Planning Committee Call In (08.03.2023)**

- The application has been Called-In to Planning Committee by Councillor Ian Rigbye (Bickerstaffe Ward) for the following reasons
- I have been asked by Simmonswood Parish Council that the application at Newbridge Farm be called in before Committee. This site is a residential site in the Green Belt that has consent/ license for 7 static residential caravans.
- The application seeks to increase the numbers including holiday lets, thereby changing the character of the existing site. This change to the character of the land within the Green Belt is therefore considered to be a material change
- I am sure the PC would be amenable to withdrawing this request if officers are minded to refuse this application

### 7.2 **Simmonswood Parish Council (03.03.2023)**

- The maximum holiday caravans were limited to 7 on the last application and this will exceed it.
- The parish council ask for the planning committee to do a site visit as unsure the holiday caravans are not being used as residential homes this needs to be checked out.

## 8.0 **SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

8.1 Planning Statement – GA Associates (13.01.2023)

8.2 Email Correspondence- GA Associates (18.04.2023) (25.04.2023)  
Confirmation regarding ancillary parking arrangements/ alternative provision

## 9.0 **RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES**

9.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the West Lancashire Local Plan 2012-2027 DPD provide the policy framework against which the development proposals will be assessed.

9.2 The site is located within the Green Belt

### 9.3 **National Planning Policy Framework**

Building a strong and competitive economy  
Protecting green belt land  
Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

### 9.4 **West Lancashire Local Plan (WLLP) 2012-2027 DPD**

Policy RS1- Residential Development  
Policy GN1 – Settlement Boundaries  
Policy GN3 – Criteria for Sustainable Development  
Policy EN2 – Preserving and Enhancing West Lancashire’s Natural Environment

9.5 **Supplementary Planning Document**

Design Guide (2008)

Development within the Green Belt (2015)

10.0 **OBSERVATIONS OF CORPORATE DIRECTOR OF PLACE AND COMMUNITY**

10.1 The main considerations for this proposal are as follows:

- Principle of Development- Impact upon the Green Belt
- Siting, Design and Layout
- Impact upon Residential Amenity
- Highways/ Parking Provision
- Drainage

**Principle of Development- Impact upon the Green Belt**

10.2 Caravans including static vans/ lodges that fall within the prescriptive limits set out in section 29(1) of the Caravan Site and Control of Development Act 1960 are not classed as buildings or operational development for the purposes of planning assessment. The 'development' associated with caravans is therefore considered to constitute the use of the land for the siting of caravans.

10.3 Policy GN1 of the Local Plan states that planning applications for development in the Green Belt outside of settlement boundaries are to be assessed against both national policy (The NPPF) and any relevant local plan policies. Paragraph 133 of the NPPF attaches great importance to Green Belts, advising that their fundamental aim is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence. Paragraph 144 requires that when considering any planning application, Local Planning Authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt.

10.4 Paragraph 146 of the NPPF advises that certain other forms of development are not inappropriate in the Green Belt, provided they preserve its openness and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it (in this case encroachment into the countryside) Material changes in the use of the land is one such form of development. Given the wording of paragraph 146, it is necessary to assess whether the proposed development would have a greater impact upon openness of the Green Belt than the existing or authorised development. If there is found to be a greater impact, the proposals would be considered inappropriate development and therefore harmful to the Green Belt.

10.5 'Openness' is not defined in the NPPF but has been clarified in Inspectors decisions as freedom from development and is an absolute test that does not depend upon whether the development can be seen. Furthermore, the NPPF confirms that openness is capable of having both spatial and visual aspects and that matters such as the degree of activity likely to be generated by a proposal can be considered.

**Assessment of Openness**

10.6 The lawful use of the site is a Static Caravan Park. The proposed siting of the additional two units would be contained within an area of land that is already

developed, containing both an existing Caravan together with an established area of gravel/ hardcore which serves as ancillary parking. The site is immediately flanked by the cluster of buildings associated with Newbridge Farm Fisheries and the internal access road which serves the remainder of the Caravan Park. In this respect the proposed development would be contained within the established built up areas of the site.

- 10.7 The scale form and design of the proposed units would be single storey, relatively modest and of consistent height with the surrounding built form. The rear boundary of the application site is formed by mature planting and trees which demarcate the built up areas of the site with the open countryside beyond. Owing to the positioning of the Caravans and their associated domestic paraphernalia (parking/ decking/ amenity area) these established boundaries will not be comprised by the development.
- 10.8 Furthermore, whilst it is accepted that the existing ancillary parking provision will be lost to the siting of the new caravans, the development proposals have been revised to include three new alternative parking bays which would be located towards the entrance of the complex. As this would utilise an existing area of hardstanding it would not result in any additional engineering operations on the site. It is also noteworthy that both the new units and each of the existing holiday and residential caravans benefit from their own designated 'driveway' and parking provision and as such I am satisfied there would not be any significant displacement or pressure for parking resultant from the development.
- 10.9 On the basis of the above, it is considered that the proposed developments would not result in any greater impact upon the openness of the Green Belt nor conflict with the purposes of including land within it. The development is therefore not considered to constitute inappropriate development and is accordant with the NPPF and Policy GN1 of the Local Plan.

### **Siting, Design and Layout**

- 10.10 Policy GN3 of the Local Plan required that all new development have regard to the visual amenity of the surrounding area and should complement or enhance any existing attractive attributes of the site through sensitive design including appropriate siting, orientation, scale, materials, landscaping and boundary treatments.
- 10.11 In addition, the SPD Design Guide states that new development should be an overall scale, mass and form which responds to the characteristics of the site and its surroundings. Care should be taken to ensure that a building(s) height and roof line do not impact on any significant wider landscape views.
- 10.12 The scale form and design of the two additional units are consistent with the existing static Caravans on site and in this respect will contribute to the overall cohesive appearance of the complex which is well maintained and laid out. The existing unit will be re-sited and re-orientated to align with the new Caravans to preserve adequate amenity, spacing and parking provision between each of the units and this is considered acceptable.
- 10.13 The positioning of the units would share a consistent building line which is set back modestly from the access road which runs through this area of the site and serves the other established Caravan plots on the park. This layout is consistent with the

existing pattern of development and therefore assists in providing a visual uniformity whilst additionally limiting the spread of development within the site.

- 10.14 The existing mature green boundaries which enclose this part of the site would be maintained as part of the development and this is considered positive in this rural location and furthermore will assist the new units to assimilate well into the existing complex.
- 10.15 On the basis of the above, the proposal is accordant with Policy GN3 of the Local Plan and the West Lancashire Design Guide.

### **Impact upon Residential Amenity**

- 10.16 Policy GN3 of the West Lancashire Local Plan (2012-2027) DPD allows development provided it retains or creates reasonable levels of privacy, amenity and sufficient garden and outdoor space for occupiers of the neighbouring and proposed properties.
- 10.17 Each of the new proposed units will be sufficiently spaced and orientated to allow an acceptable level of amenity with the neighbouring plots and accommodate necessary parking and outdoor space. The layout is consistent with the existing units on the site. As noted previously the Static already sited within this parcel (No. 12) will be re-aligned to sit alongside the new units which will preserve this occupant's existing amenity levels.
- 10.18 It is noted that the two proposed units are for holiday use. Whilst the adjacent existing unit of No 12 is part of the authorised permanent Residential Caravans this is not considered in itself to result in any diminishing levels of amenity for the existing occupants. The site owners advise there are established age and occupancy restrictions/ use in operation at the site which are overseen by separate agreement with individual owners/ users. Furthermore, full consultation with all residents and holiday units within the site has been completed as part of the submission and no adverse comments or representation have been received.
- 10.19 On the basis of the above, the proposals are not considered to result in any significant harm to residential amenity and are therefore accordant with Policy GN3 of the Local Plan

### **Highways/ Parking Provision**

- 10.20 The development proposal related to an additional two Caravan Units on the site each of which will include adequate space to the side of the units to accommodate off road parking. This is consistent with the parking provision for each of the existing units across the site.
- 10.21 The siting of the new units is on an area of land currently used informally for ancillary parking. To mitigate this loss three new parking bays will be created on an existing area of hardstanding towards the main entrance of the complex. On this basis and given the adequate individual parking provision for each of the existing and proposed caravan plots I am satisfied the proposals would not result in any significant harm in respect of displaced parking either within the site or on the surrounding public lane
- 10.22 The Caravan Park itself is served by an existing vehicular access off Stop gate Lane which links to a long private access way which runs through the site serving

both the park complex and adjacent Fisheries. There are no new accesses proposed with this application therefore LCC Highways have no objections.

- 10.23 Given the above the proposal is considered accordant with Policy IF2 and GN3 of the Local Plan.

### **Drainage**

- 10.24 Policy GN3 of the West Lancashire Local Plan requires that acceptable sustainable drainage provision is made for any new development. The planning statement includes details of proposed drainage arrangements, and the Councils Principal Drainage Engineer has been consulted on the proposals.
- 10.25 Based on the details submitted and the nature and scale of the proposals the Engineer has raised no objections in principle as it is estimated the impact on flood risk due to development is negligible. The proposals is therefore considered accordant with Policy GN3 of the Local Plan

### **11.0 Conclusion**

- 11.1 The proposed development is considered compliant with the NPPF and Policies GN1, GN3 and IF2 of the West Lancashire Local Plan 2012-2027 DPD and the application is recommended for approval

### **12.0 Recommendation**

- 12.1 That planning permission be GRANTED subject to the following conditions:

1. The development must be begun not later than the expiration of three years beginning with the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with the requirements of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2. The development hereby approved shall be carried out in accordance with details shown on the following plans:

Site Location Plan Dwg: GA3510-LP-01 Received by the Local Planning Authority on 13th January 2023

Proposed Unit Plan Elevations Dwg: GA3510-PPE-001-A Received by the Local Planning Authority on 3rd February 2023

Proposed Site Layout Dwg: GA3510-PSP-01B Received by the Local Planning Authority on 6th June 2023

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and to ensure compliance with the provisions of Policy GN3 in the adopted West Lancashire Local Plan 2012-2027 Development Plan Document.

3. The materials to be used on the external surfaces of the extension hereby permitted shall match those detailed in Materials Section of the Planning Application Form Received by the Local Planning Authority on 13th January 2023.



If the applicant or developer has any doubts as to whether the proposed materials do match they should check with the Local Planning Authority before commencement of the building works.

Reason: To ensure that the external appearance of the building(s) is satisfactory and that the development therefore complies with the provisions of Policy GN3 in the adopted West Lancashire Local Plan 2012-2027 Development Plan Document.

4. The 2 static caravans hereby approved for holiday use shall be occupied for holiday purposes only and none shall be occupied as a person's sole or main residence. The owners/operators of the site shall maintain an up to date register of the names of all owners/occupiers of individual static caravans on the site and of their main home addresses and shall make this information available at all reasonable times to the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To define the consent and to ensure the development complies with the provisions of Policies GN3, EN2 and EN4 of the West Lancashire Local Plan 2012-2027 Development Plan Document and Green Belt policies in the NPPF.

#### Reason for Approval

1. The Local Planning Authority has considered the proposed development in the context of the Development Plan including, in particular, the following Policy/Policies in the adopted West Lancashire Local Plan 2012-2027 Development Plan Document:

Policy RS1- Residential Development

Policy GN1 – Settlement Boundaries

Policy GN3 – Criteria for Sustainable Development

Policy EN2 – Preserving and Enhancing West Lancashire’s Natural Environment

Policy IF2 - Enhancing Sustainable Transport Choices

together with Supplementary Planning Guidance and all relevant material considerations. The Local Planning Authority considers that the proposal complies with the relevant Policy criteria and is acceptable in the context of all relevant material considerations as set out in the Officer's Report. This report can be viewed or a copy provided on request to the Local Planning Authority.

### **13.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS**

- 13.1 There are no significant sustainability impacts associated with this report and, in particular, no significant impact on crime and disorder.

### **14.0 FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 14.1 There are no significant financial or resource implications arising from this report.

### **15.0 RISK ASSESSMENT**

- 15.1 The actions referred to in this report are covered by the scheme of delegation to officers and any necessary changes have been made in the relevant risk registers.

### **16.0 HEALTH AND WELLBEING IMPLICATIONS**

16.1 There are no health and wellbeing implications arising from this report.

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### **Background Documents**

In accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972 the background papers used in the compilation of reports relating to planning applications are listed within the text of each report and are available for inspection in the Planning Division, except for such documents as contain exempt or confidential information defined in Schedule 12A of the Act.

### **Equality Impact Assessment**

The decision does not have any direct impact on members of the public, employees, elected members and / or stakeholders. Therefore no Equality Impact Assessment is required.

### **Human Rights**

The relevant provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998 and the European Convention on Human Rights have been taken into account in the preparation of this report, particularly the implications arising from Article 8 (the right to respect for private and family life, home and correspondence) and Article 1 of Protocol 1 (the right of peaceful enjoyment of possessions and protection of property).

### **Appendices**

None.