

BOROUGH OF KETTERING

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| Committee | Full Planning Committee - 30/06/2015 | Item No: 5.4 |
| Report Originator | Andrew Smith Senior Development Officer | Application No: KET/2015/0065 |
| Wards Affected | Welland | |
| Location | The Paddocks, Park Hill, Braybrooke | |
| Proposal | Full Application: Use as permanent traveller site for 3 no. pitches | |
| Applicant | Biddle, Foster And Smith | |

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- To describe the above proposals
- To identify and report on the issues arising from it
- To state a recommendation on the application

2. RECOMMENDATION

THE DEVELOPMENT CONTROL MANAGER RECOMMENDS that this application be APPROVED subject to the following Condition(s):-

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of 3 years from the date of this planning permission.

REASON: To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) and to prevent an accumulation of unimplemented planning permissions.

2. The development hereby permitted shall not be carried out other than in accordance with the approved plans referenced as follows: KET/2015/0065/1; 14899-TOPO-1 11/06/2015.

REASON: In the interest of securing an appropriate form of development in accordance with Policy 13 of the North Northamptonshire Core Spatial Strategy.

3. The site shall not be occupied by any persons other than Gypsies and Travellers as defined in Paragraph 15 of Circular 01/2006 and each of the 3 Gypsy/Traveller pitches hereby granted permission shall not be occupied by more than 1 family and at no time shall there be more than 1 static caravan / mobile home per family on site.

REASON: To ensure that the use is implemented as an exception to the general presumption against development in the open countryside and to ensure that each site is occupied by 1 family only to prevent an over intensive use of the site in accordance with Policies 9, 13 and 17 of the North Northamptonshire Core Spatial Strategy.

4. There shall be no external illumination on the site at any time other than in accordance with a detailed scheme which shall first have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: In the interests of the amenity of occupants of neighbouring properties in accordance with Policy 13 of the North Northamptonshire Core Spatial Strategy.

5. Any gates provided at the point of access to the site shall be hung so as to open inwards into the site only.

REASON: In the interests of highway safety in accordance with Policy 13 of the North Northamptonshire Core Spatial Strategy.

6. The land shall not be used in connection with any trade, industrial or business use whatsoever.

REASON: In the interests of the amenity of neighbouring residents in accordance with Policy 13 of the North Northamptonshire Core Spatial Strategy.

7. No existing trees or hedgerows on site shall be removed without the prior written consent of the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: To protect the visual amenity of the surrounding area in accordance with Policy 13 of the North Northamptonshire Core Spatial Strategy.

8. In the event that unexpected contamination is found at any time when carrying out the development hereby approved, it must be reported immediately to the Local Planning Authority. Development works at the site shall cease and an investigation and risk assessment undertaken to assess the nature and extent of the unexpected contamination. A written report of the findings shall be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority, together with a scheme to remediate, if required, prior to further development on site taking place. Only once written approval from the Local Planning Authority has been given shall development works recommence.

REASON: To ensure that risks from land contamination to the future users of the development and neighbouring land are minimised.

9. Within a time period of 3 months from the date of this permission full details of a scheme for the storage of residential refuse and recyclables shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall be retained as approved thereafter.

REASON: Refuse details are necessary in the interests of general amenity and to ensure that no obstruction is caused on the adjoining highway in accordance with Policy 13 of the North Northamptonshire Core Spatial Strategy.

10. Within a time period of 3 months from the date of this permission, details of the method of construction of the means of access shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and shall subsequently be fully implemented in accordance with the approved details within 3 months of the date of the details having been approved.

REASON: Access details are necessary to ensure a satisfactory means of access to the highway in accordance with Policy 13 of the North Northamptonshire Core Spatial Strategy.

Officers Report for KET/2015/0065

This application is reported for Committee decision because there are unresolved, material objections to the proposal.

3.0 Information

Relevant Planning History

KET/2013/0517 – Use of land as a traveller site for 3no. families – APPROVED (with a temporary time limit expiring 25/09/2015) 27/09/13.

KET/2010/0566 – Variation of Condition 1 of KET/2010/0288, change of time limit from temporary to permanent – REFUSED 08/10/10.

KET/2010/0288 – Retention of use of land as traveller site for 3 no. traveller families – APPROVED (with a temporary time limit) 29/06/10.

KET/2008/0289 -Retention of use as traveller site for 3 no. traveller families – APPROVED (with a temporary time limit) 18/06/08.

KET/2006/0086 – Use of land as travellers site for 3 traveller families (renewal of previous temporary permission) – REFUSED 23/05/06. An appeal against this application was withdrawn following a resolution by the planning committee to take no further action in respect of the breach of planning control until such a time that the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) is completed, and site provision has been made available in accordance with the GTAA through the Local Development Framework.

KET/2003/0172 – Provision of 2 mobile homes for residential use and 2 touring caravans for temporary accommodation – REFUSED 17/04/03. Appeal allowed for temporary permission.

Site Description

Officer's site inspection was carried out on 01/04/2015

The application site is an area of land of approximately 0.5ha in area located to the east of Braybrooke village and on the eastern side of Park Hill. To the north of the application site is a garden/plant centre in addition to a residential property whilst to the east there is open countryside. Land to the south is predominantly grassland with some hardstanding and buildings situated close to the Park Hill (the buildings are used to stable horses).

The application site is divided into 3no. separate Gypsy sites. The northern portion of the site is divided into 2no. plots separated by a timber fence running north-south. The southern portion of the site, which is separated from the northern portion by a hedge running east-west, provides a further 1no. plot. The eastern side of the southern portion of the site is vacant and currently not used.

The plots are all covered with hardcore. Within the northern portion of the site there is a mobile home situated adjacent to Park Lane. This is supplemented by associated sheds and also a number of touring caravans at the time of the site visit. Within the rear northern plot there is also a mobile home and there were at least 5no. touring caravans situated on-site at the time of the site visit. The southern plot contained a mobile home, 2no. touring caravans and an associated shed for storage at the time of the site visit. The rear part of this southern plot is clear of both built structures and parked vehicles.

Planning permission was first granted (on a temporary basis) for the use of the land as a traveller site in October 2003. A series of temporary consents have followed, the last being granted in 2013, which expires in September 2015.

Proposed Development

Full planning permission is sought to use the land at The Paddocks as a gypsy and traveller site for 3 no. traveller families on a permanent basis. The pitches are already in place and individually defined having been granted a series of temporary permissions in the past.

Any Constraints Affecting the Site

C Road
Open Countryside

4.0 Consultation and Customer Impact

Braybrooke Parish Council: Strong objection. The site is in open countryside and new traveller site development should be strictly limited. The scheme would result in severe over concentration in an unsustainable location. The Crossroads and Paddocks pitches would almost constitute one huge site. The Council has other sites available for travellers. The material considerations in favour of the proposal – the outstanding identified unmet need, the failure of the development plan to date, the lack of alternative sites and the personal circumstance can be given substantial

weight, but do not outweigh the harm.

Harrington Parish Council: Strong objection. The site is located in open countryside and is not closely linked to an adequate range of services and facilities. There have been periods when the site has been unused and part of it is derelict. The Council has enough provision for traveller sites until 2021. There is a cumulative effect felt by over sixty pitches being within the area. The surrounding road network is entirely unsuitable for any increase in traffic.

Arthingworth Parish Council: Strong objection. There is a massing of traveller sites within close proximity of this proposed application, which increasingly feels imbalanced with the settled community. Considerable harm would be caused to the character and appearance of the countryside. The site is not closely linked to an existing settlement.

Desborough Town Council: The Council has a definitive listing for authorised traveller sites and this site is not part of that listing.

KBC Environmental Health: No objection subject to planning conditions being applied to ensure that any unexpected contamination found at any time when carrying out the development is reported to the Council and subsequently investigated and remediated (if required). Informatives for the applicant related to caravan site licensing and radon protection are also recommended.

Highway Authority: No objection subject to conditions being applied to secure appropriately designed access arrangements.

Environment Agency: No objection, the applicant had not supplied adequate information to demonstrate that the risks of pollution posed to surface water quality could be safely managed. But further information has been received confirming that a new drainage field has been constructed and sited away from the site entrance and that it is functioning correctly.

Northamptonshire Police: The Police generally approve of the use of the land for traveller / gypsy sites provided that such sites are for small named family groups who have local connections to the area. No objection to what is proposed subject to a planning condition being imposed to ensure that the site is specifically resided upon by the named applicants. The application addresses local needs for the provision of traveller pitches / accommodation for people with local connections in Kettering Borough and the county of Northamptonshire only.

North Northamptonshire Residents Against Inappropriate Development (NN RAID): Objection, the scheme fails to meet the requirements of Policy 31 of the forthcoming North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy. The site is situated away from local services and would add to the proliferation of such sites in the area, which totally dominate small rural communities. A drainage review should be undertaken. The land has been occupied intermittently by the applicant whilst the site has caused tensions within the settled community locally. The scheme conflicts with Policies 9, 13 and 17c of the Core Spatial Strategy. It is estimated that Braybrooke has nearly 40% of Northamptonshire's Gypsy and Traveller population in its immediate vicinity; the local community is affected by the overwhelming numbers. The inhabitant families hold the potential to further expand upon the site.

Cllr David Howes: Objection, local planning authorities should strictly limit new traveller site development in the open countryside, which should not dominate the nearest settled community. Permanent planning permission would result in considerable harm to the character and appearance of the countryside in a wholly unsustainable location. The granting of planning permission would allow an opportunity for further pitches to be applied for. The feelings of the local community are against this application.

Cllr Cecile Irving-Swift: Comments from the County and District Councillor for the ward and division adjacent to Braybrooke (Brixworth Division / Welford Ward). Permission has previously been granted on a temporary basis due to a lack of provision of available Gypsy and Traveller sites. Kettering Borough Council has worked hard to attain robust policy on such matters and should therefore reject the planning application.

Neighbours: Notification letters were sent out to close proximity neighbours and a site notice was erected adjacent to the site – objections from 43no. different addresses were received in addition to 19no. further objections from unspecified addresses. The objections received can be summarised as follows:

- The application does not meet the requirements of Policies 9, 13 and 17 of the North Northamptonshire Core Spatial Strategy.
- The site location is unsustainable.
- The site is not located within easy walking distance of local services and of any bus route.
- The site is accessed off a single track road, which is unsuitable for the additional traffic movements that could be generated.
- The area is environmentally sensitive and the scheme represents a clearly visible and unwanted intrusion into the open countryside.
- The area is already overwhelmed with gypsy and traveller sites, a disproportionate number.
- The site is in such close proximity to the Crossroads development (Animal

Corner, 3 Park Lane, Brookeside and Braybrooke Stables) that it almost constitutes one huge site.

- The Council already has provision in hand for gypsy and traveller sites through to 2021.
- The site could accommodate further pitches.
- On other gypsy and traveller sites there have been instances of additional pitches being approved on an incremental basis, which could occur on this site.

5.0 Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework

Policy 7. Requiring good design

Policy 11. Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

Planning Policy for Traveller Sites

Policy H: Determining planning applications for traveller sites

Development Plan Policies

North Northamptonshire Core Spatial Strategy

Policy 1: Strengthening the Network of Settlements

Policy 9: Distribution & Location of Development

Policy 13: General Sustainable Development Principles

Policy 17: Gypsies and Travellers

Local Plan

Policy 7: Protection of the Open Countryside

Policy RA5: Housing in the Open Countryside

Emerging Policies (Local Development Framework)

Emerging Joint Core Strategy – Policy 31: Gypsy and Travellers and Travelling Show People

Site Specific Proposals Local Development Document Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation – Options Paper Consultation (June 2013)

6.0 Financial/Resource Implications

None

7.0 Planning Considerations

The key issues for consideration in this application are:-

1. Principle & Policy Considerations
2. Landscape & Visual Impact
3. Residential Amenity
4. Access & Highways
5. Drainage

1. Principle & Policy Considerations

Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS) requires that applications are determined in accordance with it, the presumption in favour of sustainable development and other policies contained within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). In terms of sustainable development, consideration needs to be given to the three dimensions running through the NPPF, namely; economic, social and environmental elements.

The PPTS requires consideration to be given, alongside other matters, to:

Level of local provision and need for sites.

Availability of alternative accommodation for the applicants.

Other personal circumstances of the applicant.

Locally specific criteria used to guide the allocation of sites.

That applications should be determined from any travellers not just those with local connections.

The PPTS states that local authorities should strictly limit new traveller development in the open countryside that is away from existing settlements or outside areas allocated in the Development Plan. The PPTS also states that sites in rural areas should respect the scale of and not dominate the nearest settled community, and avoid placing undue pressure on local infrastructure. The site that is the subject of this application is in the open countryside to the east of Braybrooke.

Paragraph 25 of the PPTS states that if the local planning authority cannot demonstrate an up to date five year supply of deliverable sites, then this should be a significant material consideration when considering applications for the grant of temporary planning permissions. This application is for permanent permission but a condition could be used to grant temporary consent. However Section 72 of the Town and Country Planning Act (1990) does state it will rarely be justifiable to grant a second temporary permission, further permissions should be granted permission or refused.

Level of local provision and need for sites

The North Northamptonshire Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment Update 2011 (GTAA) identified a need for 10 residential pitches in the period 2012 – 2017 and 10 residential pitches between 2017 – 2022. The GTAA included 5 pitches with temporary planning permission in the supply of existing residential pitches. If these sites are not granted permanent planning permission then the number of pitches required would increase by 5. In the period 2012-2022 25 permanent pitches are needed. The current supply of pitches within this period is 17, there are, therefore, 8 pitches required in the period to 2022.

Table 1 shows the five year requirement for Kettering Borough based on the 2011 GTAA Update and the supply of sites identified. The current rolling five year supply period is to 2020/21, this is different to the GTAA period above.

| Table 1 | | | | | | | |
|--|--|---|--------------------------------------|---|--|---|--|
| Level of need | | | | | | | |
| No. of pitches required up to 2016/17 | 10 | | | | | | |
| No. of pitches required 2017/18 – 2020/21 | 8 (based on average of 2 per year) | | | | | | |
| Supply met by temporary consents at GTAA | 5 | | | | | | |
| <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Springfields, Harborough Road, Braybrooke</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Black Paddock, Park Lane, Braybrooke</td> <td>3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Woodcroft, Stoke Albany Road, Desborough</td> <td>1</td> </tr> </table> | Springfields, Harborough Road, Braybrooke | 1 | Black Paddock, Park Lane, Braybrooke | 3 | Woodcroft, Stoke Albany Road, Desborough | 1 | |
| Springfields, Harborough Road, Braybrooke | 1 | | | | | | |
| Black Paddock, Park Lane, Braybrooke | 3 | | | | | | |
| Woodcroft, Stoke Albany Road, Desborough | 1 | | | | | | |
| Total additional pitches required up to 2020 | 23 | | | | | | |
| Supply of sites | | | | | | | |
| No. of additional permanent pitches granted since the October 2011 GTAA update | <p>2 Northampton Road, Broughton – KET/2011/0363</p> <p>7 pitches at The Laurels, Stoke Albany Road, Desborough</p> <p>1 pitch at Springfields, Harborough Road, Braybrooke – KET/2013/0376 (previous temporary consent)</p> <p>1 pitch at Woodcroft, Stoke Albany Road, Desborough - KET/2014/0028 (previous temporary consent)</p> | | | | | | |

| | |
|------------------------------|--|
| | 1 no. dwelling to replace mobile home and 5 no. pitches, Woodside (North East of), Stoke Albany Road, Desborough - KET/2014/0532 (replaces 1 pitch at Stoke Albany Road, Desborough KET/2008/0423) |
| Total supply of sites | 17 |
| Remaining Requirement | 6 (including 3 currently provided at Black Paddocks which has temporary planning permission and is the subject of this application) |

An additional 10 pitches have been granted planning permission at Stoke Albany Road, Desborough. However through work undertaken on the Site Specific Proposals LDD in relation to the allocation of sites, it has been necessary to assume that this site will not be delivered within the required time, funding is not currently identified as being available to deliver it. The site has, therefore, not been included in the five year supply of sites.

Table 1 demonstrates that, while significant progress has been made in identifying sites, 6 permanent pitches are required to demonstrate a 5 year supply of sites.

Availability of alternative accommodation for the applicants

Work is progressing in identifying sites to be allocated for gypsy and traveller accommodation through the Site Specific Proposals LDD. The Council consulted on the Site Specific Proposals LDD Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation – Options Paper in June 2013. This consultation document identified potential sites, alternative options and discounted sites.

Following the consultation a report was taken to Planning Policy Committee, where it was resolved that:

1 pitch at Woodcroft, Desborough be progressed as an allocation (this now has permanent planning permission).

More detailed assessments of viability and deliverability be completed for the potential sites at Highcroft Farm, Broughton; and land at Junction 4 of the A14 at Rothwell.

This site (the subject of this application) be considered for potential allocation as a permanent site, recognising the need to provide additional pitches to meet the need for sites up to 2022.

Progress has been made in addressing outstanding issues in relation to Highcroft Farm, Broughton and land at Junction 4 of the A14, Rothwell. However, not sufficiently enough to report conclusions back to Committee.

The site assessment for this site completed for the Site Specific Proposals LDD concluded that the site has relatively few constraints, but has poor access to services and facilities, so is deemed to fall within an unsustainable location.

Other personal circumstances of the applicant

In relation to the personal circumstances of the applicants, it has been stated that children from the site go to school in Rothwell whilst a number of adult residents are employed in family businesses or local businesses. It is clear that – given the length of time that has passed since the families first resided on the site (i.e. over 10 years ago) – it is inevitable that local connections and responsibilities (such as employment) are in place.

Locally specific criteria used to guide the allocation of sites

The North Northamptonshire Core Spatial Strategy (CSS) sets out the overarching development strategy for Kettering Borough. Policy 17 of the Core Spatial Strategy sets out criteria to be met by applications for gypsy and traveller accommodation. The policy requires that:

It should be in accordance with the locational guidance set out in policy 9 of the CSS and should meet the criteria set out in CSS Policy 13 where relevant;

The site is not in an area designated as environmentally sensitive; and

The site is closely linked to an existing settlement with an adequate range of services and facilities in order to maximise the possibilities for social inclusion and sustainable patterns of living.

Policy 9 states that development will be distributed to strengthen the network of settlements as set out in Policy 1 of the CSS, which focuses development at the Growth Towns with smaller towns providing a secondary focus for development and limited development in the rural area. Policy 9 states that new building development in the open countryside, outside the Sustainable Urban Extensions, will be strictly controlled. Policy 9 gives priority to previously developed land within urban areas and gives preference to locations that are accessible by a choice of means of travel.

Saved Policy 7 of the Local Plan states that planning permission for development in the open countryside will not be granted except for where otherwise provided for in that plan. Saved Local Plan Policy RA5 states that planning permission for residential development will not normally be granted and lists exceptions to this, one of which is gypsy sites (criteria vi); however the related Policy 119 has not been saved.

The site is located in the open countryside where development is strictly controlled; the nearest settlement is Braybrooke, which is approximately 0.6 miles to the west of the site. The role of Braybrooke in the CSS is that of a rural area or village, where development is limited to meeting local needs. The site is located approximately 1150m (0.7 miles) by road from the settlement boundary of Braybrooke. Braybrooke is limited in the supply of services and facilities on offer to the community; a public house, church and village hall are the only facilities, there is no shop or school. Braybrooke does not offer a range of services and facilities, and occupants would need to travel to Desborough to meet their day to day needs.

The site is located approximately 3200m (2 miles) by road from Desborough town centre. Desborough has a number of services and facilities, including a medical centre, primary schools, shops, library and leisure centre. There are no footpaths along the rural lanes which link the site to Braybrooke or Desborough. The narrow nature of the roads means that they are not likely to be used regularly to access services and facilities on foot. The County Connect Bus service operates in Braybrooke parish. To use this service you need to register and book in advance. The nearest bus stops for a timetabled service are located in Braybrooke. The X43 service operates between Market Harborough and Kettering on an hourly basis. Due to the distance from the site to the nearest bus stop it is likely that trips to and from the site will be predominantly by car.

In distance and accessibility terms the site relates more to Braybrooke than Desborough. The site is therefore not closely linked to an existing settlement with an adequate range of services and facilities and would not therefore maximise possibilities for social inclusion and sustainable patterns of living in accordance with Policy 17 of the CSS. The site does not comply with Policy 17 of the Core Spatial Strategy in respect of its location.

The site is not in an area designated as environmentally sensitive. While the site is located in the open countryside, it is located between the railway line and existing development immediately to the north of the site. There are also a number of pitches located approximately 230m south of the site at the corner of Park Lane and Desborough Road. The site would have a visual impact on the character of the surrounding area, however this impact is minimised by existing development and its location in relation to the railway bridge, which acts as a buffer or screen.

The CSS is currently being reviewed; a pre-submission consultation on the Joint Core Strategy took place between January and March 2015, Policy 31 sets out the approach to gypsy and traveller sites. A consultation on focused changes is taking place between 12th June and 27th July 2015; these include changes to Policy 31. This policy sets criteria for applications to be tested against. It maintains the requirement for sites to be closely linked to an existing settlement with an adequate range of services and facilities and requires that the size of the site and number of pitches does not dominate the nearest settled community. Limited weight can only be attached to this emerging policy.

The PPTS states that local planning authorities should ensure that sites in rural areas respect the scale of, and do not dominate the nearest settled community, and avoid placing undue pressure on the local infrastructure. The population of the parish of Braybrooke was 362 in 2011 with 167 households. Within 2km of the settlement boundary of Braybrooke there are 21 permanent pitches, and 13 pitches with temporary planning consent (3 of which are the subject of this application) A number of these temporary permissions have recently lapsed. Within 3 km there are an additional 30 permanent pitches. These distances are measured as the crow flies from the edge of the settlement boundary and do not take into account the relationship between these sites and Braybrooke.

It is likely that the residents of all pitches would travel to Desborough or Market Harborough to access the majority of services and facilities. It is unlikely that the residents on sites such as Justin Park, which is located south of Market Harborough, where the distance by road to Braybrooke is further than to a higher order settlement, have any relationship to or would use facilities in Braybrooke at all. It is considered that an additional 3 pitches in this location would not adversely impact on Braybrooke.

The existing pitches are visually separate and located east, north west, and to the south of Braybrooke. This site is located between the railway line and existing development immediately to the north of the site. Due to the distance between existing sites and the village, visual separation between the sites and the location of this site, it is not considered the provision of 3 pitches in this location would have a visually dominating effect.

In conclusion, it is considered that the addition of 3 pitches in this location would result in a scale of development that would not dominate the nearest settled community.

That applications should be determined from any travellers, not just those with local connections

A full list of the inhabitants at the site on a family-by-family basis has been provided on behalf of the applicants. Northamptonshire Police have recommended a condition which sets out these named Gypsy and Travellers for each pitch. This is not however considered to be a necessary condition. There is however a condition recommended (Condition 3) to ensure that the occupiers are Gypsy and Travellers and meet the definition set out in National Policy. To ensure consistency with the extant temporary permission that is in place (KET/2013/0517) and to guard against an over intensive use of the site, Condition 3 is recommended to reference that each of the 3no. pitches shall not be occupied by more than one family and by no more than one static caravan / mobile home per family.

Policy and Principle Summary

The site is in an unsustainable location and does not comply with policy 17 of the Core Spatial Strategy in terms of location. However the visual impact of the site is much less than that of other sites which were considered through the Councils work on the Site Specific Proposals LDD. This site remains under consideration through the plan making process. The site is close to existing pitches located south of the site and has good access to the A6 which provides access to Desborough and Market Harborough. A material consideration is the Council's need to demonstrate a five year supply of sites, table 1 demonstrates that 6 pitches are required for a five year supply to be demonstrated. The PPTS requires that in determining applications consideration is given to need for sites. This site would make an important contribution to meeting identified need and thus also assist in helping to manage effectively demand for less suitable locations.

2. Landscape & Visual Impact

The application site lies in a rural location where new development is strictly controlled by Policy 7 of the 1995 Local Plan for Kettering Borough and Policies 1 and 9 of the North Northamptonshire Core Spatial Strategy. The scale of the proposed development would have an impact upon the visual amenity and rural character of the locality. The site is however sandwiched between the railway line and existing development located immediately to the north of the site. In this context it does not represent a single excursion into the open countryside.

It is also important to note that there is a band of mature vegetation in place that largely visually screens the site from the highway whilst hedgerow also runs the southern boundary of the site and a notable portion of the eastern boundary also.

In the officer's report associated with the last temporary permission at the site (KET/2013/0517) it was stated that if permission were to be permanently granted for the pitches it would have a harmful affect upon visual amenity. However, as highlighted in the previous section of these considerations, it is felt that the visual impact of the site is much less than that of other sites which were considered through the Council's work on the Site Specific Proposals LDD. Furthermore, in light of the planning history of the site (which illustrates a series of 3no. temporary permissions for traveller pitches dating back to 2008) the existence of the pitches in this location is now well established.

It is felt that the landscape and visual impact of the scheme is acceptable in the context of the site's immediate surroundings which is characterised by existing built form to the immediate north, in the context of planning history of the site which confirms the established use of the site for traveller pitch purposes and in the context of no clearly preferable sites in landscape and visual terms emerging through the Council's ongoing work in terms of formal site allocation.

3. Residential Amenity

There is a residential property to the north of the application site. The boundary treatment to the north of the site comprises a close boarded fence. The boundary between the residential dwelling and the proposal is considered to be an appropriate residential boundary treatment and given that the use of the site is for residential accommodation it is considered that this proposal would not have a significant impact upon the living conditions of the occupiers of the neighbouring property in terms of overlooking, overbearing impact or increased pollutants such as light or noise. The proposal therefore accords with Policy 13 of the North Northamptonshire Core Spatial Strategy in terms of impact upon the amenity of neighbours.

4. Access & Highways

Policy 13 of the North Northamptonshire Core Spatial Strategy states that new development should not have an adverse impact upon the safety of the local highway network. The highway authority has been consulted on the application and has raised no objection. The proposed development would not result in a significant increase to the level of traffic using the local highway network. Full details of the vehicular access into the site should be secured via condition in light of the highway authority noting that the current access may not meet their standard specification, although a visit to the site indicates that good pedestrian and vehicular visibility is achieved. The proposal would not have an adverse impact upon highway safety and therefore the proposal accords with Policy 13 of the North Northamptonshire Core Spatial Strategy.

5. Drainage

Policy 13 (q) of the Core Spatial Strategy requires that developments do not cause a risk to the quality of the underlying ground water or surface water. The Environment Agency (EA) initially objected to the application in the absence of adequate information to demonstrate that the risks of pollution posed to surface water could be safely managed. The EA stated that they had received recent reports advising that sewage effluent had been discharged from the application site to the adjacent road verge, which had subsequently led to the pooling of water beneath the nearby railway bridge and close to a watercourse.

The EA objection has now been removed on the basis of further information that has been received to confirm that a new drainage field has been constructed and sited away from the site entrance and that it is functioning correctly. The scheme is therefore considered to comply with Policy 13 (q) of the Core Spatial Strategy.

Conclusion

The Local Planning Authority cannot currently demonstrate a 5 year supply of sites which is a significant material planning consideration. 6 pitches are needed to meet this requirement up to 2020/21. The proposed development would provide an additional 3 pitches and help to meet part of this requirement. The opposition from some local groups or representatives is readily acknowledged. The Council however is required to weigh the issues.

The development would make an important contribution towards an identified local need for traveller pitches. It would safeguard residential amenity and highway safety, and the visual impact is less than other alternatives. It is therefore supported taking account of Development Plan Policy, the guidance

contained within the National Planning Policy Framework and Planning Policy for Traveller Sites.

Background Papers

Title of Document:

Date:

Contact Officer:

Previous Reports/Minutes

Ref:

Date:

Andrew Smith, Senior Development Officer on 01536 534316