

COMMITTEE REPORT

Date: 6 June 2013 **Ward:** Strensall
Team: Major and **Parish:** Strensall With Towthorpe
 Commercial Team Parish Council

Reference: 13/00760/FUL
Application at: Country Park Pottery Lane Strensall York YO32 5TJ
For: Use of land for winter storage of up to 30 touring caravans
By: Miss Raquel Nelson
Application Type: Full Application
Target Date: 29 May 2013
Recommendation: Refuse

1.0 PROPOSAL

1.1 The Country Park Pottery Lane Strensall comprises a 40 pitch touring caravan site subject to a seasonal occupancy restriction, currently in the process of development, occupying a prominent location within the York Green Belt to the north west of Strensall village. Planning permission is sought for the use of the southern section of the site for storage of touring caravans during the period when the site is closed for normal touring use between the end of October and March.

1.2 The application has been called in for consideration by the Local Member Councillor Sian Wiseman on the grounds of concerns in respect of its impact upon the open character and purposes of designation of the York Green Belt.

2.0 POLICY CONTEXT

2.1 Development Plan Allocation:

City Boundary GMS Constraints: York City Boundary 0001

DC Area Teams GMS Constraints: East Area (2) 0005

2.2 Policies:

CYGB1
Development within the Green Belt

CYV5
Caravan and camping sites

3.0 CONSULTATIONS

INTERNAL:-

3.1 Integrated Strategy Unit object to the proposal on the grounds of being inappropriate development within and by definition harmful to the open character and purposes of designation of the Green Belt.

3.2 Highway Network Management raise no objection to the proposal.

EXTERNAL:-

3.3 The Foss Internal Drainage Board object to the proposal on the grounds that the surface water discharge from the site is unregulated and therefore any additional activity at the site would be potentially harmful to the level of flood storage capacity in the local area.

3.4 Strensall with Towthorpe Parish Council object to the proposal on the grounds that it would materially harm the open character and conflict with the purposes of designation of the York Green Belt, in addition to conflicting with the terms of the earlier planning permission for the site.

3.5 One letter of objection has been received in respect of the proposal expressing concern in relationship to the impact of the proposal upon the open character and purposes of designation of the York Green Belt.

4.0 APPRAISAL

KEY CONSIDERATIONS:-

4.1 KEY CONSIDERATIONS INCLUDE:-

* Impact upon the open character and purposes of designation of the York Green Belt.

STATUS OF THE DRAFT LOCAL PLAN:-

4.2 The Development Control Local Plan was approved for Development Control purposes in April 2005; its policies are material considerations although it is considered that their weight is limited except where in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework.

IMPACT UPON THE OPEN CHARACTER AND PURPOSES OF DESIGNATION OF THE YORK GREEN BELT:-

4.3 Policy GB1 of the York Development Control Local Plan states that within the Green Belt planning permission will only be granted for development where the scale, location and design of such development would not detract from the open character of the Green Belt, would not conflict with the purposes of including land within the Green Belt and would be for one of a number of purposes deemed to be appropriate within the Green Belt including essential facilities for outdoor sport and recreation. Central Government planning policy in respect of planning in Green Belt areas outlined in paragraph 89 of the NPPF indicates that the provision of facilities for outdoor sport and recreation would constitute appropriate development within the Green Belt providing it would preserve the openness of the Green Belt and not conflict with the purposes of including land within it. The current proposal envisages the usage of the southern section of the approved touring caravan site as storage for caravans outside of the normal period of operation of the site.

4.4 Secure winter storage of touring caravans is a concomitant of caravanning as a recreational activity as only a proportion of caravan owners are able or willing to store their caravans within their domestic property. The open storage of caravans is not uncommon at established sites through the Vale of York. However the storage of caravans can not be reasonably defined as an appropriate use within the Green Belt either in terms of the Draft Local Plan or the NPPF. As the proposal relates to what is inappropriate development, there is a need for the applicant to demonstrate "very special circumstances" in order to overcome the general presumption against such development. The applicant has indicated that the degree of landscaping around the southern and eastern boundaries of the site as presents a significant degree of mitigation for the proposal in terms of the impact on the openness of the Green Belt. However, no indication has been given of how the proposed storage activity would operate, where the caravans would be located and the likely density that would be adopted. In the absence of this information and a detailed justification as to why the storage activity could not be accommodated on a non-Green Belt site then the proposal is not considered to be acceptable on Green Belt grounds.

4.5 Notwithstanding any landscaping at the site boundaries, the concentration of caravans at the southern edge of the site would effectively constitute an open storage use, urbanising in nature, and the impact upon the open character of the Green Belt could not be entirely overcome. In any event, the fact that the site might be screened is not a defence when considering the impact of a proposal on the openness of the Green Belt. The proposal would, therefore, conflict with the terms of Policy GB1 and advice contained within the NPPF in relation to the Green Belt.

5.0 CONCLUSION

5.1 The Country Park Pottery Lane Strensall comprises a 40 pitch touring caravan site subject to a seasonal restriction, currently in development, occupying a prominent location within the York Green Belt to the north west of Strensall village. Planning permission is sought for the winter storage of touring caravans within the southern area of the site outside of the main occupation season. Winter storage of touring caravans comprises a type of open storage use albeit one that is not uncommonly found in suitable areas of open countryside, further north in the Vale of York, for example. As an open storage use rather than a specifically recreational use, the proposal constitutes inappropriate development within the Green Belt and is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt. In order to overcome the usual presumption against inappropriate development within Green Belt, the developer is required to present a case of “very special circumstances” to justify setting aside the usual presumption against inappropriate development within the Green Belt. No such compelling case has been forthcoming. The applicant has submitted significant detail in respect of the level of landscaping around the application site which it is argued would mitigate the impact of the scheme on the openness of the Green Belt. No detail has however been submitted in respect of how the storage would operate and the proposal is considered to be unacceptable in Green Belt policy terms.

COMMITTEE TO VISIT

6.0 RECOMMENDATION: Refuse

1 The use of the site for the winter storage of touring caravans between November and March each year would amount to inappropriate development in the Green Belt and would therefore be harmful to its openness contrary to Policy GB1 of the York Development Control Local Plan and Central Government planning policy in respect to the Green Belt set out in paragraph 89 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

7.0 INFORMATIVES:

Notes to Applicant

1. STATEMENT OF THE COUNCIL’S POSITIVE AND PROACTIVE APPROACH

In considering the application, the Local Planning Authority has implemented the requirements set out within the National Planning Policy Framework (paragraphs 186 and 187) in seeking solutions to problems identified during the processing of the application.

The Local Planning Authority took the following steps in an attempt to achieve a positive outcome:

A detailed outline of how the storage operation would be managed was requested but was not forthcoming.

As such, it was not possible to achieve a positive outcome, resulting in planning permission being refused for the reasons stated.

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