

COMMITTEE REPORT

Date: 18 February 2016 **Ward:** Rural West York
Team: Major and **Parish:** Upper Poppleton Parish
Commercial Team Council

Reference: 15/01439/OUTM
Application at: Proposed Caravan Site Northfield Lane Upper Poppleton York
For: Outline application for use of land for touring caravans (91 pitches)
10no.camping pods with associated buildings, refuse points,
access and landscaping
By: SBO Lands Ltd
Application Type: Major Outline Application (13 weeks)
Target Date: 26 February 2016
Recommendation: Refuse

1.0 PROPOSAL

1.1 The application seeks outline consent for touring caravan and camping site providing 91 touring caravan pitches, and 10 camping pods, with associated buildings (such as reception buildings, shop, amenity buildings, camping pods), refuse points, access and landscaping. All matters are reserved except access. A plan has been submitted showing an indicative layout of the proposed scheme. The proposed scheme would create up to 4.2 FTE jobs and it is proposed that it would be open all year round.

1.2 The site is within the general extent of the York Green Belt. The site is not within defined settlement limits or within a conservation area, and there are no listed buildings in close proximity. The application site is classified as Grade 1 agricultural land. To the north of the site is Poppleton Garden Centre, Minster Vets and a restaurant. To the east is Wheatlands Wood an area of woodland between the site and the ring road, the woodland currently has public access through the application site. To the south of the site is Oakwood Business Park, to the south west is Northminster Business Park, to the west are large arable fields, and to the north west is the newly constructed Park and Ride site. The proposed site surrounds a terrace of dwellings - 1 - 6 Northfield Lane on three sides.

1.3 Pre-application advice was sought from the applicant; the applicant was advised that without 'very special circumstances' for developing in the Green Belt the application would not be supported.

1.4 Under Regulation 5 of The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2011 a screening opinion is required. It was concluded that an Environmental Impact Assessment was not required. The proposed development does not comprise 'Schedule 1' development where an Environmental

Impact Assessment is always required. The proposed development is however of a type listed at 12 (e) in column 1 of Schedule 2 (Permanent camp sites and caravan sites) as revised in the Planning Practise Guidance. The site exceeds 1 hectare however it does not meet the further Indicative criteria and threshold of permanent camp sites or caravan sites with more than 200 pitches. It is the view of Officers that the proposed site is not within or adjacent to an environmentally sensitive area (as specified in the Regulations) and taking into account the characteristics of the proposed development, the location of the development, and characteristics of the potential impact and the proposed development would not result in significant environmental effects and therefore an Environmental Impact Assessment was not required.

1.5 Revised indicative plans have been submitted reducing the number of caravan pitches, removing the camping element, introduction of a bund and soft landscaping surrounding the Northfield Terrace. A noise assessment has been submitted together with a report of the archaeological trial trenching. Revised Tourism Need and Economic Impact Assessment has been submitted after it was noted that the report omitted the majority of the caravan parks within the city boundary.

2.0 POLICY CONTEXT

2.1 Draft Development Plan Allocation:

- Air safeguarding GMS Constraints: Air Field safeguarding 0175
- City Boundary GMS Constraints: York City Boundary 0001
- York North West Boundary GMS Constraints: York North West Boundary CONF

2.2 Policies:

City of York Draft Local Plan adopted for Development Control Purposes (2005) (CYLP):-

- CYSP2 The York Green Belt
- CYSP3 Safeguarding the Historic Character and Setting of York
- CYSP6 Location Strategy
- CYSP7A The sequential approach to development
- CYSP8 Reducing dependence on the car
- CYGP1 Design
- CYGP3 Planning against crime
- CYGP4A Sustainability
- CYGP4B Air Quality
- CYGP9 Landscaping
- CYGP13 Planning Obligations
- CYGP14 Agricultural land
- CGP15A Development and Flood Risk
- CYNE1 Trees, woodlands, hedgerows

- CYNE6 Species protected by law
- CYNE7 Habitat protection and creation
- CYNE8 Green corridors
- CYHE10 Archaeology
- CYGB1 Development within the Green Belt
- CYGB11 Employment devt outside settlement limits
- CYGB12 Shopping devt outside settlement limits
- CYT2B Proposed Pedestrian/Cycle Networks
- CYT4 Cycle parking standards
- CYT7C Access to Public Transport
- CYT18 Highways
- CYT20 Planning agreements
- CYV1 Criteria for visitor related devt
- CYV5 Caravan and camping sites

City of York Council Emerging Local Plan Publication Draft (2014) – see paragraphs 4.4 and 4.5 below. Most relevant policy is EC6 relating to the rural economy,

3.0 CONSULTATIONS

INTERNAL CONSULTATIONS

Highway Network Management - No objections

3.1 Access to the site is proposed to be taken from a new access being formed on Northfield Lane. The access offers visibility in accordance with national guidance and is of sufficient width to enable two-way traffic flow.

3.2 The adjacent highway junctions of Northfield Lane/A59 and the A59/A1237 have recently been improved in terms of capacity, safety and pedestrian/cycle facilities. The peak periods of traffic generation of the proposed campsite will be outside of the peak periods of operation of the highway network and are not of a level that would cause capacity issues nor warrant mitigation works.

3.3 The improvement of the aforementioned junctions together with the construction of the Park & Ride site mean that the site can be considered to be sustainable. Pedestrian and cycle facilities exist (including an underpass to cross the A1237) to make journeys to the city centre by non car modes a viable option. The Park & Ride is a short walk away.

3.4 In order to improve the pedestrian and cycle facilities officers have negotiated and secured improvements to the footway running along the Western side of Northfield Lane. The existing footway will be widened to a minimum width of 2.4m in order to provide a shared unsegregated pedestrian/cycle facility.

3.5 No objections are therefore raised subject to the following conditions: Hwy 14 (drwg ref 15-183-TR-007 Rev B)), Hwy 22, Hwy 23, Hwy 28 (15m of rear of the highway), Hwy 31, Hwy 40, Off-Site Highway Works - provision of a shared unsegregated pedestrian/cycle route of minimum width 2.4m on the Western side of Northfield Lane, and INF 1(S184)(S62)

Planning and Environmental Management (Landscape) - Object

3.6 States the site lies within landscape character type 1 - 'Open arable farmland'. The landscape features of the site are fairly typical for the area.

3.8 Currently there exists a reasonable division between the southern edge of Upper Poppleton (adjacent to the A59) and the North Minster business Park, which is a distinctly separate item to both Poppleton and Knapton. The application site plays a part in this separation.

3.9 The presence of Oakwood Business Park and caravan storage area reduces the effectiveness of this margin of open countryside that forms part of the character of North Lane. Nonetheless, despite the influences of the northern ring road, this stretch of land suitably represents an important remnant of countryside lying between Knapton village and Upper Poppleton; an area that incidentally includes the terrace of 1-6 Northfield Lane. The countryside context plays an important part in the link to Moor Lane from Knapton and Poppleton, which is used by pedestrians and cyclists and equestrians.

3.10 The scheme involves the introduction of substantial areas of hard-standing - for roadways, cars, caravans. Whilst the pitches are separated with slithers of grass, the overriding impression would be of a densely spaced development, even without the temporary presence of cars and caravans and paraphernalia. This would be supplemented by low level lighting, and signage, which would be more obvious at the site entrance.

3.11 The pitches are pushed relatively tight up to the boundaries such that the perimeter vegetation is not given a suitable buffer for it to 'breathe' and read as a separate entity to the caravan park with a wider association with the other landscape elements. In some instances this does not meet the root protection areas of the trees.

3.12 The provision of open green space is fragmented; and quite small, relative to the quantity of hard standing. Furthermore these appear to be close-mown areas to provide for general outdoor recreation, rather than the creation of additional habitat areas to help blend the proposed and the existing and mitigate the loss.

3.13 The proposed development represents an intense use of the site over a substantial area. The development poses a significant and permanent change to the fundamental landscape character of the site. The association between arable and woodland is lost, thereby reducing the amenity value of Wheatlands wood and the landscape qualities of the site and the setting of Northfield Lane.

3.14 There would still be views through and an awareness of the change of use, and the reduction in the landscape quality. The effect of this screening would obviously be reduced during the winter months.

3.15 Complete development of this site, which the application represents, poses a risk of coalescence between Poppleton, North Minster Business Park and in turn Knapton.

3.16 This is a green field with natural drainage. Require further information as to what drainage interventions would be required

Planning and Environmental Management (Ecology) - No objections

3.17 Wheatlands Woodland is noted as a 'Site of Local Interest' (Ref: 131) as a newly created broadleaved woodland with sown wildflower grassland. Sites of Local Interest are sites that do not fulfil the criteria for the local designation, Site of Interest for Nature Conservation (SINC), but on which there is some interest and they do have significant value in helping to maintain the network of biodiversity across York. The woodland is connected to a local green infrastructure corridor '12 The Ring Road'. The woodland will be retained as part of the proposals.

3.18 The bat activity survey recorded low levels of common pipistrelle, a widely spread species. As would be expected the woodland and hedgerows recorded the greatest activity. The hedgerows will provide important links from the woodland into the wider countryside. None of the trees on site were found to be suitable to support roosting bats.

3.19 Two ponds were identified within 250m of the site. Both of these were surveyed in 2008 in connection with the new Poppleton P+R site and did not record any great crested newts. The more suitable and closer pond was subject to an eDNA test in June 2015 for great crested newts; the result was negative. The arable fields provide sub-optimal habitat for amphibians.

3.20 The creation of a caravan site would increase activity on the site including noise and lighting. There will be a loss of two short sections of hedgerow to create access into and across the site. The adjacent Wheatlands Woodland will see increased disturbance from recreation. Without maintaining connections the proposal could increase the isolation of the woodland from surrounding habitats. However this could be mitigated for by retaining the hedgerows, creating new hedgerows and creating wildflower areas.

3.21 Lighting has a detrimental effect on bat activity; many bats will actually avoid areas that are well lit. Lighting can cause habitat fragmentation by preventing bats from commuting between roosts and foraging grounds. As there is suitable foraging habitat surrounding the site details of the light via conditions is recommended.

3.22 It is requested that a biodiversity management plan is sought via condition, and informative advising the developer of Section 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

Planning and Environmental Management (Archaeology)

3.23 The trial trenching has revealed Roman-British ditched field boundaries, enclosures and evidence of domestic use. The evaluation revealed more archaeological features than were suggested by the geophysical survey results meaning that further archaeology is likely to remain on the site.

3.24 Due to the finds of the evaluation request following standard conditions be applied to any consent which is given for this site: ARCH1 and ARCH2

Flood Risk Management Team - No objections

3.25 Seek drainage scheme details via condition

Public Protection - No objections

3.26 As part of the planning application a noise assessment was submitted. Measured background noise levels on site found that noise levels at the nearest residential properties on Northfield Lane were approximately 46dB(A) Leq during daytime hours with a night time Leq of 40dB(A). Whilst these levels of noise are not very high they are sufficiently high to provide a masking effect on any noise which may be caused by the presence of the new caravan site. The noise report specifically noted that noise in the area was dominated by traffic noise.

3.27 The report states that the nearest residential property will be located approximately 25 metres from the closest caravan pitch with a 2 metre high bund between the two. The report concludes that these two factors would effectively provide sound attenuation of up to 38dB, meaning that a single raised voice of

70dB(A) would be 32dB(A) at the property, a level which would be lower than the existing measured background levels. Based on this can confirm do not have any objections on the grounds of noise and the potential for loss of amenity.

3.28 A noise management condition can be sought via condition so that the proposed site proactively manages noise coming from the site, for example not allowing amplified music, no games after 8pm etc etc, having a noise complaints procedure. It is noted that there is concern that the provision of this condition highlighted the acceptance that there will be reason for residents to complain. This condition does not do that but rather places a responsibility on the site manager/owner to ensure that their operations on site do not cause loss of amenity or complaint. However if complaint are made then there is a suitably documented procedure to ensure that any issues found are resolved.

3.29 Lighting to be provided in buildings will be on timers with a low level of lighting around the site. Providing that the lighting does not include any floodlighting have few concerns over this matter, but would require further details.

3.30 The proposed site is currently used for agricultural purposes. Due to the potential for contamination from former uses recommended condition for unexpected contamination.

3.31 Request construction hours and electric vehicle recharging points are controlled via condition. In addition request INF11

Planning & Environmental Management (Forward Planning)

3.32 States that for the purposes of determining this application the site should be treated as falling within the Green Belt in accordance with the RSS and both the City of York Council Local Plan incorporating the 4th set of changes and the emerging local plan. Only certain types of development are allowed in the Green Belt, all other forms of development (including caravan site proposals) are considered to be inappropriate development. As such, it is necessary for the applicant to demonstrate very special circumstances to justify why the presumption against development should not apply.

3.33 The applicant reviewed almost 800 sites and all sites were filtered out as part of the process above, no alternative sites have been put forward for further analysis. It is accepted that a full review of alternative sites has been undertaken and it is agreed that on the basis of the information submitted that there are no acceptable alternatives that are deliverable or viable.

3.34 Whilst it is accepted that the information submitted by the applicants to support the application, which includes a Tourism Economic Need Impact Assessment does appear to suggest that there is a need for this type of facility in York and that it

would help to boost the local economy, it is important to consider comments from colleagues in Economic Development relating to whether there is a need for this type of development in the city whether it is required as part of the wider economy.

3.35 The site is located within the Green Belt. However it appears to be a visually well screened and contained site. The visual impact of the proposals on the openness of the Greenbelt would need to be addressed through an on-site assessment by the DM Officer and Council's Landscape Officer.

Economy and Place

3.36 No objections

EXTERNAL CONSULTATIONS/REPRESENTATIONS

Highways Agency

3.37 No objections

Police Architectural Liaison Officer

3.38 If the indicative site layout plan is adopted, it will incorporate many positive Crime Prevention through Environmental Design principles.

3.39 There were 8 x crimes and 10 x anti-social behaviour incidents recorded. The analysis indicates that crime and anti-social behaviour levels within the vicinity of the proposal are low.

3.40 Request the following:

- A secure perimeter around the site must be provided. Any gaps in boundary hedging must be re-enforced.
- CCTV, particularly at the site entrance/exit;
- A management declaration displayed in prominent positions around the site to demonstrate a commitment to the provision of the standard of service and information that users can expect;
- Clear visible signage should be provided to identify entrances, exits, information points and short and long stay parking areas;
- Different areas of the site should be easily identifiable to staff and users.
- Lighting for surveillance in main entrance/exit, public areas etc;
- Any landscaping proposed for within the site should not restrict surveillance
- Anchorage points for securing cycles or secure covered cycle storage area
- Good physical security measures for the reception, cycle hire and site storage buildings;
- A responsible member of staff available on-site, outside normal working hours;

- A robust management plan include expected behaviour of persons using the facility, including visitors
- The site entrance should be clearly visible to approaching vehicles from both directions on Northfield Lane. It is suggested that the entrance should be clearly advertised

Environment Agency

3.41 A mains connection has been proposed for foul drainage disposal. Before determination, LPA should contact Yorkshire Water to confirm whether there is capacity in the receiving sewer and sewage treatment works to accommodate the proposed discharge.

3.42 If capacity is not available, sewerage improvement works may need to take place as part of the planning permission.

Yorkshire Water - No objections

3.43 No objections, request details of surface water and foul drainage are sought via condition

3.44 On the Statutory Sewer Map, there is a 225 mm diameter public foul sewer recorded to cross the site (south east corner of the red line site boundary). No obstruction requested within 3 metres of the sewer centre line. In this instance, the public sewer is unlikely to be affected. No new tree planting within 5 metres of a sewer centre line

3.45 An off-site foul water sewer may be required. This may be provided by the developer and considered for adoption by means of a sewer adoption agreement under Section 104 of the Water Industry Act 1991. Alternatively, the developer may in certain circumstances be able to requisition off-site sewers under Section 98 of the Water Industry Act 1991.

3.46 The public sewer network does not have any capacity available to accept any discharge of surface water. The public sewer network is for domestic sewage purposes. Land and highway drainage have no right of connection to the public sewer network.

Ainsty Internal Drainage Board

3.47 States the site is in an area where drainage problems exist and development should not be allowed until the Authority is satisfied that surface water drainage has been satisfactorily provided for. Any approved development should not adversely affect the surface water drainage of the area and amenity of adjacent properties.

3.48 The application form indicates a preference to discharge surface water from the site by means of a SUDs system in the form of soakaways. Should testing prove the site to be unsuitable and the applicant seeks to discharge to Board assets alternative proposals would need to be developed and submitted to the Board along with evidence that the site currently discharges to the respective Board asset.

3.49 The Board's prior consent is required for any development including fences or planting within 9.00m of the bank top of any watercourse within or forming the boundary of the site. Any proposal to culvert, bridge, fill in or make a discharge to the watercourse will also require the Board's prior consent. The IDB did not provide any information as to whether any part of the site was within 9 metres of their watercourse.

3.50 Correspondence from Yorkshire Water alludes to the inhibition of the ability to discharge surface water to a public sewer, there would appear to have been no further information produced to influence the Board to reconsider their initial stance. As this is currently an outline application, the Board would not object to the site on principle but would require the applicant to produce a comprehensive drainage strategy before full planning permission was granted.

3.51 Drainage scheme details can be sought via condition

Campaign to Protect Rural England (York and Selby) - Object

3.52 States rely on the Policy YH9(C) that was in the Yorkshire & The Humber RSS and whose references to Green Belt policy have been acknowledged by City of York during a recent housing appeal. At the Inquiry it was said that Government was committed to ensuring that the open land around the City be fully protected, thus the Green Belt policy was not revoked at that stage.

3.53 The Poppleton Neighbourhood Plan which includes a Policy (PNP1) that green belt land surrounding the two villages forms an important part of the special and open agricultural character of the setting of the historic City of York. The Policy asserts that any development which harms the open character of such land will not be permitted. It should be noted that about 30% of the York Green Belt is Grade 1 or 2, with above the national average (81%) being in agricultural use. 3.54 This application has to be considered in the light of earlier loss of green belt land to Poppleton Park and Ride site, being an extensive urban focussed scheme with the bare minimum landscaping, added to visually intrusive junction engineering,

3.55 The number and scale of buildings proposed on this grade 1 agricultural land are felt to be out of character and there would be visual intrusion from lighting and other site facilities/layout

3.56 Proposal is inappropriate development. At odds with the fundamental aim of green belt policy laid down in NPPF para 79 to keep land permanently open

3.57 Current use has an increasingly important potential for storing carbon and preventing flooding as well as being a vital resource for food security and soil protection.

3.58 Will further urbanise the western approach to the city.

3.59 DCLG Good Practice Guide on Planning for Tourism (May 2006) is a material consideration. However, suggest the need to take a more circumspect view in respect of York, and look at environmental capacity of the city centre in particular.
Welcome to Yorkshire

3.60 Support the application, enhances the visitor experience of Yorkshire.

Make it York

3.61 Support proposed development, consider there would be sufficient demand for the site and the proposal quality of the site would be a benefit to the York tourism offer. Location of the site is supported, would not be intrusive and located close to public transport

Upper Poppleton Parish Council - Object

3.62 States the outline development is inappropriate development in the Green Belt. It goes against the emerging Neighbourhood Plan for Poppleton (Green Belt Policy PNP 1 - Any development, which harms the open character and setting of either York or the villages of Upper and Nether Poppleton, will not be permitted. The Green Belt land surrounding the villages of Upper and Nether Poppleton villages forms an important part of the special open and agricultural character of the setting of the nationally significant historic city of York. Together with the other Green Belt land surrounding the villages it plays an important role in maintaining the identity, character and setting of the Poppleton Villages.)

3.63 Northfield Lane is a narrow road and not wide enough for the easy flow of two-way traffic. Exit onto the A59 is at a busy section shared by the Park and Ride, Wyevale Garden Centre and Luigi's Restaurant, near the congested A1237 roundabout.

3.64 The residents of the six properties which would be surrounded on three sides by the development would be deprived of quiet enjoyment of their homes by being subjected to the impact of noise, disturbance at unsociable hours, light pollution, and the loss of rural aspect.

3.65 Potential for light pollution

3.66 Adverse impact on wildlife and compromise access to the woodland

3.67 Loss of Grade I and II agricultural land

3.68 The site is not identified for development in the Preferred Options City of York Local Plan 2014, and is also contrary to the commitment made by the City Council for protection of Green Belt land.

3.69 The viability of the proposal does not fulfil established need since there are already two existing caravan /camping sites in Poppleton and a caravan site similar to the proposal at Strensall is under-subscribed. Residents in the vicinity of the Strensall site report continual drip-feed of extensions and modifications of building consent not envisaged in the original proposal in attempts to attract custom.

Nether Poppleton Parish Council - Object

3.70 Inappropriate development in the greenbelt

3.71 Many vacant space in existing caravan sites in the city

3.72 Would become brownfield land and subsequently available for housing

3.73 Result in encroachment, would impact on the village setting and would result in coalescence within the city

3.74 Not sustainable development

3.75 Loss of agricultural land

3.76 Contrary to Poppleton Neighbourhood Plan - PNP1, PNP3, PNP5, PNP10

3.77 Contrary to national planning policy,

Nether and Upper Poppleton Neighbourhood Plan Committee – Object

3.78 Contrary to first policy of neighbourhood plan - any development which harms the open character and setting of York or the villages of Upper and Nether Poppleton will not be permitted. The surrounding villages form an important part of the open agricultural character of the setting of the historic city

3.79 Loss of grade II agricultural land

3.80 Contrary to greenbelt policy

3.81 Would destroy bird a habitat

3.82 Requires surface water drainage

3.83 The toilet block are set to far away from many of the pitches and concerned may result in other areas being used

3.84 Traffic to the proposal would cause congestion resulting in disruption to the business park

3.85 Concerned it may become residential caravan park

3.86 Concerned regarding the potential noise and light issues

3.87 Concerned if allowed, may be further change of use to housing

3.88 If allowed would be contrary to Local Plan allocation, would affect safeguarded land adjacent to the site

NEIGHBOUR NOTIFICATION AND PUBLICITY

3.89 38 Representations of objection to the original scheme and 30 representations of objection to the revised scheme as follows:

- Contrary to NPPF, Local Plan, and saved policies YH9c and Y1c greenbelt policy, no very special circumstances have been put forward, fails to comply with the purposes of the greenbelt. Impact on the setting of the village would result in the encroachment of development, coalescence of development and furthering in urban sprawl. Would result in an unbroken line of development from A59 to Northfield Business Park. Site creates a visual break between Poppleton and the business park. Reason for Green Belt is openness and permanence
- Sites have been allocated consider the application is trying to circumnavigate the Local Plan
- Contrary to emerging Neighbourhood Plan, policies including PNP1 and PNP3
- Loss of Grade II agricultural land, waste of natural resources
- There are a number of existing brownfield sites around York which could be considered for this use
- Northfield Lane is unlit, part of the rural character of the area, the lighting required for 10 acres would result in light pollution and would alter the character of the area. Out of scale with surrounding development
- Extension to Northfield Terrace have been refused on the grounds that they would impact on the openness of the greenbelt, and this was upheld by the Planning Inspectorate

- Proposal similar to other development such as Naburn Lock which has been refused and dismissed at appeal
- The Park and Ride should not be used for precedent in allowing development in the greenbelt
- Concerned may become residential site unless restrictions are imposed. Concerned if principles of use is permitted would be easier to secure planning permission for other uses on the sites such as housing and industrial uses
- May affect the adjacent safeguarded land if approved
- Concerned proposal may become more densely developed over time
- Negative impact to the ecology of the neighbouring Wheatlands Wood. Concerned it may have an impact on the community woodland by virtue of the proximity of the caravans and the increase in use. The proposed development would break a vital wildlife corridor between current open farmland and the Wheatlands Community Woodland. Applicant has stated that the woodland would fall into disrepair if they are unable to gain funding from the proposed use. Concern public access to the woodland would be obstructed
- Would lead to traffic congestion, exacerbate existing problems. Caravans would cause obstruction to the goods vehicles travelling to the nearby business park. Northfield Lane is not wide enough for 2 way traffic of large vehicles. Northfield Lane has no parking restrictions will result in caravans etc parking on the road resulting in traffic issues. The proposal; should contribute towards accommodating traffic it will generate to prevent erosion of any benefit created by the existing road junction. Should contribute to lighting, footpaths, cycle paths. Objector's business has contributed via S106 towards the existing infrastructure in the area. The erosion of any future capacity in the road/cycle/pedestrian network would lead to a dilution of the employment uses that can be provided in the future at Northminster Business Park.
- Creating only 2 - 4 low paid jobs, the supporting information vastly inflates this figure
- The economic case is questionable,
- Applicants argument appear to be base argument on that there is a shortage of pitches at Rowntree Park during peak times. There is capacity in existing caravan and camping sites within the area, as such there is no justification for an additional site
- Economic figures appear to be based 50 - 55% occupancy with a spend of £55 per person per day, which appear to be rather high, the national average for tourism is £66 per day this is the average including hotel meals etc. Assumes that all the 60000 visitors nights would be incremental whereas it may result in a reduction in stays on other sites
- The applicant has stated that the site would be for a certain type of person, not possible to vet people before they arrive
- Loss of an amenity area
- Occupants of the dwellings adjacent to the site has not been consulted by the applicant, local business were consulted

- Occupants of Northfield Terrace would result in a loss of residential amenity, noise and light disturbance, too close to dwellings, Loss of quiet enjoyment of homes. The noise of the potential users could not be controlled the screening barrier (native trees) between Northfield Terrace and the proposal may be virtue of the proximity result in damage to properties, overshadowing resulting in a loss light and loss of view/outlook. Concerned re hazardous materials, Concerned re odours
- Noise levels would not be alleviated by the proposed bund and planting, by stating that the residents will have a mechanism for complaint is an admission that there would be noise and disruption
- Visual Impact Statement makes no reference to views of the site from neighbouring properties
- Existing and proposed screening would not mask the view of the caravans etc
- Design and Access statement has a number of errors and anomalies
- The applicants has refused trim and thin existing trees close to Northfield Terrace, existing trees drop branches, potential to result in damage to caravans
- Result in devaluation of properties on Northfield Lane
- Do not agree with the findings of the noise impact assessment
- Position of the bund and fence will have detrimental impact on the woodland and its wildlife
- Existing surface water drainage issues in Northfield Lane and the surrounding area
- Concerned that by virtue of the distance between the toilets and the pitches other areas of the proposed site may be used rather than the formal facilities
- Human Rights Act Article 8, states person has right to peaceful enjoyment of all their possessions, which include the home and other land. A person has the substantive right to respect for their private and family life. In the case of *Britton v SoS* the courts reappraised the purpose of law and concluded that the protection of the countryside falls within the interests of Article 8. Private and family life therefore encompasses not only the home but also the surroundings. Loss of quiet enjoyment
- West boundary deciduous hedge and trees provide very little screening of the proposed development during the winter months therefore proposed caravans would be visually prominent and visible from the A59
- Nearby water vole habitat on Moor Lane may be affected by increased use
- No overriding benefit that justifies the approval, no meaningful mitigation is possible
- Concerned re loss of trees
- Effect on listed building and conservation area
- Does not fulfil the description of 'in-filling' - the infilling of a small gap within an otherwise built up frontage or group of houses. Would create ribbon development resulting in urban sprawl

- Applicant has not accurately quoted from appeal decision particularly Brecks Lane.
- Contrary to policy V5 which restricted site to 20 pitches and there is no adverse effect on the openness of the Green Belt
- Provides an important green corridor/green wedge

3.90 1 Representation of general comments to the original scheme

- Business case appears to be based on number of misleading assumptions
- Comments from the a person whose partner owns a caravan site in the nearby area and the occupancy rate is usually 30%, rare for the site to be fully booked
- The assumption is that there is an unsatisfied demand, does not agree rather there is currently a substantial overcapacity. Would result in the site diverting customers from other sites resulting in a negative impact to these existing sites, or it would fail to attract visitors and the business would fail
- It only creates 4 jobs, the 68 jobs that the applicant states would be created in the wider economy are unlikely

3.91 6 Representations of support to the original scheme and 2 representations of support to the revised scheme as follow:

- Good location close to the park and ride, A1, A59 and A64
- would benefit local businesses
- Small caravan park locally which is always full
- Knows the applicant
- Caravan users are attracted to rural, unlikely to visit York because of the issues of negotiating it with a large vehicle
- Attract families and retirees which would more benefit to York than stag/hen parties
- Create additional employment
- Screened from view
- Minister Vets have been assured that there would be adequate fencing between the proposal and the paddocks
- Has problems getting a pitch in Rowntree Park

4.0 APPRAISAL

RELEVANT SITE HISTORY:-

08/02024/FULM - Erection of garden centre (5,823 sq metres) with associated landscaping and extended car park following demolition of existing - Withdrawn

KEY ISSUES:-

- Planning policy
- Green belt and consideration of very special circumstances
- Design and landscape considerations
- Impact to residential amenity
- Archaeology
- Highways
- Ecology
- Drainage

ASSESSMENT

PLANNING POLICY

Development Plan

4.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compensation Act 2004 requires that determinations be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The development plan for York comprises the saved policies of the Yorkshire and Humber Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) relating to the general extent of the York Green Belt. These are policies YH9(C) and Y1 (C1 and C2) which relate to York's Green Belt and the key diagram insofar as it illustrates general extent of the Green Belt. The policies state that the detailed inner and the rest of the outer boundaries of the Green Belt around York should be defined to protect and enhance the nationally significant historical and environmental character of York, including its historic setting, views of the Minster and important open areas.

Local Plan

4.2 The City of York Draft Local Plan Incorporating the Fourth Set of Changes was approved for Development Management purposes in April 2005 (DCLP). Whilst the DCLP does not form part of the statutory development plan, its policies are considered to be capable of being material considerations in the determination of planning applications where policies relevant to the application are consistent with those in the NPPF.

4.3 Policy V5 'Caravan/Camping Sites' of the DCLP sets out a number of criteria of considering new sites, whilst some of the specific criteria do not comply with the NPPF the general aim of the policy is considered to be in line with the NPPF.

Emerging Local Plan

4.4 The planned consultation on the Publication Draft of the City of York Local Plan, which was approved by the Cabinet of the Council on the 25 September 2014, has been halted pending further analysis of housing projections. The emerging Local Plan policies can only be afforded weight at this stage of its preparation, in accordance with paragraph 216 of the NPPF.

4.5 The most relevant of the document's policies is policy EC6 which states that York's rural economy will be sustained and diversified through, among other things, permitting camping and caravan sites for holiday and recreational use where proposals can be satisfactorily integrated into the landscape without detriment to its character, are in a location accessible to local facilities and would not generate significant volumes of traffic. Seasonal occupancy should be conditioned on visitor accommodation. At the present early stage in the statutory process the weight that can be given to the draft policy is limited. However, the evidence base that underpins the proposed emerging policies is capable of being a material consideration in the determination of the planning application. In the emerging draft York Local Plan the site is allocated as green belt land.

4.6 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published in March 2012. It sets out government's planning policies and is material to the determination of planning applications. The NPPF is the most up-to date representation of key relevant policy issues (other than the Saved RSS Policies relating to the general extent of the York Green Belt) and it is against this policy Framework that the proposal should principally be addressed.

4.7 Paragraph 14 of the NPPF sets out the presumption in favour of sustainable development, unless specific policies in the NPPF indicate development should be restricted. This presumption does not apply in Green Belt locations.

4.8 The National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) explains how weight may be given to policies in emerging plans. Arguments that an application is premature are unlikely to justify a refusal of planning permission other than where it is clear that the adverse impacts of granting permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, taking the policies in the NPPF and any other material considerations into account.

4.9 The NPPF states that the refusal of planning permission on grounds of prematurity will seldom be justified where a draft Local Plan has yet to be submitted for examination. Where planning permission is refused on grounds of prematurity, the local planning authority will need to indicate clearly how the grant of permission for the development concerned would prejudice the outcome of the plan-making process.

4.10 The Poppleton Neighbourhood Plan is at an early stage; pre-submission consultation has been undertaken. Whilst the weight given to such a report grows as it passes each consultation stage, the weight that can be given to the plan is currently very limited.

4.11 The Poppleton Village Design Statement was adopted as supplementary planning guidance in 2003 following consultation. It has a number of relevant design guidelines including: Expansion of Poppleton outside the existing curtilage towards the Ring Road and other principal road links such as the A59 should be discouraged; Any new development on the village periphery should be in keeping with both the surrounding properties and the countryside and should give high priority to landscape design, to protect and enhance the external views of the village. Any further commercial and industrial development within or within direct influencing distance of Poppleton should be well screened and not exceed existing height, for example, Northminster Business Park is predominantly viewed from Red Lion Bridge and any proposed extension should protect the open views of the surrounding flat landscape; The existing quiet and peaceful atmosphere should be preserved; The attractive green corridor approach to York along the A59 should be protected and development along this road should be discouraged.

Evidence Base - Site Selection Process

4.12 The application site was first submitted to the council for consideration in the call for sites in 2008, the applicants proposed that the site be allocated for employment /housing. Following the decision to cease work on an LDF and to move forward with a new local plan, a new spatial strategy was devised and a new NPPF compliant site selection methodology was developed. A further call for sites was held in August 2012. The site was considered for its potential as they were within the council's database of known land due to the earlier submissions. The Council also received a late call response for sites (2012) on this site and updated records accordingly that the site had a recently confirmed willing landowner. A number of criteria were established as part of the new Local Plan Site Selection Process to help identify the most suitable available land in line with the new spatial strategy. The site was assessed for suitability for potential residential, employment and retail allocation but was found to be less preferable to other sites in all cases. The site did not meet the minimum criteria in terms of access to services to be considered for housing allocation. It did however pass the minimum threshold for consideration for employment uses. The site was evaluated through the Council's Site Selection Paper (June 2013) and was analysed for its potential employment uses. The site passed Criteria 1,2,3 (It was not wholly within Historic Character and Setting, Nature conservation designations, Regional Green Corridor, Ancient Woodlands, Functional Floodplain, Flood Zone a or Open space designation) and it also passed criteria 4 for employment purposes (access to services). All sites which passed the first 4 criteria as having suitability for employment were then passed to consultants Drivers

Jonas Deloitte for further analysis and to develop a shortlist of those with the greatest potential to fill the current Employment demand for uses B1, B2, B8.

4.13 The comments on the site made by Drivers Jonas Deloitte are as follows:

"This site would form a natural part of the Northminster Business Park. The site would form part of the wider parcel of land to accommodate a range of B class uses (B1 (a), B1(c) B2 and B8) and benefits from an established location, existing infrastructure and direct access to the A59 and wider road network. Ancillary uses C1/A3/A4/D2 could also be included within this new Business Park as it is developed over the plan period. Poppleton railway station is a 10 minute walk and connectivity improvements could be delivered with early phases of development, however the site does provide a natural buffer between Northminster Business Park and the A1237. On balance, this site may be better left undeveloped to provide an appropriate buffer between future development and the A1237 and expansion focused towards the west of site 684."

4.14 The site was not shortlisted for this purpose or carried forward for further employment analysis. The proposed site was therefore not one of the Council's preferred shortlisted B1 employment sites and it was not allocated.

4.15 The Site Selection Paper was consulted on through the Preferred Options Consultation. Any new sites which were submitted through this process or any sites which had additional evidence or information submitted by landowners and developers were then re-evaluated and considered through the Further Sites Consultation. The site in question however did not submit any further evidence through the Preferred Options Consultation. A response to the site was however received through the Further Sites Consultation (despite this site not featuring in that document) The response asked for the site to be reconsidered for Tourism and Caravan Park uses. While the site was not part of the Further Sites document the representation received on the site was still considered against the earlier published information within the Site Selection Paper (June 2013). The Local Plan officers considered that the site was not appropriate for allocation in the local plan for a caravan site and was rejected.

GREEN BELT STATUS OF THE SITE

4.16 As noted in the above Planning Policy section of this report, the site is located within the general extent of the York Green Belt as described in the RSS; is shown as being within the Green Belt on the proposals map in the DCLP and retained within the Green Belt in the draft York Local Plan.

4.17 Additionally, when the site is assessed on its merits (in paragraphs 4.20 to 4.23 below) it is concluded that whilst the York Green Belt has not yet been fully defined, the site falls within the general extent of the Green Belt and serves a number of

Green Belt purposes. As such, the proposal falls to be considered under the restrictive Green Belt policies set out in the NPPF.

OPENNESS AND PURPOSES OF THE GREEN BELT

4.18 The NPPF states that the fundamental aim of the Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open and that, the essential characteristics of the Green Belt are its openness and permanence. The Green Belt serves 5 purposes:

- to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
- to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
- to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
- to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns;
- and to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

4.19 The NPPF states that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. NPPF paragraph 89 states that the construction of new buildings is inappropriate in the Green Belt, save in the case of a list of exceptions. Whilst the NPPF supports the provision in the Green Belt of facilities for outdoor sport and recreation (paragraph 81), use of land as a caravan site is not fall within these exceptions in paragraphs 89 and 90. The change of use is therefore inappropriate development in the Green Belt. Furthermore, the buildings and engineering operations involved in the application (the amenity buildings, reception buildings, lighting, loop roads, passing places, pods, caravan pitches, car parking, bin store, fencing and lighting) together with the presence of the caravans and cars would undermine the openness of the Green Belt and conflicts the purposes of the Green Belt, which is to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment, check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas. Therefore these structures and engineering operations, also, constitute inappropriate development in the Green Belt (NPPF, paragraph 90). The proposed buildings with the proposed intensification of activity over and above that expected with the existing fields would of itself significantly harm the character of the area and the Green Belt. The proposed development by virtue of the use and structures would result in an increase in the built form and a coalescence of development and the loss of this visual buffer between developments and therefore resulting in actual harm to the openness and permanence of the greenbelt.

4.20 The NPPF states that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. .

4.21 The fundamental purpose of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. The proposal gives rise to harm to the green belt by reason of inappropriateness which should not be approved except in very special circumstances. The proposal would result in substantial harm to the openness and permanence of the Green Belt. It also conflicts with the Green Belt purposes of preventing encroachment into the countryside and coalescence of development. The NPPF states that local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the green belt. 'Very special circumstances' will not exist unless the potential harm to the green belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.

ASSESSMENT OF THE CONSIDERATIONS FORWARDED BY THE APPLICANT

4.22 The Applicant has forwarded the following factors to be considered as very special circumstances:

- (i) The land should not be defined as greenbelt
- (ii) There is a 'need' for the development
- (iii) Economic benefit to the city
- (iv) Lack of suitable, available and deliverable sites within the urban area
- (v) Screening

(i)The land should not be defined as greenbelt

4.23 To the north of the site is Poppleton Garden Centre, Minster Vets and a restaurant. To the east is Wheatlands Wood an area of woodland between the site and the ring road, there is currently public access allowed to this area. To the south of the site is Oakwood Business Park (within the greenbelt in the Local Plan, 2005 and the halted local plan), to the south west is Northminster Business Park (not shown within the greenbelt in the Local Plan, 2005 or the halted local plan), to the west are large arable fields, and to the north west is the newly constructed Park and Ride site. The proposed site surrounds a terrace of dwellings - 1 - 6 Northfield Lane on three sides.

4.24 The site has been submitted a number of times through the LDF and Local Plan Process and has been rejected each time as it is considered that the site forms an important buffer between existing development. The site to the west had been initially allocated as an employment allocation use in the emerging local Plan. Whilst mindful that in allowing the proposed use this may impact on the feasibility of the nearby employment allocations, it should be noted that the proposed employment allocation has not been tested by public consultation and as such, the potential allocation of this land can only be given limited weight at this stage. There is currently no public confirmed timetable for the Local Plan to be submitted to public consultation or to the Planning Inspectorate.

4.25 The site was not identified in the City of York Local Plan - The Approach to the Green Belt Appraisal (2003) which the Council produced to aid in the identification of those areas surrounding the City that should be kept permanently open. However, whilst this documents identifies key important areas, which do not include this site, it leaves large areas of countryside as similarly not being of particular importance and it does not set out that all that remaining land within the extent of the Green Belt is necessarily suitable for development or that it has no Green Belt purpose.

4.26 In general terms, it is not appropriate to assume every un-built on piece of land within the general extent of the Green Belt should necessarily be considered as Green Belt, rather each case should be considered on its own merits. The 2 no. fields (the application site) and the established field boundaries are considered to fulfil two of the purposes of the greenbelt and acts as a buffer between the village of Poppleton and the industrial buildings to the south and south west as well as between the outer ring road and Northminster Business Park thus the aim of preventing the encroachment, sprawl and coalescence of development and therefore maintaining the essential Green Belt characteristics of openness and permanence. Additionally, the site can not reasonably be considered to be close to the inner boundaries of the greenbelt because there is a clear gap created by fields between Acomb and Poppleton. These fields have been considered through the site selection process for the LDF and the emerging Local Plan however they did not progress as they were assessed as having importance in the setting and special character of the city. As such it is considered that the application site should be treated as falling within the general extent of the Green Belt.

(ii) Need for the development

4.27 The site is close to good public transport links such as the park and ride site and Poppleton train station, and there is a pedestrian route into Poppleton and York. There are some nearby facilities such as a restaurant and cafe within the garden centre, and as such the proposed development is considered to be in a sustainable location.

4.28 The applicant has submitted a revised Tourism Need Statement after it was noted that they had significantly underestimated the number of caravan sites (the stated 14) and pitches (495) within the city boundary. There is still some disagreement between Officers and the applicant regarding the specific number of sites within the York area; however it is considered that the total number of pitches are relatively similar, there are approximately 43 caravan sites (GVA consider 29 sites in the revised report) (the applicant does not include sites providing 5 pitches, when added up they provide between 85 and 90 additional pitches), with circa 1038 to 1075 pitches (GVA 854 to 986, Figure 5.1). The applicant states that there is difficulty in obtaining a pitch during peak periods and that the proposal can provide better facilities than the current caravan parks. The applicant argues that they called only 14 sites regarding potential spaces for a weekend in June (19 - 21st) 2015

requesting the information on the 18th June, 4 of the 14 sites had spaces for the whole weekend break. For the week long break 9 of the 14 sites the consultants contacted had available sites (no details were submitted as to when the survey took place). It is considered that a sample of 14 out of 43 (29) is rather small and does not provide a sufficiently robust case. When officers searched for available accommodation the end of July and for the whole of August 2015, (the caravan sites with internet booking (the majority)) with the exception of the Rowntree Park in the city centre (which showed some full weekends), all showed availability.

4.29 Officers undertook a basic internet search and found sites within York offering similar facilities to those being proposed. The applicant argues that the quality of the proposed development is a very special circumstance. It should be noted this is an outline application and the quality of the proposed development may be different on the receipt of a reserved matters application and may alter during the construction and/or commencement and running of the business, as such the quality of the site can only be given limited weight. Whilst a range of accommodation is required for the tourism offer, it is not considered that the accommodation proposed differs so significantly from the quality already existing as to be exceptional.

4.30 Whilst a range of accommodation is required for the tourism offer it is not considered that on the basis of the information the applicant has submitted that it has been convincingly demonstrated there is a compelling 'need' for this type of development. It is considered that this factor carries little weight in favour of the proposal.

(iii) Economic benefit to the city

4.31 The applicant argues that the principal benefit of the application is the contribution it would make to the local economy and that this benefit constitutes very special circumstances that justify approval. The NPPF says that planning policies should support economic growth in rural areas by taking a positive approach to sustainable new development. Nevertheless, this policy does not outweigh green belt policy, as the presumption in favour of sustainable development does not apply to sites within the green belt.

4.32 The council supports in principle investment in tourism for the economic benefits it brings to the local area and the city as a whole. The proposed development would create 4.2 full time equivalent jobs. The level of direct employment created is not considered to be of a sufficient economic benefit to outweigh the harm. The applicant has stated that a further 53 full time equivalent jobs may be created in the wider area from visitor spending, these figures are based on a number of assumptions. If there is not an actual convincing demonstrable need for the park, it raises the question as to whether the spend would have occurred anyway from visitors using other touring sites within the York area, or whether the proposed site would create additional visitors. Setting aside the reliability of the

submitted figures it is expected there would be some economic benefit from the spend of the users of the park. Whilst there is a need to balance the economic benefits against other planning considerations, it is considered appropriate to give this factor little weight due to the uncertainties surrounding the scale and spread of these benefits.

(iv) Lack of suitable, available and deliverable sites within the urban area

4.33 The applicant has submitted information demonstrating that they have looked at other sites within the city, and concluded apart from the application site (that they own) there no other sites meet the criteria they require. As the applicant has not adequately demonstrated that there is a need for this development, the lack of other available sites is considered to carry little weight in favour of the proposal.

(v) Screening

4.34 The applicant argues that, the site is well screened from outside the site by the hedges and trees. The proposed use would be screened from the ring road by the established Wheatlands woodland. The visual impact of the proposed caravan park and associated buildings, lighting, and infrastructure when viewed from the A59 the site would be viewed in context of the neighbouring employment uses and the existing park and ride site. The deciduous hedge and trees would only provide an element of screening during the summer months and during the winter months the site would be clearly visible from a significant distance and from one of the main transport routes into York (A59) as well as the Northfield Lane. The western boundary is considered to provide little screening during the winter months and additional vegetation could be planted although it would be likely to take some years for this to mature sufficiently to completely obscure the caravans, buildings, engineering works from view, from the road throughout the year. The indicative plans indicate a proposed 2 metre high fence behind (to the east) of the western boundary the fence would be clearly visible particularly during the winter months and would exacerbate the built form, creating a consolidation of development along the horizon when viewed from the A59, the fencing would appear overly urban and out of character in this location particularly when viewed from Northfield Lane. It is considered therefore that this factor carries little in favour of the proposals.

DESIGN AND LANDSCAPE CONSIDERATIONS

4.35 The proposed site is classified as grade 1 agricultural land, of which there is little within the authority area. The NPPF states Local Planning Authorities should take into account the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land. Where significant development of agricultural land is demonstrated to be necessary, local planning authorities should seek to use areas of poorer quality land in preference to that of a higher quality. That some of the surrounding

grade 1 agricultural land has been allocated for other uses in the emerging local plan is considered to have little weight by virtue of the lack of public consultation and there is not a published timetable for the progression of the Local Plan. The proposed use would result in the loss of this agricultural land. Whilst it is considered that it is not a sufficient reason to refuse the application on these grounds alone, it is considered to result in additional harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness and the harm to the openness of the Green Belt as set out above.

4.36 Despite the degree of deciduous vegetation along Northfield Lane, there are glimpsed views of the fields beyond and an awareness of the rural openness. The application is screened from the ring road by Wheatlands wood. Northfield Lane is subject to development pressure from Northfield Business Park and potential extensions thereof. Similarly several sites have been proposed (though they may not come forward) within the emerging local plan that potentially reduce the physical and perceived separation between Poppleton village and the edge of town on Boroughbridge road and the ring road. Currently there exists a reasonable division between the southern edge of Upper Poppleton (adjacent to the A59) and the Northminster Business Park, which is a distinctly separate item to both Poppleton and Knapton. The application site plays a part in this separation.

4.37 The presence of Oakwood Business Park and caravan storage area reduces the effectiveness of this margin of open countryside that forms part of the character of Northfield Lane. Nonetheless, despite this, and despite the influences of the northern ring road, this stretch of land suitably represents an important remnant of countryside lying between Knapton village and Upper Poppleton.

4.38 All matters relating to the site layout and appearance apart from the entrance to Northfield Lane have been reserved; however the indicative plans show a number of buildings including a reception/shop/cycle hire store, wardens accommodation, garage, amenity blocks, service buildings, refuse store, camping pods together with an extensive internal road layout, parking spaces, and a 2 metre high bund surrounding Northfield Terrace as well as a 2 metre high fence to the western boundary. An indicative plan has been submitted however this could significantly alter on the submission of a reserved matters application. However the aforementioned structures and engineering works would be on the site in some form. The proposed development would result in a change of character and an increase in activity in the area. The proposed fence (or soft landscaping) to the western boundary would provide an awareness of the change of use, and result in a reduction in the landscape quality.

4.39 The indicative plan shows the pitches sited relatively tight up to the boundaries such that the perimeter vegetation is not given a suitable buffer for it to 'breathe' and read as a separate entity to the caravan park with a wider association with the other landscape elements. The proposed development represents an intense use of the site over a substantial area.

4.40 As such the proposed use and buildings and associated works etc would not be compatible with the prevailing character of the area. The proposed change of landscape character from agricultural fields to a developed site would result in a reduction in the quality of the landscape. The current landscape serves to provide a setting for Northfield Lane and separation from the ring road, and separation between Poppleton and Northminster Business Park. Development of the site would further erode these divisions, and as such would be contrary to the NPPF which expects proposals take account of the different roles and character of different areas, and improve the character and the quality of an area.

IMPACT TO RESIDENTIAL AMENITY

4.41 The proposed development would surround Northfield Terrace on three sides. The Victorian dwellings have long gardens enclosed by mature hedges. The applicant has shown on the indicative plan a 2 metre high bund adjacent to the three boundaries with the terrace. The proposed development would result in activity that currently does not exist, close to the proposed dwellings, however it is not considered that this change in activity would result in harm to the residential amenity to the occupants of this terrace. Public Protection has advised that the proximity of the use shown on the indicative plan would be unlikely to result in statutory noise issues. The distance between pitches and the dwellings could be sought via a condition. Public Protection considers the bund is required to provide noise mitigation.

4.42 The proposed caravan park would result in a change of outlook from the buildings from fields to a caravan park however by virtue of the large gardens the alterations to the outlook are considered not to result in a loss but rather a different outlook and it is not considered that the development could be refused on this basis. The siting of the enclosing bund and the proposed landscaping is not considered to result in a loss of light or overshadowing by virtue of the distance and large size of the gardens.

IMPACT TO ARCHAEOLOGY

4.43 The archaeology within the site is a non designated heritage asset. The NPPF states that Local Authorities should take into account the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and that they should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including any development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise (paragraph 129). The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that affect directly or indirectly non designated heritage assets, a balanced

judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset (paragraph 135).

4.44 During the trial trenching twelve of the thirteen trenches excavated contained archaeological features which were cut into natural layers.

4.45 Several of these trenches exposed features indicative of more intensive activity and/or settlement and are suggestive of further significant remains elsewhere on the site. Features identified which were not detected by geophysical survey also suggest that further undetected archaeological remains may be present on the site.

4.46 Ditches identified during the evaluation may form part of a rectangular enclosure. Despite a lack of dating evidence, this series of features is likely to represent a pre-medieval field system, and possibly settlement, most likely of Romano-British date. Two pits which contained burnt bone also probably date to this period and are suggestive of domestic activity on the site. Charred cereals found on the site may relate to this domestic occupation too. The later ridge and furrow field system was found to extend across much of the site with furrows aligned east to west. The system probably has its origins in the medieval or post-medieval period. The land was probably still used for agriculture through to the present day though a large feature in one trench may represent quarrying in the 18th-century. A scatter of flints found across the site is representative of prehistoric activity in the general area.

4.47 Although not unique, the archaeological evidence of prehistoric/Romano-British agricultural practices and/or settlement activity on this site is of local and regional significance. The information gained from the excavation carried out so far and any further investigation will assist in the understanding of the wider pre-medieval landscape of York. The archaeology on this site is not required to be retained in-situ.

4.48 The archaeology is largely located between 0.5m-1.10m below ground level (bgl). The more significant features - ditches and pits were generally found at depths of 0.5-0.8m bgl. Topsoil stripping in preparation for the creation of caravan pitches and excavations for drainage and erection of amenity blocks will have a negative impact on the archaeology on this site. Due to the shallow nature of the archaeology the Archaeology Officer recommends that a strip map and record exercise take place in the areas which have produced the most in terms of archaeological results and which will be affected by drainage, amenity blocks and pitches and an archaeological watching brief should be maintained across the rest of the site when groundworks are taking place. This can be sought by condition.

ECOLOGY

4.49 The NPPF sets out that the Planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, geological conservation interests and soils; minimising impacts on biodiversity and providing net gains in biodiversity where possible.

4.50 The bat activity survey recorded low levels of common pipistrelle, a widely spread species. The woodland and hedgerows recorded the greatest activity. The hedgerows will provide important links from the woodland into the wider countryside. None of the trees on site were found to be suitable to support roosting bats.

4.51 Two ponds were identified within 250m of the site. Both of these were surveyed in 2008 in connection with the new Poppleton P+R site and did not record any great crested newts. The more suitable and closer pond was subject to an eDNA test in June 2015 for great crested newts; the result was negative. The arable fields provide sub-optimal habitat for amphibians.

4.52 The creation of a caravan site would increase activity on the site including noise and lighting. There will be a loss of two short sections of hedgerow to create access into and across the site. The adjacent Wheatlands Woodland will see increased disturbance from recreation. Without maintaining connections the proposal could increase the isolation of the woodland from surrounding habitats. However this could be mitigated for by retaining the hedgerows, creating new hedgerows and creating wildflower areas.

4.53 Lighting has a detrimental effect on bat activity; many bats will actually avoid areas that are well lit. Lighting can cause habitat fragmentation by preventing bats from commuting between roosts and foraging grounds. Details of the lighting could be sought via condition if the development was considered acceptable

4.54 Objectors are concerned that access to Wheatland's woodland would be restricted. The plans have show the access moved to outside of the application site. As it is privately owned woodland with access allowed at the owner's discretion it is considered that the potential restriction of access is not a planning consideration.

DRAINAGE

4.55 The NPPF requires that suitable drainage strategies are developed for sites, so there is no increase in flood risk elsewhere. Local Plan policy GP15a: Development and Flood Risk advises discharge from new development should not exceed the capacity of receptors and water run-off should, in relation to existing run-off rates, be reduced. It is considered that the drainage details could be sought via condition to be submitted with the reserved matters application if the proposed development was considered to be acceptable

TRAFFIC, HIGHWAY, PARKING AND ACCESS ISSUES

4.56 The National Planning Policy Framework states that developments should be located and designed where practical to give priority to pedestrian and cycle movements, and have access to high quality public transport. Policy SP8 seeks to reduce dependence on the private car within new developments through, amongst others, accessibility and linking the development with surrounding uses. Policy T7c seeks to ensure all new developments are within 400m of a frequent bus service. Policy T4 seeks to promote cycle parking to encourage sustainable transport choice. These local plan policies are considered to accord with the aims of the NPPF.

4.57 Access to the site is proposed to be taken from a new access being formed on Northfield Lane. The access offers visibility in accordance with national guidance and is of sufficient width to enable two-way traffic flow. The adjacent highway junctions of Northfield Lane/A59 and the A59/A1237 have recently been improved in terms of capacity, safety and pedestrian/cycle facilities. The peak periods of traffic generation of the proposed campsite will be outside of the peak periods of operation of the highway network and Highway Network Management Officers consider that it would not be of a level that would cause capacity issues nor warrant mitigation works.

4.58 The improvement of the aforementioned junctions together with the construction of the Park & Ride site mean that the site can be considered to be sustainable. Pedestrian and cycle facilities exist (including an underpass to cross the A1237) to make journeys to the city centre by non car modes a viable option. The Park & Ride is a short walk away, within 400 metres.

4.59 In order to improve the pedestrian and cycle facilities Highway Network Management Officers have negotiated and secured improvements to the footway running along the Western side of Northfield Lane. The existing footway will be widened to a minimum width of 2.4 metres in order to provide a shared unsegregated pedestrian/cycle facility which is considered to be a reasonable requirement; this could be secured via a condition.

5.0 CONCLUSION

5.1 The application site is located within the general extent of the York Green Belt and serves a number of Green Belt purposes. As such it falls to be considered under paragraph 87 of the NPPF which states inappropriate development, is by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. Very special circumstances will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness and any other harm is clearly outweighed by other considerations (Loss of Grade I agricultural land, and harm to landscape). National planning policy dictates that substantial weight should be

given to any harm to the Green Belt. In addition to the harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, it is considered that the proposal would have a harmful effect on openness and that the proposal would undermine two of the five Green Belt purposes. Substantial weight is attached to this harm which the proposal would cause to the Green Belt. Planning permission should only be granted if the potential harm caused to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations. It is only if those “other considerations” are of sufficient weight that very special circumstances will exist. It is the cumulative weight of these other factors that matters; they do not individually need to be “very special” in their own right.

5.2 The applicant has advanced the following factors which they consider to amount to very special circumstances in respect of the proposal:-

- The land should not be defined as greenbelt
- There is a 'need' for the development
- Economic benefit to the city
- Lack of suitable, available and deliverable sites within the urban area
- Screening

5.3 The Local Planning Authority has carefully considered the justification put forward by the applicant in support of the proposals and, having weighed these considerations against the harms that have been identified, has concluded that these considerations do not individually or cumulatively clearly outweigh these harms. It is concluded that very special circumstances do not exist to justify the proposal.

5.4 If the decision is taken to approve the application the Town and Country Planning (Consultation) (England) Direction 2009 requires that proposals that constitute inappropriate development within the Green Belt, and are recommended for approval, are referred to the Secretary of State for consideration.

6.0 RECOMMENDATION: Refuse

1 The application site is within the general extent of the Green Belt as set out by policy Y1 of The Yorkshire and Humber Plan - Regional Spatial Strategy. In accordance with paragraph 89 of the National Planning Policy Framework it is considered that the touring caravan site including 91 caravan pitches, 10 camping pods, reception/shop/cycle hire store, wardens accommodation, garage, amenity blocks, service buildings, refuse store, together with an extensive internal road layout, parking spaces, 2 metre high bund surrounding Northfield Terrace, and 2 metre high fence to the western boundary constitutes inappropriate development which, according to Section 9 of the Framework is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. The

proposal conflicts with the essential characteristics of Green Belts (their openness and their permanence) and the purposes of including land within the Green Belt by resulting in encroachment of development into the countryside, the sprawl, merging and coalescence of development; and is harmful to the openness of the Green. The Local Planning Authority has carefully considered the justification put forward by the applicant in support of the proposals but has concluded that these considerations do not clearly outweigh the harm to the Green Belt and other harm (being loss of Grade 1 agricultural land, harm to visual and landscape amenity) when substantial weight is given to the harm to the Green Belt. As such very special circumstances do not exist to justify the proposal. The proposal is therefore contrary to Section 9 of the National Planning Policy Framework and policy YH9 of the Yorkshire and Humber Plan and also conflict with Draft Development Control Local Plan (2005) policy GB1: Development in the Green Belt.

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:

- Advised applicant on the issues with the Tourism Need and Economic Impact Assessment
- Advised applicant of initial concerns regarding green belt, noise, and archaeology.
- Applicant requested additional time to submit information to support their case

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

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