

## COMMITTEE REPORT

**Date:** 6 March 2014                      **Ward:** Strensall  
**Team:** Major and                      **Parish:** Strensall With Towthorpe  
                    Commercial Team                      Parish Council

**Reference:** 14/00096/FUL  
**Application at:** Country Park Pottery Lane Strensall York YO32 5TJ  
**For:** Change of use of part of caravan site to display and sell  
                    caravans  
**By:** Miss Raquel Nelson  
**Application Type:** Full Application  
**Target Date:** 14 March 2014  
**Recommendation:** Refuse

### 1.0 PROPOSAL

1.1 Country Park Pottery Lane Strensall comprises a 40 pitch touring caravan site in the process of development lying within the Green Belt to the north west of Strensall village. Planning permission is presently sought for the change of use of an area of up to 6 pitches directly to the north of the existing amenity/site office block for the retail sale of touring caravans on an appointment only basis.

### 2.0 POLICY CONTEXT

2.1 Development Plan Allocation:

City Boundary York City Boundary 0001  
DC Area Teams East Area (2) 0005

2.2 Policies:

CYGB1      Development within the Green Belt  
CYV5      Caravan and camping sites

### 3.0 CONSULTATIONS

3.1 Strensall with Towthorpe Parish Council object to the proposal on the grounds that:-

- the proposal would lead to access to the site being maintained throughout the year even during the period when the previous planning permission indicates that it should not be operational;
- the proposal would not be appropriate development within the Green Belt; and

- the types of caravan to be sold from the site remain unspecified with static caravans being significantly more visually harmful to the open character of the Green Belt than touring caravans.

3.2 One letter of objection has been received in respect of the proposal expressing concern in relation to:

- the impact of the proposal upon the open character of the Green Belt;
- the appropriateness of introducing a retail use of this nature within the Green Belt;
- the lack of clarity in terms of the types of caravan to be sold ;
- the maintenance of access to the site throughout the year when a previous permission had restricted the site to a seasonal pattern of usage ;
- the visual impact of the lighting that has been erected along the site access road.

## **4.0 APPRAISAL**

### **4.1 KEY CONSIDERATIONS INCLUDE**

- Impact upon the open character and purposes of designation of the Green Belt;
- Sustainability of the proposal.

### **STATUS OF THE YORK DEVELOPMENT CONTROL LOCAL PLAN**

4.2 The York Development Control Local Plan was approved for Development Control purposes in April 2005; its policies are material considerations in arriving at Development Management decisions 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 GREEN BELT**

4.3 Central Government Planning Policy in respect of planning in Green Belt areas as outlined in paragraph 89 of the National Planning Policy Framework identifies new built development within the Green Belt as inappropriate and therefore automatically harmful unless it comes within one of a number of specific categories including the provision of appropriate facilities for outdoor recreation as long as the openness of the Green Belt is preserved and there is no conflict with Green Belt purposes.

4.4 Policy GB1 of the York Development Control Local Plan sets out a clear policy presumption that planning permission will only be forthcoming in the Green Belt where the scale, location and design of such development would not detract from the open character of the Green Belt, conflict with the purposes of including land within the Green Belt and be for one of a number of purposes deemed to be appropriate including essential facilities for outdoor sport and recreation.

4.5 The application site comprises a 40 pitch touring caravan site, the planning permission for which has yet to be fully implemented. The current application has been justified by the applicant on the basis that the sale of up to six caravans on an appointment basis throughout the year would be ancillary to the primary caravan site use. However the proposal would result in the layout of additional pitches at the more visually sensitive northern end of the site. The operational permission in respect of the site as a whole, seeks that the site be closed between November and March in order to safeguard the openness of the Green Belt, as this is the period when the surrounding landscaping gives the lowest level of protection. A landscape supporting statement has been submitted with the proposal, however this relates instead to the current planning permission for the operation of the caravan site instead (ref:- 12/03270/FUL). By the introduction of an outdoor retail use the proposal would be inappropriate development within the Green Belt. In order to overcome the usual presumption against inappropriate development within the Green Belt a case for "very special circumstances" should be advanced. It has not been in this case. The proposal is not therefore felt to be appropriate in terms of either the requirements of paragraph 89 of the National Planning Policy Framework or Policy GB1 of the Development Control Local Plan.

4.6 During the peak period of operation of the caravan site during the summer months the additional impact of the retail use would be more modest, however for much of the year it is likely to be a significant element of the operation of the site and during the winter months the primary operation taking place. The layout of the site has become dense and heavily engineered in appearance with a network of formalised pitches with concrete or gravel bases, service roads and associated service connections. The proposed activity would only result in further harm to the open character of the Green Belt. A year round use that would by its nature involve a significant amount of comings and goings would also require enhanced lighting which of itself would be harmful to the open character of the Green Belt.

#### SUSTAINABILITY OF THE PROPOSAL:-

4.7 The site lies a significant distance to the north west of Strensall village and is accessed via comparatively narrow and windy roads. Customers of the site will approach by car creating disturbance to adjoining properties. At the same time it is unclear to what extent caravans will be delivered and removed by commercial vehicles with associated impacts.

No indication has been given as to how the caravans to be sold would be repaired and maintained at the site with further implications for the sustainability of the proposal.

## **5.0 CONCLUSION**

5.1 The Country Park , Pottery Lane, Strensall comprises a 40 pitch touring caravan site presently in the process of development lying within the Green Belt to the north west of Strensall village. Planning permission is sought for the sale of up to 6 caravans on an area directly to the north of the amenity/office block on the basis of a level of retail sales being ancillary to the approved caravan site use. The caravan site use has not however been implemented.

5.2 The proposed sales area would result in the creation of additional pitches to service it and would constitute inappropriate development within the Green Belt. No case for "very special circumstances" has been advanced in justification. The proposed sales use would be active throughout the year including through the November to March period when the site would otherwise be closed and when the level of protection afforded by the surrounding landscaping would be at its lowest. Significant and visually harmful levels of site lighting would also be required to facilitate such a winter time use. Impact upon the openness of the Green Belt arising from the proposal would therefore be both significant and harmful.

5.3 The application is at the same time unclear as to levels of potential retail customers who would visit the site and how the caravans to be sold would be delivered. As a direct function of the nature of the proposal and its potential clientele virtually all journeys to the site will be by car and along roads that are not necessarily ideal. It can be clearly argued that like a car or commercial vehicle dealership the proposal would be more appropriately located in sustainability terms within the urban area. It is felt therefore that the proposal is not acceptable in planning terms and it is recommended that planning permission be withheld.

## **6.0 RECOMMENDATION: Refuse**

1 The proposal by virtue of extending the developed area of the site and by introducing an element of outdoor retail use throughout the calendar year would materially harm the open character of the Green Belt and the purposes of including land within it by introducing a land use more appropriately located within the urban area contrary to Policy GB1 of the York Development Control Local Plan and 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:

It was suggested that the application be withdrawn pending a detailed justification to be brought forward for the proposal.

However, the applicant was unwilling to withdraw the application, resulting in planning permission being refused for the reasons stated.

### **Contact details:**

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