Item No. 13

APPLICATION NUMBER CB/15/04456/FULL

LOCATION Land at Long Lake Meadow, High Road,

Seddington, Sandy, SG19 1NU

PROPOSAL Change of use of land to use as a residential

caravan site for the accommodation of up to 5

gypsy families, including the laying of

hardstanding.

PARISH Sandy WARD Sandy

WARD COUNCILLORS Cllrs Maudlin, Smith & Stock

CASE OFFICER
DATE REGISTERED
EXPIRY DATE
APPLICANT

Alex Harrison
18 November 2015
13 January 2016
Mr L Connors

AGENT Philip Brown Associates

REASON FOR Call in by Cllr Maudlin for the following reasons:

• Highway safety due to additional traffic at the

DETERMINE access in a dangerous location.

Noise pollution to potential residents

RECOMMENDED

DECISION Approval Recommended

Reason for Recommendation:

The proposed development is in a sustainable location and would provide permanent pitches towards the Councils 5 year supply of gypsy and traveller accommodation needs in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework and Planning Policy for Traveller Sites. The proposal would not result in significant harm to the character of the area or an adverse impact on the residential amenity of neighbouring properties to the extent that it would outweigh the benefit of providing pitches at a time when the Council cannot demonstrate a 5 year land supply. It is acceptable in terms of highway safety therefore by reason of its size, design and location, is in conformity with Policy DM3 of the Core Strategy and Management Policies, November 2009; and The National Planning Policy Framework, Planning Policy for Traveller.

Site Location:

The site is located at Long Lake Meadow, High Road in the small hamlet of Seddington, accessed directly off the A1 trunk road. It is located within the open countryside, in a relatively isolated position with the closest residential property being Tye Cottage 30m to the north of the access track.

The land within which the application relates is a field to the west of a gypsy/traveller caravan site and stable and paddock all of which is under the control of the applicant and access from the same site entrance. The site is close to but outside of

The Application:

Planning permission is sought to change the use of the land to provide up to 5 pitches for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation.

The accommodation would be for permanent pitches and would have space for a caravan, either a static caravan or mobile home or tourer, and car parking for two vehicles.

The application was withdrawn from the Committee Agenda of 20 July 2016 following a request from Highways England for additional information relating to the access to the site. This information was submitted and has since been considered.

RELEVANT POLICIES:

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (March 2012)

Core Strategy and Development Management Policies - North 2009

CS5 (Providing Homes)

CS14 (High Quality Development)

CS16 (Landscape and Woodland)

DM3 (High Quality Development)

DM4 (Development within and beyond Settlement Envelopes)

DM14 (Landscape and Woodland)

Mid Bedfordshire Local Plan Review December (2005)

Saved policy - HO12 - Gypsies

Draft Gypsy and Traveller Plan

In June 2014, Central Bedfordshire Council submitted the Gypsy and Traveller Plan to the Planning Inspectorate for Examination after a long process of preparation and consultation.

In August 2014, the issues and matters that the Inspector wished to discuss were received. In doing so, he raised significant issues on a substantial number of matters and asked the Council to undertake a considerable amount of additional work prior to the commencement of the Examination hearings.

Following considerations of these matters Officers concluded that it was unrealistic for the Council to respond within the proposed timescale and recommended to Members (via Executive on 19th August 2014 and subsequently at Council on 11th September 2014) that the plan was withdrawn. This document therefore carries little weight in the determination of this application. However for the purpose of assessing a planning application for the suitability of a proposed site, the policies contained within the document are considered to be useful guidelines as to whether a proposal is considered to be acceptable for its intended purpose.

Those policies thought to be relevant are:
GT5 (Assessing planning applications for Gypsy and Traveller sites)

Development Strategy

At the meeting of Full Council on 19 November 2015 it was resolved to withdraw the Development Strategy. Preparation of the Central Bedfordshire Local Plan has begun. A substantial volume of evidence gathered over a number of years will help support this document. These technical papers are consistent with the spirit of the NPPF and therefore will remain on our website as material considerations which may inform further development management decisions.

Supplementary Planning Guidance/Other Documents

Central Bedfordshire Design Guide (March 2014)

Relevant Planning History:

MB/90/00136	Full: Permanent siting of mobile home – Refused 13.03.1990 Appeal Dismissed	
MB/95/01068	Full: Retention of use of land for siting of mobile home, driveway and barn for storage purposes – Refused 21.11.1995 Appeal Granted 18.06.1997	
MB/99/00416	Full: Retention of mobile home and alteration of existing vehicular access – Refused Appeal Granted 15.11.1999	
MB/00/01795	Full: Retain mobile home for residential use without compliance with the temporary period specified in condition 2 attached to appeal decision dated 15.11.1999 ref: T/APP/J0215/A/1027879/P4 – Refused	
CB/09/05652	Lawful Development Certificate (Existing): Use of land and dwelling for residential (C3) – Refused	
CB/10/02306	Lawful Development Certificate for existing use: Retention of existing dwelling house. Refused.	
CB/13/00450	Lawful Development Certificate Existing: Stationing and use of structure for residential purposes	
CB/13/04088	Lawful Development Certificate Proposed use: Increase the number of caravans from 1 to 5 for occupation for residential purposes. Allowed on appeal.	
CB/ENC/13/0492	Enforcement Notice. Requiring removal of hardstanding. Appeal allowed in respect of land shown hatched black. Appeal dismissed in respect of land outside the land shown hatched black.	
CB/15/00892/FULL	Erection of stable building & laying of hardstanding. Approved.	

Consultees:

Sandy Town Council

The Council has previously received reports that Central Bedfordshire Council Officers were in the process of enforcement action in relation to this site. The enforcement action was against the same applicant as the above. I do not believe the Council were notified of the outcome of that action.

To assist Members I would be grateful if you could advise the definitive position of the site, including how matters currently stand regarding the site; whether the applicant is still in breach of previous decisions and if enforcement action is still pending.

Highways

The proposal is for the siting of five residential caravans using an existing access taken from the A1. The proposal will affect Highways East and they should be consulted regarding any highway implications relating to the proposal.

However it would be prudent to include conditions for surfacing and drainage within the site, a turning area and a refuse collection point if permission is issued.

Highways England

No objection raised.

Internal Drainage Board

The Board objects to this application as the applicant previously agreed to provide a flood compensation area, and it is unclear if the proposed development is on land that was designated as a flood compensation area for a previous application.

Environment Agency

Raised no objections

Pollution Team

The applicant has failed to demonstrate:

- That noise from the A1M trunk road and adjacent land uses will not be to the detriment of future occupiers
- The site is free from any land contamination

Waste Services

Regarding the above planning application, please see our comments below:

- The Council's waste collection pattern for Seddington / Sandy is as follows:
- Week 1 1 x 240 litre residual waste wheelie bin, 1 x 25 litre food waste caddy
- Week 2 1 x 240 litre recycling wheelie bin, 1 x 25 litre food waste caddy.
- Garden waste bags will not be provided as the allocated sites do not include any grassed areas.

Wherever possible, refuse collection vehicles will only use adopted highways. The properties on the proposed development are accessed via a private driveway, therefore these residents will be required to pull their bins to the entrance of the adopted highway. The plan should indicate both where bins are to be stored and where they are to be presented on waste collection days, with enough space for the waste collection vehicle to pull off from the A1 main highway.

Housing Officer Ecology

Development Had no comments to make

I have no objection to the proposal but as the site lies within the Greensand Ridge Nature Improvement Area and as the NPPF calls for development to deliver a net gain for biodiversity I would ask that the impact on hard standing on the existing grassland is offset by the introduction of a grassland management plan. This support biodiversity friendly management should techniques such as that recommended by Bumblebee Conservation

Other Representations:

Neighbours

1 letter of objection received from the occupier of Tye Cottage raising the following objections:

- The new development is outside the Inspector's recommended permitted development area.
- The increase in traffic flow would constitute an increased danger on a major road. The entrance is at the end of a lay-by with barely enough room to turn in and an increase of traffic would exacerbate this problem even more.
- There is a government legislation against permitting the increases of green field sites and open countryside to travellers.
- As a resident of the area we or no one in this hamlet have mains drainage due to the age and small population. With an increase of this development there would need to have some major infrastructure.
- Fear of future development if this is permitted.

Determining Issues:

The main considerations of the application are;

- 1. Principle
- 2. Affect on the Character and Appearance of the Area
- **Neighbouring Amenity** 3.
- **Highway Considerations** 4.
- 5. Planning Balance

6. Other Considerations

Considerations

1. Principle of Development

- 1.1 The site lies outside of any settlement, the closest being Biggleswade to the south. In policy terms it is within the open countryside where there is a general presumption against the granting of planning permission for new development as set out by Policy DM4 of the Core Strategy and Development Management Policies Document (2009). There are no dwellings or other buildings in the immediate vicinity of the site.
- 1.2 Planning Policy for Traveller Sites 2015 (PPTS) guidance sets out that Local Authorities should ensure that traveller sites are sustainable economically, socially and environmentally. The guidance requires that Local Planning Authorities carry out a full assessment of the need of Gypsies and Travellers in their area and identify a supply of deliverable sites sufficient to provide 5 years worth of sites against their locally set targets.
- 1.3 Paragraph 25 of the PPTS sets out that if a local authority cannot demonstrate an up-to-date five-year supply of deliverable sites, this should be a significant material consideration in any subsequent planning decision when considering applications for the grant of temporary consent.

1.4 Gypsy and Traveller Pitch Provision

The need for Gypsy and Traveller pitches to 2035 is set out in the Gypsy, Traveller and Showperson Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) (August 2016) This identifies a need for 23 pitches over this period with up to a further 48 pitches to be delivered through a criteria based policy. The total need within the plan period is up to 71 pitches. 14 of these pitches need to be delivered by 2021 in order to ensure the Council has an up to date 5 year supply.

1.5 Sustainability

The PPTS states, in para 14, that:

14. When assessing the suitability of sites in rural or semi-rural settings, local planning authorities should ensure that the scale of such sites does not dominate the nearest settled community.

However, para 25 of that document also states that:

- 25. Local planning authorities should very strictly limit new traveller site development in open countryside that is away from existing settlements or outside areas allocated in the development plan. Local planning authorities should ensure that sites in rural areas respect the scale of, and do not dominate, the nearest settled community, and avoid placing an undue pressure on the local infrastructure.
- 1.6 The site is within the open countryside it would be an extension to an existing site. Therefore while it is new development it is not per se establishing a new site. The content of the PPTS seeks to ensure sites are sustainable in their location but also acknowledges that sites can be in rural locations. A 2015 appeal decision at Woodside, Hatch provides guidance into the location of sites

and distances from services. It noted that there were sizeable settlements close by, explicitly listing Sandy (1.4 miles), Upper Caldecote (2 miles) and Northill (1.3 miles). This application site is 1.6 miles to Biggleswade however it is noted that the return journey would be somewhat longer due to the nature of the A1 as residents would have to travel to the edge of Sandy to then come back to the site, approx. 4.3 miles. The distance to Biggleswade for services is comparable to those already considered acceptable by the Planning Inspectorate and while the return journey would be longer it is considered that, as an extension to an existing site, this would not be sufficient reason to refuse planning permission when considering the location of a site. Therefore it is considered that there should be no objection to the location of the site away from any established settlements in this location.

1.7 The issue of need.

In a recent appeal decision at Twin Acres, Arlesey the Inspector noted:

"Although the Council prepared the Central Bedfordshire Gypsy and Traveller Local Plan, that plan has been withdrawn and there are no allocated sites."

This decision has previously been referred to in reports to this Committee. The Inspector went on to say:

"It is clear there is a significant unmet, immediate need for gypsy and traveller pitches" and again to say "As a matter of policy the absence of an up to date five year supply of deliverable sites is a significant material consideration in applications for temporary permission by virtue of paragraph 25 of the PPTS. However, this factor is capable of being a material consideration in any case and with another appeal ref APP/P0240/A/12/2179237, concerning a site within Central Bedfordshire, the Secretary of State concluded that the need for sites carried considerable weight and the failure of policy was also afforded significant weight. That must remain the case today."

- 1.8 Recent planning permissions and appeal decisions over the last year have granted consent for a number of additional pitches, including making permanent some temporary pitches. Current site provision in Central Bedfordshire is continually being reviewed through monitoring and site visits including the biannual caravan count. The Council has therefore commissioned a further GTAA, which will have a baseline updated to 2016 and a new 5 year supply period to 2021. It will necessarily reflect the provisions of the revised PPTS, including the new "planning" definition of gypsies and travellers which requires consideration of the extent to which their "nomadic habit of life" is continuing (Annex 1 para.2).
- 1.9 In the meanwhile, the Council accepts that whilst the immediate backlog may well now have been resolved, and a new site at Dunton Lane was recently approved, there remains an unmet, albeit currently imprecise, need going forward resulting in the lack of a 5 year supply of suitable accommodation to 2019. This application for five permanent additional gypsy and traveller pitches as an extension to an existing site is therefore considered acceptable in principle.

2. The effect on the character and appearance of the area

2.1 Currently the site lies outside of any recognised settlement envelope and is located on the edge of Seddington, a small hamlet of dwellings. It is well

screened from the public realm by existing tree planting adjacent to the A1 with timber fencing behind and there are no views through to the site as a result. The character of the site and views from the wider area will materially change as a result of this proposal. The screening would be retained as part of the application and there are opportunities to shore up the southern boundary by requiring landscaping to be provided by condition.

- 2.2 When considering planning applications, paragraph 26 of the PTSS states:
 - 26. When considering applications, local planning authorities should attach weight to the following matters:
 - effective use of previously developed (brownfield), untidy or derelict land
 - sites being well planned or soft landscaped in such a way as to positively enhance the environment and increase its openness
 - promoting opportunities for healthy lifestyles, such as ensuring adequate landscaping and play areas for children
 - not enclosing a site with so much hard landscaping, high walls or fences, that the impression may be given that the site and its occupants are deliberately isolated from the rest of the community
- 2.3 Development of the site will materially alter the character and appearance of the area. Built form will be introduced onto the site in the form of 5 permanent pitches. This built form will affect the character of the area and although the existing significant landscape buffer on the west boundary screens the site from the public realm. It is noted that advice states that screening should not be designed to hide developments such as this however in this regard the landscaping is existing.
- 2.4 The existing and further proposed landscaping secured by condition would soften the impact of the development and accord with para 26 of the PTSS. The buffer would help screen a development that proposes what is regarded as low-scale buildings and its associated development. The PPTS states that, in considering applications weight should be given to not enclosing a site with so much hard landscaping, high walls or fences, that the impression may be given that the site and its occupants are deliberately isolated from the rest of the community (para 26). The landscape buffers avoid a need to consider this type of enclosure and would screen any erection of a more solid enclosure if necessary.
- 2.5 On the basis of the considerations above the impact on the character and appearance of the area is considered to not be detrimental to the extent that it would warrant a refusal of planning permission when considered as part of the individual merits of the scheme.

3. The Impact on residential amenity

3.1 Existing residential amenity.

There are existing dwellings to the north of the site, the nearest of which is Tye cottage, adjacent to the access for the site. The application site is screened from this neighbour by virtue of an existing row of mature conifer trees within the applicant's control. Admittedly some of these would have to be removed to create the access into the site however the layout plan shows the majority retained. The presence of these trees would act as a visual barrier for the neighbouring residents and ensure they would not be overlooked. It would also contribute to reducing noise impacts although these would be considered

against the background noise level of vehicles travelling on the A1 at national speed limit. It is therefore considered that the proposed development would not detrimentally harm the amenity of the adjacent neighbouring resident

3.2 <u>Proposed Residential Amenity.</u>

The proposed layout shows that the pitches are sited with adequate room for accommodation. Each pitch also has space around these provisions and the proposal is therefore considered to provide suitable amenity space for future residents. There are no standards as to pitch sizes to consider proposals against and as a result the spacing between pitches and nature of development are considered to ensure suitable amenity and privacy levels would be established for residents of the proposed development

3.3 The Council's Pollution Team has raised objection on the grounds that the applicant has failed to demonstrate that the development addresses noise impact from the A1. No such information has been provided with this application however it is considered that the nature of the site is such that measures could be incorporated to address the concern. The Pollution Team do not consider that the matter can be dealt with via condition however this is not agreed with and it is considered that a condition would be pertinent. The existing landscaping is dense to the extent that an acoustic fence could be set up behind it, within the site, to address noise issues, without being overly prominent and affecting the character of the area. Therefore while the objection from the Pollution Team is noted it is considered that it would be matter that could be dealt with by condition and would not therefore substantiate a reason to refuse planning permission.

4. Highway Considerations

- 4.1 The site can be accessed via a slip lane off of the A1 which serves the existing properties in Seddington and therefore it is not gained directly from the trunk road itself. The Highway Officer has raised no objection to the application subject to a condition requiring the access to be in place before the pitches are occupied which is reasonable. The nature of the existing access is such that it is considered to be able to accommodate the additional traffic capacity and there is no requirement to make alterations. Highways England had previously requested an assessment of the access junction onto the A1 to ensure that the increased traffic numbers could safely access the trunk road. Following the submission of additional information Highways England confirmed they had no objection to the scheme.
- 4.2 In terms of on site provision the report has advised that each pitch provides suitable space for two vehicles. The on-site parking provision is therefore considered to be generous and acceptable as a result.
- 4.3 On the basis of the information provided the application is not considered to cause any concerns regarding highway impacts that would warrant a reason to refuse planning permission.

5. Planning Balance

5.1 The Council is unable to demonstrate a deliverable 5 year supply of sites. Therefore significant weight should be afforded to sites subject to planning

applications that would contribute to this supply. The PTTS states that proposals should be assessed in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development. The report has concluded that the site is considered to be in a sustainable location for a gypsy and traveller site and would be suitably close to services and facilities within Biggleswade. The site is located close to an existing community although it is acknowledged that Seddington is not large and cannot sustain a community on its own. It can be regarded as an extension of an existing site in a rural location which would not be dominated by the proposal, which does accord with government advice. The site would provide G&T accommodation at a time when there is a need for pitches and this application would contribute to its growth. The principal impact of the scheme is that it amounts to development in the open countryside

- 5.2 Taking account of the above points the site is considered to be acceptable in light of the three strands (social, environmental and economical) of sustainable development as set out in the NPPF and can therefore be regarded as such.
- 5.3 In terms of the impacts resulting from the scheme, they should be weighed against the benefits as perceived. In this instance the report has highlighted that the impacts would not result in significant and demonstrable harm. The concerns regarding its isolated location are noted however it is clear that gypsy and traveller provision in rural locations can be accommodated.
- 5.4 In considering the previous appeal decisions at Twin Acres and at Woodside it is considered that the weight that should be attributed to the provision of pitches is significant to the extent that it should outweigh the impacts of the scheme.

6 Other Issues

6.1 Flooding

Objection is raised on the grounds that the site is potentially an area of flood compensation required by the Internal Drainage Board in approving the application for the stable block and paddock east of the site. This compensation area was required by condition and has not yet been approved. As the works have been carried out this detail is being pursued by enforcement. The agent has advised and submitted a plan to show that the required flood compensation area can be provided elsewhere on land within the applicants control and therefore this application does not result in its removal. This area can be secured by condition.

6.2 Drainage

Concern has been raised on this ground. The concerns are noted however it is reasonable to require such details as condition. Given the site's location close to the flood risk zone and the increase in hardstanding proposed it is considered to be reasonable to require such details by condition to ensure that measures are put in place to provide suitable site drainage.

6.3 Enforcement issues

The Town Council has raised comments over clarification on previous enforcement matters on the site. An enforcement investigation was made over the laying of hardstanding east of this site on land within the blue line area. Since the enforcement case was opened the Council has granted consent for a

stable and paddock which include the aforementioned hardstanding. The approval made the hardstanding lawful and no further enforcement proceedings were required.

6.4 Human Rights and Equality issues:

Based on the information submitted there are no known issues raised in the context of Human Rights/equalities Act 2010 and as such there would be no relevant implications with this proposal.

Recommendation:

That Planning Permission be granted subject to the following:

RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS / REASONS

- The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this permission.
 - Reason: To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.
- The site shall not be occupied by any persons other than gypsies and travellers as defined in Annex 1 of Planning Policy for Traveller Sites, August 2015, or any subsequent guidance.
 - Reason: To limit the use of the site to gypsies and travellers as the proposal is justifies on addressing a need for such accommodation in accordance with the Planning Policy for Traveller Sites 2015.
- No commercial activities shall take place on the land, including the storage of materials.
 - Reason: In order to ensure appropriate development in the open countryside and to protect the amenities of local residents in the interests of policies DM3 and DM4 of the Core Strategy and Development Management Policies 2009.
- Notwithstanding the details in the approved plans, no development shall take place until a landscaping scheme to include all hard and soft landscaping and a scheme for landscape maintenance for a period of five years following the implementation of the landscaping scheme have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The landscaping scheme shall be submitted as part of a revised site layout showing a planting strip running the length of the southern boundary and shall include details, including sections, of the proposed landscaping bund hereby approved. The approved scheme shall be implemented by the end of the full planting season immediately following the completion and/or first use of any separate part of the development (a full planting season means the period from October to March). The trees, shrubs and grass shall subsequently be maintained in accordance with the approved landscape maintenance

scheme and any which die or are destroyed during this period shall be replaced during the next planting season.

Reason: To ensure an acceptable standard of landscaping. (Sections 7 & 11, NPPF)

Notwithstanding the details in the approved plans, no development shall take place until details of the proposed walls and means of enclosures have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority indicating the positions, design, materials and type of boundary treatment to be erected. The boundary treatment shall be completed in accordance with the approved scheme before the use hereby permitted is commenced and be thereafter retained.

Reason: To safeguard the appearance of the completed development and the visual amenities of the locality. (Section 7, NPPF)

No development shall take place until details have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority of a scheme of proposed noise mitigation at the site to address noise impacts from vehicles on the A1 trunk road. The works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plans, be in place prior to the occupation of the first pitch hereby approved and thereafter be retained.

Reason: To ensure that the site is able to achieve suitable amenity levels for residents in respect of noise to accord with policy DM3 of the Core Strategy and Development Management Policies 2009.

No development shall take place until a foul water strategy has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Unless otherwise agreed in writing the works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details prior to the occupation of any pitch. The permitted works shall be retained thereafter.

Reason: To ensure suitable drainage is provided and maintained in the interests of flooding and high quality development.

No development shall take place on site until a detailed scheme for the provision and future management and maintenance of surface water drainage, together with a timetable for its implementation, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The drainage scheme shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details and timetable and shall be retained thereafter.

Reason: To ensure suitable drainage is provided and maintained in the interests of flooding and high quality development.

9 No vehicle over 3.5 tonnes shall be stationed, parked or stored on this site.

Reason: In order to protect the amenities of local residents.

No development shall take place until the applicant has provided

details showing the extent of and position of an area of land within their control to be lowered to provide equal flood storage to that lost by construction of the stable block (CB/15/00892/FULL) and the development hereby approved and that land has been lowered in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: A pre commencement condition is required as the site is located within Flood Zone 3 and as such the details of compensatory work to allow for the loss of flood storage to prevent flood risk to adjacent properties and those downstream will need to be agreed and implemented. Policy CS13 CSDMP

The development hereby permitted shall not be carried out except in complete accordance with the details shown on the submitted plans, numbers CBC/001, CBC/002 and CBC/003.

Reason: To identify the approved plan/s and to avoid doubt.

INFORMATIVE NOTES TO APPLICANT

DECICION

1. This permission relates only to that required under the Town & Country Planning Acts and does not include any consent or approval under any other enactment or under the Building Regulations. Any other consent or approval which is necessary must be obtained from the appropriate authority.

Statement required by the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 - Part 5, Article 35

The Council acted pro-actively through positive engagement with the applicant during the determination process which led to improvements to the scheme. The Council has therefore acted pro-actively to secure a sustainable form of development in line with the requirements of the Framework (paragraphs 186 and 187) and in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.

DECISION		