

The application seeks full planning permission for the change of use of an agricultural field to a 64 pitch campsite at Park Hill Farm, Park Lane which is to operate 4 months of the year. The application also seeks permission for a new toilet and shower building, a new treatment plant and associated drainage. The application site falls within the rural area of the Borough on land designated as an Area of Landscape Conservation as indicated on the Local Development Framework Proposals Map. The application site also lies adjacent to Burnt Wood which is a Site of Special Scientific Interest.

**The 8 week determination period expires on the 13<sup>th</sup> June, however an extension of time has been agreed until the 14<sup>th</sup> October 2022.**

### **RECOMMENDATION**

**PERMIT subject to conditions relating to the following matters:-**

- 1. Time limit condition**
- 2. Approved Plans**
- 3. Materials**
- 4. All works to be completed in accordance with the recommendations set out in the tree report**
- 5. Replanting of hedgerows along the proposed passing place**
- 6. Soft Landscaping Scheme**
- 7. Restriction of any external lighting**
- 8. Provision of passing places prior to first occupation**
- 9. Restriction of camp site to 4 months of each year only**
- 10. No user of the site is to stay longer than 28 days at any one time and a register of all visitors/occupiers shall be maintained and made available to the LPA**
- 11. Camp site to be for tents only with no allowance for caravans**
- 12. Restriction to 64 camping pitches only**
- 13. No tents are to be on site outside of the approved operational times of the camp site**
- 14. Toilet block to be installed prior to first use of the camp site**
- 15. Visibility splays from the site are to be provided in accordance with the submitted details and retained for the lifetime of the development**

### **Reason for Recommendation**

The location of the proposed campsite represents a sustainable location for new rural business relating to tourism within the Borough and is therefore acceptable in principle. In all other respects it has been demonstrated that the proposed development, subject to appropriate planning conditions, represents a sustainable form of development that would not harm the character of the area, the amenity of existing and future occupiers or cause significant highway safety implications. The proposals accord with development plan policies and the guidance and requirements of the NPPF.

### **Statement as to how the Local Planning Authority has worked with the applicant in a positive and proactive manner in dealing with this application**

Additional information has been submitted in support of the application to overcome issues raised by relevant consultees and the development is now considered to be a sustainable form of development in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework.

### **Key Issues**

The application seeks full planning permission for the change of use of an agricultural field to a campsite at Park Hill Farm, Park Lane which is to operate 4 months of the year. The application also seeks permission for a new toilet and shower facility, a treatment plant and associated drainage. The

application site falls within the rural area of the Borough on land designated as an Area of Landscape Conservation as indicated on the Local Development Framework Proposals Map.

The main issues in the consideration of the application are:

- Is the principle of development acceptable?
- Design and impact on the character and form of the area,
- Impact on residential amenity
- Parking and impact on highways safety
- Impact on trees
- Impact on SSSI

### **Is the principle of development acceptable?**

The application site is located in a rural location, within the open countryside.

Park Hill Farm is an established agricultural holding which has been in operation for a number of years. The Farm currently contains a small farm shop which is open to customers.

Saved Policy C17 of the Local Plan requires that certain considerations be given to new camping and caravan sites within the Borough, these considerations include the visual impact of proposals, the impact on residential amenity, the impact on highway safety and the need for such facilities in the area.

Paragraph 84 of the NPPF supports the creation and expansion of rural businesses.

The application site is located in a rural location and would require most users of the campsite to rely on a private vehicle to access the site. Although unsustainable in that respect, paragraph 85 of the NPPF notes that:

*'Planning policies and decisions should recognise that sites to meet local business and community needs in rural areas may have to be found adjacent to or beyond existing settlements, and in locations that are not well served by public transport. In these circumstances it will be important to ensure that development is sensitive to its surroundings, does not have an unacceptable impact on local roads and exploits any opportunities to make a location more sustainable (for example by improving the scope for access on foot, by cycling or by public transport). The use of previously developed land, and sites that are physically well-related to existing settlements, should be encouraged where suitable opportunities exist'*

Whilst the application site is only accessible by vehicles from Park Lane, which is an unlit narrow road, the application site is within walking distance from Loggerheads via a public footpath found to the north of the site. Whilst most users of the campsite would be expected to drive to the application site, it would be likely that some users would use the footpath to access the services of Loggerheads during their stay at the site as camping tends to appeal to people seeking a more active holiday who are more likely to be inclined to walk.

It must be acknowledged that camp sites will normally always require a rural location, and that whilst there will be some harm caused by vehicle movements to and from the site, the proposal does also bring with it the economic benefits which will help to enhance the economic viability of the surrounding area. Evidence provided with the application and research completed by officers demonstrates that there is no other camping provision within the nearby area and whilst there is a caravan site to the north of Loggerheads (White House Farm), this site does not allow for tent pitch camping. It can therefore be concluded that there is a lack of camping site provision within the local area which the proposal would help to address if approved.

As assessed later in this report, issues relating to landscaping and visual impact are not considered to be significant and can be addressed through the use of appropriate conditions.

To conclude it is considered, on balance, that the principle of a campsite in this rural location is acceptable subject to appropriate conditions.

### **Visual impact of the proposal**

Paragraph 127 of the National Planning Policy Framework states that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities.

Paragraph 130 of the framework lists 6 criterion, a) – f) with which planning policies and decisions should accord and details, amongst other things, that developments should be visually attractive and sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change.

Policy CSP1 of the adopted Newcastle under Lyme and Stoke on Trent Core Spatial Strategy (CSS) details that new development should be well designed to respect the character, identity and context of the area.

Policy LNPP1 of the Loggerheads Neighbourhood Plan also requires that new development must demonstrate high standards of design and complement the established character of the surrounding context in terms of scale, density, massing, height and degree of set-back from streets and spaces.

The site will change very little in visual terms due to the fact that the camp site will only accommodate tents and not caravans, however it is recognised that the parking of vehicles at the site may result in some temporary visual impact whilst the camp site is in operation. The proposal does however include the creation of a toilet and shower facility which will be housed in a single storey structure that would have a footprint of 6.3m x 6.3m and would feature a pyramidal roof arrangement which would have an eaves height of 2.73m with a total ridge height of 5.8m. The modest scale of the building will ensure it has no significant impact on the wider landscape, and it is considered that the building would be seen in context with other nearby structures that make up the farmstead rather than appearing as an isolated feature in the countryside. The number of existing trees located to the east of the proposed building will also help to soften the visual impacts of the proposal.

Conditions will be used to ensure that there are no caravans allowed on site, and that only 64 pitches for tents are available for use. Subject to the above conditions it is considered that the visual impact of the proposal is acceptable and is in accordance with development plan policies and the requirements of the NPPF.

### **Impact on residential amenity**

Criterion f) within Paragraph 127 of the National Planning Policy Framework states that development should create places that are safe, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users.

Although a concern has been raised by a local resident about potential noise nuisance, given that the nearest property to the site is 450m away and given the level of screening surrounding the application site, it is not considered that there would be any significant impacts on neighbouring properties as a result of the development.

The EHD have raised no concerns to the proposal.

### **Parking and impact on highway safety**

Paragraph 111 of the NPPF states that development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts of development would be severe.

Neighbourhood Plan Policy LNPT1 states that to be supported new development comprising new homes, employment units or community facilities must, subject to viability considerations, demonstrate a balanced and sustainable approach to transport, including:

- *Providing for different modes of transport, including walking and cycling including incorporating secure, covered storage space for cycles*
- *Providing electric car charging points*

- *Ensuring there is no significant negative impact on road safety and severe traffic congestion*
- *Providing safe and suitable access for both vehicles and pedestrians*
- *Incorporating well-connected and permeable pedestrian networks; where not already in place, footways (pavements) are provided to link the site to the existing footway network*

The campsite proposes a total of 64 grass pitches which will be available for 4 months of each year. The Highways Authority have raised concerns due to the unsustainable location of the camp site and the quality of Park Lane, which is an unlit narrow country road. To mitigate some of the highways concerns the HA requested that details of parking areas and new passing places be provided with the application. While these details have been provided, the HA still maintain their objection to the isolated location of the proposed campsite.

Any vehicles travelling to the site would likely use the A53 and then travel the remaining 1.6km along Park Lane which is a travel distance of approximately 5 minutes by car. It is acknowledged that Park Lane is narrow at points, however there are approximately 10 passing places which could be utilised by drivers and it is also recognised that Park Lane is a no-through road.

In addition to the above whilst it is acknowledged that the application site is not ideally suited for large numbers of vehicle arrivals and departures due to the quality of Park Lane, the application site itself can comfortably provide the necessary amount of parking for a camp site. The creation of a new passing place on the private road leading to the site from Park Lane will help to address some of the potential highways impact. Details of visibility splays have also been provided in support of the proposal which demonstrate that the proposed access to the site meets the standard highways requirements and it must be recognised that Highways Authority have raised no objections to the proposed visibility splays for the site.

Some limited weight can also be given to the fact that permitted development rights allow for the temporary change of a field to a campsite for one month of each calendar year, which does provide the applicant with a fall-back position if the application were refused.

Although the application site would be considered to be an unsustainable location with regards to the need for users of the campsite relying on the use of a private vehicle to access the site, camp sites will normally always require to be in a rural location. The Highways objections to the proposal are given weight in the determination of this application, however the impacts on the highway network in this case are not considered to be severe.

Although an objection has been raised by a nearby resident with regards to the deterioration of Park Road, this matter would fall under the control of the Highways Authority and would therefore falls beyond the scope of this report.

### **Impact on Trees**

Policy N12 states that the Council will resist development that would involve the removal of any visually significant tree, shrub or hedge, whether mature or not, unless the need for the development is sufficient to warrant the tree loss and the loss cannot be avoided by appropriate siting or design.

The Landscape Development Section have raised no objections subject to conditions requiring that all works be completed in accordance with the submitted tree report and subject to the section of hedge that it is to be removed to facilitate installation of the first passing place from the main road being replanted.

Subject to the conditions referred to above, the proposal's impact on trees is considered to be acceptable.

### **Impact on Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)**

The application site lies adjacent to Burnt Wood which is a SSSI located directly to the north of the proposed camping area.

Paragraph 180 of the NPPF states that *'development on land within or outside a Site of Special Scientific Interest, and which is likely to have an adverse effect on it (either individually or in combination with other developments), should not normally be permitted. The only exception is where the benefits of the development in the location proposed clearly outweigh both its likely impact on the features of the site that make it of special scientific interest, and any broader impacts on the national network of Sites of Special Scientific Interest'*

There would be no construction works within or adjacent to the SSSI and whilst the camp site field is in close proximity to the woodland, given that the site would be for tents only it is not considered that there would be direct impact upon the SSSI itself. Natural England have been consulted on the application but have not provided any comments.

Given the nature of the proposal and the lack of any direct impact upon the SSSI it is considered that the proposal is in compliance with the requirements of paragraph 180 of the NPPF.

### **Reducing Inequalities**

The Equality Act 2010 says public authorities must comply with the public sector equality duty in addition to the duty not to discriminate. The **public sector equality duty** requires **public authorities** to consider or think about how their policies or decisions affect people who are **protected** under the Equality Act. If a public authority hasn't properly considered its public sector equality duty it can be challenged in the courts.

The duty aims to make sure public authorities think about things like discrimination and the needs of people who are disadvantaged or suffer inequality, when they make decisions. People are protected under the Act if they have protected characteristics. The characteristics that are protected in relation to the public sector equality duty are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

When public authorities carry out their functions the Equality Act says they must have due regard or think about the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't
- Foster or encourage good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't

With regard to this proposal it is considered that it will not have a differential impact on those with protected characteristics

## APPENDIX

### **Policies and proposals in the Development Plan relevant to this decision:**

#### [Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent Core Spatial Strategy \(CSS\) 2006-2026](#)

Policy SP1:	Spatial Principles of Targeted Regeneration
Policy SP3:	Spatial Principles of Movement and Access
Policy ASP6:	Rural Area Spatial Policy
Policy CSP1:	Design Quality
Policy CSP3:	Sustainability and Climate Change

#### [Newcastle-under-Lyme Local Plan \(NLP\) 2011](#)

Policy C17:	Camping and Caravan Sites
Policy H1:	Residential Development: Sustainable Location and Protection of the Countryside
Policy T16:	Development – General Parking Requirements
Policy N12:	Development and the Protection of Trees
Policy N18:	Areas of Landscape Conservation

#### [Loggerheads Neighbourhood Plan \(LNP\) 2013-2033](#)

LNPP1:	Urban Design and Environment
LNPT1:	Sustainable Transport

### **Other Material Considerations**

#### National Planning Policy

#### [National Planning Policy Framework](#) (2021)

#### [Planning Practice Guidance](#) (2018)

#### Supplementary Planning Guidance/Documents

#### [Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent Urban Design Guidance Supplementary Planning Document](#) (2010)

#### Relevant Planning History

15/00265/FUL - Erection of a slurry storage building – permitted

#### Consultation Responses

The **Environmental Health Division** raise no objections subject to a condition restricting any external lighting unless otherwise agreed in writing by the LPA, they also note that it would be necessary for a campsite licence to be obtained under relevant legislation from the council if permission is given.

The **Highway Authority** have requested further details be submitted in support of the application, including details of parking areas and passing places. The HA consider the site to be an unsustainable location and retain their concerns that Park Lane is a narrow unlit country road which has little passing places.

The **Landscape Development Section** raise no objections to the proposal subject to any permission being completed in accordance with the recommendations set out in the submitted tree report and subject to the section of hedge (H1) that it is proposed to remove to facilitate installation of the first passing place from the main road being replanted with species to match the existing hedge found at the rear of the new passing place.

No comments have been received by **Natural England** or **Loggerheads Parish Council**.

#### Representations

Two objection letters have been submitted by nearby residents, which raise the following concerns:

- Impact on wildlife
- Noise nuisance
- Highway safety
- Deterioration of Road

#### Applicants/agents submission

The requisite plans and application forms including a supporting statement have been submitted.

All of the application documents can be viewed on the Council's website using the following link:

<http://publicaccess.newcastle-staffs.gov.uk/online-applications/PLAN/22/00214/FUL>

#### Background Papers

Planning files referred to

Planning Documents referred to

#### Date report prepared

27<sup>th</sup> September 2022