

**PARK HILL FARM, PARK LANE**  
**MRS PAT PIMLOTT**

**22/00214/FUL**

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.

This application was reported to Committee on the 11<sup>th</sup> October but a decision was deferred to enable additional information to be provided regarding the location and measurements of passing bays on Park Lane.

**The 8 week determination period expired on the 13<sup>th</sup> June, however an extension of time has been agreed until the 9<sup>th</sup> December 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. Restriction of camp site to 4 months of each year only
9. 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
10. Camp site to be for tents and for campervans that do not exceed 6m in length with no allowance for caravans
11. Restriction to 64 camping pitches only
12. No tents are to be on site outside of the approved operational times of the camp site
13. Details of any temporary toilet provision to be submitted to and agreed in writing by the LPA prior to the construction of the toilet block
14. Visibility splays from the site are to be provided in accordance with the submitted details and retained for the lifetime of the development
15. Passing places to be installed within 6 months of the permission

**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. While 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 while there will be some limited 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.

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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 and camper vans 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.

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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 Highway Authority recommends that the application is refused on the grounds it fails to provide a safe and suitable access which would lead to highway safety issues on the network. They have also raised concerns due to the unsustainable location of the camp site.

This application was reported to Committee on the 11<sup>th</sup> October but a decision was deferred to enable additional information to be provided regarding the location and measurements of passing bays on Park Lane. A detailed highway review of Park Lane has been submitted by the applicant's agent in support of the proposal. The review sets out the width of the relevant sections of both Blore Road and Park Lane and also includes details of the number and width of existing passing places. In addition, the review contains a number of photographs which have been taken along various points of the highway. These details have been verified on site by the case officer.

The width analysis demonstrates that for 64% of Blore Road there is sufficient space for drivers to pass each other at slow speeds, and for those sections of the highway where passing cannot occur, it is considered that there is sufficient distance between passing points and non-passing points to limit driver delay along this section of highway.

From the junction of Blore Road, Park Lane covers the remaining distance of 1.7km to the point where it meets the private access road leading onto Park Hill Farm. As the application seeks permission for a 64 pitch site, in a worst case 1 hour scenario there could be a flow of 64 vehicles to the site. In reality, visitors to the site would arrive over a period of greater than an hour but to give a robust assessment, it has been assumed that this would not occur. A calculation has been set out within the highways review to demonstrate what the conflict probability of two vehicles meeting along Park Lane would be. This has been calculated using predicted visitor numbers in combination with the vehicles movements of existing properties along Park Lane. The conflict probability as set out above has been calculated at 2.06%, which is considered to be relatively low, but still but not impossible.

There are 10 existing passing places from the A53 up to the entrance to Park Hill Farm which can be utilised by drivers. These passing areas differ in quality and size, however as demonstrated by the photos provided in the highway review, they are all considered to be useable. While not required for highway safety reasons, to limit the potential of driver frustration, three additional passing places have been proposed within the adopted highway verge. A condition is recommended requiring that the suggested passing places are installed within 6 months of any permission given. Neighbouring properties and the Highway Authority have been notified of the highway review document but no additional comments or objections have been received by the LPA at the time of writing this report.

Although not required by the Highway Authority, details of visibility splays have been provided in support of the proposal which demonstrate that the proposed access to the site meets the standard highways requirements.

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

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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.

Subject to the conditions referred to above, officers' view is that the proposal's impact on highway safety is considered to be acceptable.

### **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'*

Natural England have been consulted on the proposal and have requested that a buffer zone is provided between the campsite and the SSSI as to ensure that the proposal does not damage or destroy the interests features for Burnt Wood. To address this concern, amended plans have been submitted in support of the application which have shown that a 6m buffer zone would be used to separate the camp site from the application site's north western boundary where it runs adjacent to the SSSI.

In addition to the above there would be no construction works within or adjacent to the SSSI and while the camp site field is in close proximity to the woodland, given that the site would be for tents and camper vans only it is not considered that there would be direct impact upon the SSSI itself. 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:

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- 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

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## **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 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** recommends that the application is refused on the grounds it fails to provide a safe and suitable access which would lead to highway safety issues on the network.

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.

**Natural England** request that a condition is added to any permission requiring that a buffer zone and details landscape/habitat scheme is provided as part of the proposal.

No comments have been received from **Loggerheads Parish Council**.

Representations

Two objection letters have been submitted from 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

16<sup>th</sup> November 2022