

Planning Statement in support of a planning application to develop a touring and static caravan site at Accommodation Road, Bleadon

The application site comprises a parcel of land measuring 0.9Ha located on the western side of Accommodation Road south of its junction with Wayacre Drove. The site is level and is bounded by established hedgerows. An area ofHa in the North East corner has a history of commercial uses although no planning permission exists for this activity. Accommodation Road crosses the main railway via a bridge (Summerways Bridge) with associated embankments. These offer some screening of the site when viewed from the east. Further screening is provided by the substantial hedgerow located on the frontage to Accommodation Road.

Proposed Development

It is proposed to develop the site as a touring and static caravan site with a guest reception and service block. Access is to be via an existing field entrance which would be improved to accommodate the new use, located in the south eastern corner of the site to Accommodation Road. It is proposed to develop 18 pitches for static caravans with the remainder of the site being utilised to provide space for 32 touring pitches. The static units would be located in the northern portion of the site where screening would be obtained from the railway bridge embankment.

National Guidance

National Guidance for development proposals is found in the National Planning Policy Framework (July 2018). The Guidance states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development.

There are three dimensions to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. These dimensions give rise to the need for the planning system to perform a number of roles:

- an economic role – contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth and innovation; and by identifying and coordinating development requirements, including the provision of infrastructure;
- a social role – supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by providing the supply of housing required to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by creating a high quality built environment, with accessible local services that reflect the community's needs and support its health, social and cultural well-being; and
- an environmental role – contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; and, as part of this, helping to improve biodiversity, use natural resources prudently, minimise waste and pollution,

and mitigate and adapt to climate change including moving to a low carbon economy.

Paragraph 83 supports a prosperous rural economy and states that planning policies and decisions should enable:

- a) the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings;
- b) the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses;
- c), sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments which respect the character of the countryside: and
- d), the retention and development of accessible local services and community facilities, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship.

Paragraph 84 states 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.’

The Development Plan

The Development Plan for North Somerset comprises the Core Strategy (Adopted in 2017), the Sites and Policies Plan Part 1 (Adopted in July 2016) and the Sites and Policies Plan Part 2: Site Allocations (Adopted in April 2018).

Policy CS22 of the Core Strategy states that new, improved and replacement visitor and tourist facilities and accommodation will be supported across the district provided they:

1. are of an appropriate scale and improve the quality and diversity of the tourist offer;
2. maximise, where possible, any opportunities for access by means other than the car;
3. support conservation and economic development objectives;

4. have no adverse implications for the environment, local amenity and character of the area.

In Paragraph 3.288 of the Core Strategy it states that provided proposals do not conflict with Green Belt, sustainable development and environmental policies, or lead to other adverse impacts such as through an inappropriate over- concentration of holiday accommodation in small rural communities, then an increase in tourism will be supported throughout the district.

Policy DM58 of the Sites and Policies Plan Part 1 states that Planning permission will be granted outside of the Green Belt and Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty for new or extended touring and static caravan sites and camping sites provided that:

- the proposal respects the scale, form, materials and design of any existing buildings and does not harm the character of the surrounding area; and
- there is safe and convenient access to the highway network and there are no significant adverse effect on the local highway network; and
- it would not have a significant adverse impact on the living conditions of adjoining occupiers; and
- the re-use of existing buildings is given priority over new development; only where no suitable buildings are available will new development be acceptable; and
- proposals are sited so as to minimise their visual and landscape impact – extensions to existing sites that are considered intrusive must include environmental improvements to the existing site; and
- proposals which are granted planning permission will be conditioned to ensure they are used solely for holiday use.

Planning Analysis

The applicant wishes to develop a facility for static and touring caravans on this site. It is located close to a number of tourist facilities in the area including beaches, the major tourist centres of Weston super Mare, Burnham on Sea and Brean Sands, as well as the attractive landscapes of the Mendip Hills AONB.

The development would have a limited impact on the landscape due to the presence of the road embankment taking Accommodation Road over the main railway, the well-established hedgerows surrounding the site and the otherwise flat landscape in the area. It is intended that the hedgerows be retained and that the site be further enhanced and screened by a sensitive landscaping scheme.

The site is not in Green Belt and is outside the Mendip Hills AONB.

An existing access to the field from Accommodation Road is located in the south eastern corner. This would be unsuitable to serve the new development due to restricted visibility. It is therefore proposed form a new access located some 10m to the north. The existing access would be closed upon completion of this work. In this position it would have good levels of

visibility in both directions. The necessary visibility splays can be provided on land within the ownership of the applicant. Users of the site would thus have a safe means of access that would not adversely affect levels of highway safety for existing road users.

There are no residential land uses in the vicinity that may have been adversely affected by the greater levels of activity on the site.

There are no existing buildings on site that are considered suitable for conversion to accommodate the ancillary services that holidaymakers would need. The existing structures would therefore be removed.

A new, purpose designed building to accommodate a reception facility and a shower/toilet block would be erected in a central position on the site. This is designed incorporating low eves levels and is finished in appropriate materials to blend into its rural surroundings.

The applicant is happy to accept a condition limiting the occupancy of the units to holidaymakers to ensure that the units are not lived in residentially.

Conclusion

The development would comply with policies DM58 and CS22 and Guidance in the NPPF in that it would provide a sensitively sited touring and static caravan site in an area of no special restraint.

Its landscape impact would be limited by its location adjoining a raised section of Accommodation Road, the well established hedgerows to the boundaries and by the flat nature of the land in the vicinity.

A safe means of accessing the site from the highway would be provided.

Poor quality existing structures would be removed and any new, a new permanent building would be designed to minimise its impact. This would be beneficial to the landscape quality of the area.

There would be no nearby residential properties that would be affected by any increased activity on the site.

It is therefore concluded that there is no objection to this development.