

Committee Report

Item 7B

Reference: DC/20/01438

Case Officer: Bron Curtis

Ward: Stonham.

Ward Member/s: Cllr Suzie Morley.

RECOMMENDATION – GRANT OUTLINE PLANNING PERMISSION WITH CONDITIONS

Description of Development

Change Use of land for the stationing of 5 holiday lodges.

Location

Stonham Barns, Pettaugh Road, Stonham Aspal, Stowmarket, Suffolk, IP14 6AT

Expiry Date: 07/04/2020

Application Type: FUL - Full Planning Application

Development Type: Change of Use

Applicant: Stonham Barns Ltd

Agent: Phil Cobbold Planning Ltd

Parish: Stonham Aspal

Site Area: 0.14ha

Details of Previous Committee / Resolutions and any member site visit:

The Planning Committee visited the site as part of the consideration of 3150/15 a hybrid application (full & outline planning permission) for: I. Variation of condition 2 of planning permission 655/02 to enable the existing showground (area outlined in yellow on the submitted plan) to operate between the hours permitted by the Licence granted by the Council on 10/10/2014; II. Outline planning for erection of new building as an indoor child play area (Class D2) on land adj to building No 24; III. Retention of a single storey extension to Unit 11 (Class A1); IV. Retention of retail pods (Class A1/A2/B1) in market square (buildings labelled A, B, C, D, E, PC7(G), PC5(E), PC4(D), PC1,2,3,4,5,6,7 (A,B,C) and PCF6(F) on submitted plan; V. Use of land for stationing of 51 static caravans for holiday use on land adj to west of dog training area (Identified as R1 to R51 on the submitted plan). VI. Use of land for stationing of 34 static caravans for holiday use (owner occupied) subject to restriction preventing occupation for one month of the year, on land west of Meerkat enclosure (identified as units 0 to 33 on the submitted plan); VII. Continued use of land for touring caravans (area outlined as orange on the submitted plan); VIII. Continued use of land as extension to the existing showground and/or for use as touring caravan site; IX. Continued use of land for car boot sales on Sundays (taking place at Car Park A, car Park B or the showground); X. Repositioning of earth bund on northern side of existing fishing lake No 1; XI. Use of land adj for stationing of 76 holiday lodges (owner occupied) with no occupation for one month of the year (identified as LO1 to LO45 and LO57 to LO86 on the submitted plan); XII. Use of land for stationing of 11 holiday lodges for rental (Lodges LO46 to LO56); XIII. Retention of alterations to existing field shelters to form stables; XIV. Use of land as Car Parks A & B and extension to hardstanding; XV.

Retention of alterations and extension to permanent marquee on the showground to form events barn;
XVI. Landscaping.

Planning permission granted 12th October 2018

Extract from meeting minutes:

“Members’ debated the application noting the economic benefits of the site, the proposed increase in the number of static homes, the congestion on the A1120, the internal roads on the site, the visual impact on the landscape, the masterplan of the site with developments being built without permission and the proposed change in the speed limit to 30MPH in proximity to the site.

Councillor Lesley Mayes proposed that the application be approved as per the recommendations with the added condition that a Management Plan be agreed and was seconded by Councillor Wendy Marchant.

The Proposer and Seconder agreed that further conditions be added to restrict the times of the car boot sales, that a scheme of pedestrian lighting be agreed and that further landscaping conditions be added for boundary treatment and tree protection. Some Members felt that the application included too many static caravans on the site and that the cumulative impact of the site would have a detrimental impact on the local community.”

Has a Committee Call In request been received from a Council Member (Appendix 1): No.

Has the application been subject to Pre-Application Advice: No.

PART ONE – REASON FOR REFERENCE TO COMMITTEE

The application is referred to committee for the following reason/s:

The Chief Planning Officer considers the application to be controversial

PART TWO – POLICIES AND CONSULTATION SUMMARY

Summary of Policies

NPPF - National Planning Policy Framework
FC01 - Presumption In Favour Of Sustainable Development
FC01_1 - Mid Suffolk Approach To Delivering Sustainable Development
CS02 - Development in the Countryside & Countryside Villages
CS05 - Mid Suffolk's Environment
GP01 - Design and layout of development
H16 - Protecting existing residential amenity

T10 - Highway Considerations in Development
RT19 – Static Caravans and Holiday Chalets

Neighbourhood Plan Status

This application site is not within a Neighbourhood Plan Area.

Consultations and Representations

During the course of the application Consultations and Representations from third parties have been received. These are summarised below.

A: Summary of Consultations

Parish Councils (Appendix 3)

Stonham Aspal PC:

Members unanimously agreed to object to this application on the grounds that it falls outside of the area previously agreed under the Master Plan for Stonham Barns. It contravenes national planning policy framework in that it is not proportionate and sustainable (MSDC Chief Planning Officer has acknowledged that the development is unsustainable).

There is also a need for developments need to be carbon neutral and as all units are heated with and cook with gas this would not be the case.

The council members have concerns over the water supply which is possibly via un licenced boreholes. In addition, there are question marks over the robustness of the electricity and foul water infrastructure within the site, as evidenced during 2019 with onsite power outages and overflow of foul water into surrounding ditches and water courses

It also represents the loss of agricultural land.

Pettaugh PC:

- Object.
- Contrary to development plan.
- Unsustainable development.
- Harmful to visual amenity.
- Harmful to residential amenity.

National Consultees (Appendix 4)

Natural England

- No comments, refer to standing advice.

County Council Responses (Appendix 5)

SCC - Highways

- No objection.

SCC - Fire & Rescue

- Must comply with Building Regulations or equivalent standards.
- Recommend use of open water for fire fighting.

Internal Consultee Responses (Appendix 6)

Economic Development & Tourism

- No objection.
- Recommend condition to control occupation of the lodges for tourism use only.

Environmental Health - Land Contamination

- No objection.

Environmental Health - Noise/Odour/Light/Smoke

- No objection.

Environmental Health - Air Quality

- No objection.

B: Representations

1 online comment has been received from a local resident, summarised below:

- Affects wildlife.
- Conflict with district plan and NPPF - the NPPF supports sustainable rural tourism but MSDC have said that Stonham Barns is an unsustainable location. The JLP supports tourism in principle where appropriate in scale, nature and character of the locality. Stonham barns is not of appropriate scale, nature or character.
- Drainage and increase risk of flooding
- Health and safety
- Increase in pollution – caravans use natural gas which adds to emissions and climate change any expansion will exacerbate this.
- Increase in traffic / highways issues
- Landscape impact, loss of open space and outlook, out of character with area. The site already impacts negatively on visitors' perception of Suffolk as it is visible from the A1120 tourist route. Incremental creep must be halted to protect the countryside.
- The improper occupation of the caravans cannot be controlled.

PLANNING HISTORY

REF: DC/19/00684 Full Planning Application - Use of land for the stationing of lodge for occupation by fishing warden/bailiff. **DECISION:** REF

REF: 3150/15 Hybrid application (full & outline planning permission). 1. Variation of condition 2 of planning permission 655/02 to enable the existing showground (area outlined in yellow on the submitted plan) to operate between **DECISION:** GTD

the hours permitted by the Licence granted by the Council on 10/10/2014; II. Outline planning for erection of new building as an indoor child play area (Class D2) on land adj to building No 24; III. Retention of a single storey extension to Unit 11 (Class A1); IV. Retention of retail pods (Class A1/A2/B1) in market square (buildings labelled A, B, C, D, E, PC7(G), PC5(E), PC4(D), PC1,2,3,4,5,6,7 (A,B,C) and PCF6(F) on submitted plan; V. Use of land for stationing of 51 static caravans for holiday use on land adj to west of dog training area (Identified as R1 to R51 on the submitted plan). VI. Use of land for stationing of 34 static caravans for holiday use (owner occupied) subject to restriction preventing occupation for one month of the year, on land west of Meerkat enclosure (identified as units 0 to 33 on the submitted plan); VII. Continued use of land for touring caravans (area outlined as orange on the submitted plan); VIII. Continued use of land as extension to the existing showground and/or for use as touring caravan site; IX. Continued use of land for car boot sales on Sundays (taking place at Car Park A, car Park B or the showground); X. Repositioning of earth bund on northern side of existing fishing lake No 1; XI. Use of land adj for stationing of 76 holiday lodges (owner occupied) with no occupation for one month of the year (identified as LO1 to LO45 and LO57 to LO86 on the submitted plan); XII. Use of land for stationing of 11 holiday lodges for rental (Lodges LO46 to LO56); XIII. Retention of alterations to existing field shelters to form stables; XIV. Use of land as Car Parks A & B and extension to hardstanding; XV. Retention of alterations and extension to permanent marquee on the showground to form events barn; XVI. Landscaping

PART THREE – ASSESSMENT OF APPLICATION

1. The Site and Surroundings

- 1.1. The application site extends to approximately 0.14 hectares and comprises an existing arable field located on the eastern side of the Stonham Barns leisure and tourism complex, in the countryside between the villages of Stonham Aspal and Pettaugh. Access is from the A1120 highway, through the Stonham Barns complex.
- 1.2. The siting of the proposed caravans is on part of the existing field, adjoining an existing group of holiday caravans arranged around two sport fishing lakes.
- 1.3. There is a mature roadside hedge along the A1120 and landscaping to the boundaries of the Stonham barns site. There are no residential dwellings in the immediate vicinity of the application site.
- 1.4. The site is not in or near an area designated for special landscape significance, e.g. Special Area of Conservation, Special Landscape Area, or AONB. There are no listed buildings within the immediate vicinity of the site.
- 1.5. The site is located in Flood Zone 1 and is classified as grade 3 agricultural land.

2. The Proposal

- 2.1. The application seeks full planning permission for the change of use of land from agricultural land to land to be used for the siting of 5 holiday lodges.
- 2.2. The lodges fall within the legal definition of caravan for planning purposes meaning that they are a use of land rather than individual buildings.

3. The Principle Of Development

- 3.1. The starting point for determination of any planning application is the development plan, as identified in Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. Determination of any application must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. A key material consideration regarding the principle of development is the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).
- 3.2. Policies CS2 of the Mid Suffolk Core Strategy 2008 and RT19 of the Mid Suffolk Local Plan 1998 support the principle of appropriate tourism development in the countryside, including static holiday caravans, where there are no unacceptable impacts including on residents, local amenity and highway safety. RT19 also states that in locations where permanent residential use would not be permitted, such as countryside locations outside of sustainable settlements, conditions will be imposed on permissions to ensure the occupation of the caravans is limited to holiday use only.
- 3.3. The Core Strategy Focused Review (2012) responded to changes to the NPPF with policies FC1 – Presumption in favour of sustainable development and FC1.1 – Mid Suffolk approach to delivering sustainable development which set out a more positive and flexible approach to proposed development.
- 3.4. The NPPF is generally supportive of sustainable rural tourism developments as a contribution to the rural economy.

- 3.5. As the site is in a location where permanent residential dwellings or dwelling uses would not normally be acceptable, if Members are minded to grant permission it is recommended that the permission is conditional including a restriction to control the use and occupation of the caravans for holiday letting purposes only. This is consistent with the planning permission controlling the existing holiday caravans at the fishing lakes.
- 3.6. On the basis of the above policy context the general principle of development is acceptable subject to all material consideration as discussed below.

4. Access to services and facilities

- 4.1. The application site is situated in the countryside between the Secondary village of Stonham Aspal and the Countryside village of Pettaugh (as designated by policies CS1 and CS2 of the Mid Suffolk Core Strategy 2008).
- 4.2. The development will operate as an extension to the existing holiday caravans at the fishing lakes and part of the wider Stonham Barns leisure and tourism complex, which has a range of services and facilities to support a holiday use as proposed.
- 4.3. The location of the site is such that the majority of visitors to the complex overall, and the proposed development in particular, are likely to access the site by private car. However, this is a typical and expected feature of rural tourism development which does not, in itself, warrant refusal of the application.
- 4.4. The development will support the ongoing viability and employment generation of the business operations at Stonham Barns which is recognised as a principal attraction in the area that makes a significant contribution to the rural economy of this part of the district.
- 4.5. Although the site is in a countryside location which would usually be considered unsustainable, the range of services within the Stonham Barns complex that are available to support a tourism use and the day trip / attraction visiting nature of tourism operations are material considerations. Furthermore, the proposal would make a recognisable contribution to the economic development of the existing complex.
- 4.6. On the basis of the above there is not considered to be grounds to refuse the application for reasons of unsustainable development.

5. Access, Parking And Highway Safety Considerations

- 5.1. Saved Policy T10 of the Local Plan requires the Local Planning Authority to consider a number of highway matters when determining planning applications, including; the provision of safe access, the safe and free flow of traffic and pedestrian safety, safe capacity of the road network and the provision of adequate parking and turning for vehicles. Policy T10 is a general transport policy which is generally consistent with Section 9 of the NPPF on promoting sustainable transport. Its safety focus is also consistent with paragraph 108 of the NPPF which requires development proposals, incorporate safe and suitable access that can be achieved for all users.
- 5.2. Vehicular access to the application site is from the A1120 highway via the main entrance to the Stonham Barns complex which serves an existing area of turning and parking for the fishing lakes

and associated caravans, which have car standing spaces. There are no proposed changes to the access or the on-site parking and turning arrangements.

- 5.3. Suffolk County Council Highways Authority have been consulted and advise that they consider the proposal would have no impact on highway congestion, parking or safety.
- 5.4. On the basis of the above there is not considered to be any unacceptable impact on highway safety.

6. Design, Layout and Landscape Impact

- 6.1. Development Plan policies including CS5, GP1 and RT19 and the NPPF require consideration of the aesthetic impacts of development including the appearance and layout of the structures proposed and the overall impact of the scheme on the surrounding landscape.
- 6.2. The proposal is for 5 additional caravans to be sited adjacent to the cluster of existing caravans that are positioned around the two fishing lakes. The application site projects into an existing area of grassed arable land that benefits from existing screening by way of a landscape bund and planting as well as a mature hedge along the A1120.
- 6.3. The new caravans will be of similar scale and appearance to the existing caravans arranged around the fishing lakes. The additional 5 caravans will be sited on land directly adjacent to the existing complex, laid out as an extension to that facility.
- 6.4. The proposed caravans will be visible from public vantages, most prominently from the public highway. However the siting and appearance of the 5 additional proposed caravans is such that they will be experienced in context with the adjacent complex of caravans and the visual impact of the extension will be homogenised as part of the wider complex.
- 6.5. Overall, the design, layout and landscape impacts of the proposal are not considered to be unacceptable.

7. Other Matters

- 7.1. There are no residential properties within the immediate vicinity of the application site such that there is no unacceptable impact of the development on residential amenity.
- 7.2. There are no heritage assets within the immediate vicinity of the application site such that there is no unacceptable impact of the development on heritage.
- 7.3. The land is located in Flood Zone 1. The size, location and nature of the development is such that there is not considered to be any unacceptable impact on flood risk or drainage.
- 7.4. There are no recordings of protected species or their habitats within the site or likely to be affected in the immediate area. It is highly unlikely that any protected species would be found within this site and as such this proposal is not considered to be harmful in terms of biodiversity issues.

PART FOUR – CONCLUSION

15. Planning Balance and Conclusion

- 15.1. The general principle of appropriate tourism development in the countryside is supported by national and local policy.
- 15.2. Whilst the site is not identified as a highly sustainable location, the nature of rural tourism uses is such that low locational sustainability is typical and reasonable. In this case the development would benefit from the facilities and services available within the Stonham Barns complex improving its locational sustainability. The development would make a recognised and valuable contribution to the ongoing operation of the Stonham Barns complex as a notable employment, visitor attraction and business site within the district. The overall sustainability value and impact of the proposal is acceptable.
- 15.3. There is no unacceptable impacts on the local highway network, access, parking or turning provision.
- 15.4. There will be some additional visual impact arising from the proposed development. However, this impact is ameliorated by the presence of existing landscape screening and the siting and design of the development, that will be experienced in context with the adjacent complex.
- 15.5. There is no unacceptable impacts on residential amenity, heritage assets or any other material consideration.
- 15.6. Your officers have taken full and careful account of all the representations that have been made, which have been balanced against the provisions of the Development Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework. The proposal is considered to be in general accordance with national and local policy and, for the reasons set out above, the officer recommendation is for conditional planning permission to be granted.

RECOMMENDATION

(1) That the Chief Planning Officer be authorised to Grant Planning Permission subject to conditions as summarised below and those as may be deemed necessary by the Chief Planning Officer:

- Standard - Time Limit Condition
- Standard - Approved Plans and Documents Condition
- Restriction on holiday occupation of caravans – same as permission 3150/15