

COMBINED DESIGN AND ACCESS/PLANNING STATEMENT FOR THE FORMATION OF 16 TRAVELLERS PLOTS WITH ASSOCIATED ACCESS AND LANDSCAPING ON LAND AT GREEN ACRES PARK, ROPERS GATE, GEDNEY

1. Introduction

1.1 This statement has been produced by Beacon Hill Planning and accompanies plans and surveys for 16 plots for the gypsy community on land at Green Acres Park, Ropers Gate, Gedney.

2. Site and Surroundings

2.1 The site lies on the south side of Ropers Gate and currently comprises 3 travellers pitches with 3 separate accesses from the highway. The topography of the site is relatively level and is surrounded by open countryside to the north east of the village of Gedney.

2.2 The land is bounded to the south by a field drain. The site and the surrounding land is located within Flood Zone 3.

3. Planning Policy

3.1 The original National Planning Policy Framework was published by Central Government in March 2012 and was an important material consideration in the determination and assessment of all planning applications. In December 2023 the Government published its revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied.

3.2 Throughout the NPPF there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. The original Ministerial Foreword highlights that "*sustainable development is about positive growth – making economic, environmental and social progress for this and future generations*". The opening statement goes on to state that "*Development that is sustainable should go ahead without delay*".



Location of site

3.3 The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. There are three aspects that comprise this goal:

- an economic objective – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;
- a social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being; and

- an environmental objective – to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.

3.4 Achieving sustainable development involves seeking positive improvements in the quality of the built, natural and historic environment, as well as in people's quality of life, including (but not limited to): moving from a net loss of biodiversity to achieving net gains for nature; improving the conditions in which people work; widening the choice of high quality homes; securing high quality design; supporting the transition to a low carbon future; contributing to conserving and enhancing the natural environment and reducing pollution; and improving the health, social and cultural well-being for all.

3.5 The Government's planning policies on design are set out in section 12 of the Framework. The initial paragraph of the section states that *"the creation of high quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. 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."*

3.6 Paragraph 127 advocates that planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:

"a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;

b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;

c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change."

d) establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;

e) optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and

f) create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience”.

3.7 In the Development Plan, the South East Lincolnshire Local Plan 2011-2036, adopted March 2019, is the basis for decision-making in South Holland.

4. Recent relevant Planning History

4.1 H06-0436-24. Demolition of timber structured mobile homes/day rooms and outbuildings and erection of 24 semi/terraced bungalows. Refused 19/09/24.

H06-1163-19 - Proposed gates with pillars to all three accesses. Approved 05-03-20

H06-1046-19 - Details of foul and surface water disposal (Condition 4 of H06-0233-19). Approved 09/08/21.

H06-0233-19 - Change of use of land (part retrospective) to provide five additional gypsy/traveller pitches with one day room per pitch and existing stables converted to dayrooms. Also, erection of one new store and retention of sheds for pitch 1, with construction of internal road to facilitate separate ingress and egress to and from the site, including hardstanding. Approved 05-09-19.

H06-0226-18 - Erection of day room - Approved 22 June 18

H06-0022-17 - Erect fencing around the site with associated landscaping and planting - Approved 7 March 2017

H06-0558-15 - Change of use of paddock to gypsy/traveller site comprising of 2 pitches, including alterations to existing accesses and construction of roadways and hardstanding - Approved 21 October 2015

H06-0105-15 - Provision of three stable blocks, animal feed/supply store and alterations to existing accesses - Approved 15 May 2015

H06-0145-13 - Change of use of paddock to gypsy/traveller site comprising 2 pitches, including alterations to access and construction of roadway and hardstanding - Approved 6 September 2013.

H06-1091-13 - Details of landscaping, surface materials and Flood Risk Assessment 'safe haven' (Conditions 5, 6 and 7 of H06-0145-13) - Approved 4 March 2014.

5. The proposal

5.1 Planning permission is sought for the erection of the formation of 16 travellers pitches with associated access and landscaping.

6. Analysis

Location/principle

6.1 The DCLG document, Planning Policy for Traveller Sites, sets out that in determining planning applications for such sites, applications should be assessed and determined in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development and the application of specific policies in the National Planning Policy Framework and this planning policy for traveller sites.

Policy C of the DCLG document sets out that:

“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. Policy H sets criteria for determining planning applications for traveller sites and, in particular, paragraph 24 states:

Local Planning Authorities should consider the following issues amongst other relevant matters when considering planning applications for traveller sites:

- a) the existing level of local provision and need for sites
- b) the availability (or lack) of alternative accommodation for the applicants
- c) other personal circumstances of the applicant
- d) that the locally specific criteria used to guide the allocation of sites in plans or which form the policy where there is no identified need for pitches/plots should be used to assess applications that may come forward on unallocated sites

e) that they should determine applications for sites from any travellers and not just those with local connections.”

6.2 The South East Lincolnshire Local Plan, 2019 (SELLP) acknowledges there is both a 'known' and 'unknown' unmet need for additional Gypsy/Traveller residential accommodation within its district between the period 2011-36. Policy 20 relates to Accommodation for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople. Amongst other things, it states that proposals will be granted on unallocated sites subject to a number criteria in that they:

1. will be adequately provided with appropriate infrastructure such as electricity, drinking-water, waste-water treatment and recycling/waste management;
2. will not have a significant adverse effect on the amenities of existing local residents or adjoining land users (and proposals must, therefore, give careful consideration to layout, landscaping, external lighting schemes, and the type of business uses that would be appropriate (if mixed residential and business use is proposed); and
3. will be successfully assimilated into both their immediate environs and the wider landscape;
 - a. provide occupants with an acceptable standard of amenity;
 - b. are not located adjacent to uses likely to endanger the health of occupants, such as a refuse tip, water recycling centres or contaminated land;
 - c. respect the scale of the nearest settled community;
 - d. will not place undue pressure on local infrastructure;
 - e. will not adversely affect heritage assets or areas of importance to nature conservation;
 - f. will not prejudice highway safety or give rise to problems of parking or highway access;
 - g. for sites for permanent residential use they:
 - i. provide occupants with access to education, health care and recreational facilities, shops and employment within reasonable travelling distances, preferably by walking, cycling or public transport;
 - ii. are suitable (or capable of being made suitable) for mixed residential and business use; I
 - ii. are not located within Flood Zone 3a or 3b and, if located in Flood Zone 2, the Sequential and Exception Tests have been passed; and h. for sites for transit or

stopping place use, are not located within Flood Zone 3b and, if located within Flood Zone 3a, the Sequential and Exception Tests have been passed.

6.3 It is considered that this application proposal meets all points of this policy and is, therefore, acceptable in principle. Matters of detail follow below.

Character

6.4 The NPPF seeks the creation of high quality buildings and places with developments that are visually attractive, sympathetic to local character, establish a strong sense of place “using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive welcoming and distinctive places to live.”

6.5 The application site is an existing gypsy and traveller accommodation, and although within the open countryside, is presently part of a small enclave of similar development. Further native hedgerows will be planted on the borders of the site to soften any effects, which can be the subject of an appropriately-worded condition; It is submitted that there would be no adverse impacts on the local landscape as a result.

Need

6.6 Following helpful discussions with Council officers it has been established that there is a need for addition plots in the District. It is considered that the provision of sites for families immediately adjacent to existing pitches on the site, would contribute to the future need within the local plan period, in accordance with relevant policies set out above.

Residential amenity

6.7 Given the space separation to surrounding houses and the diminutive extent of the plots, no adverse impacts are envisaged in respect of overlooking, privacy, overbearing and noise and disturbance.

Highways

6.8 The creation of a single, central access would reduce the number of openings that currently exist to Ropers Gate, which would be to the benefit of local safety, efficiency and capacity.

Flooding and drainage

6.9 The site is located within flood zone 3 and a Flood Risk Assessment and Evacuation Plan are enclosed as part of the application particulars. Foul water and drainage will be achieved through the provision of plants, details to be agreed.

Summary

6.10 There is an identified need for the development, which is considered to be a sustainable form of development because of social, educational and health factors. The proposal satisfactorily complies with Policies C and H of the Government's Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (August 2015, published by DCLG) and Policy 20 of the South East Lincolnshire Local Plan, 2019. The planning balance is in favour of the proposal.