

**STAFFORDSHIRE MOORLANDS DISTRICT COUNCIL
PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE**

25 June 2020

Application No:	SMD/2020/0087	
Location	The Raddle Inn, Quarry Bank, Hollington	
Proposal	Demolition of portakabin and erection of three holiday lodges	
Applicant	Mr Peter Wilkinson, The Raddle Inn, Quarry Bank, Hollington, Stoke-On-Trent, ST10 4HQ	
Agent	Malcolm Sales, Churchill Suite, 51 High Street, Cheadle, Stoke-On-Trent, ST10 1AR	
Parish/ward	Checkley/Checkley	Date registered: 15 th April 2020
If you have a question about this report please contact: Benjamin Hurst tel: 01538 395400 ex 4127 benjamin.hurst@staffsmoorlands.gov.uk		

REFERRAL

The application is before committee as the applicant is an elected member of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council.

1. SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATION

REFUSE

2. DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE AND ITS SURROUNDINGS

2.1 The site is an area of roadside field that lies behind a dry stone wall and is on the other side of the road to the Raddle Inn, the applicant's public house. The public house lies within an 'other rural' area of countryside designated as Special Landscape Area and is beyond and outside of the nearby small village settlement of Hollington.

2.2 There is the occasional dwelling located along Quarry Bank and Quarry Rd. There is a stone cottage (holiday let), owned by the applicant, located on the corner of Quarry Bank and the track that would be used to access the site. Immediately north and east of the site is a quarry. There are trees and hedges along the western, northern and eastern boundaries of the field. Within the field there are currently 2 No. structures/buildings, one is a deteriorating portakabin which consists of toilets and the other apparently has gym equipment in it. The portakabin in particular is concealed from the roadside by dense shrubbery and hedgerow. There is a hard-standing area (possibly used for parking) along part of the southern boundary of the field. A Public Right Of Way runs directly along the track passing by the southern boundary of the field and there are numerous Public Rights Of Way crisscrossed over surrounding fields. The surrounding land is open countryside.

3. THE APPLICATION AND DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSAL

3.1 The proposal is to erect a row of three holiday lodges in the field. Members will recall that applications for the same proposal, at the same site address, have been refused at planning committee on two previous occasions (SMD/2017/0398 & SMD/2017/0816).

3.2 The latter application introduced a proposal to install hot tubs and plug-in points for electric cars to address concerns over the sustainability of the development. The applicant appealed to the Planning Inspector against the Council's decision to refuse planning permission and the appeal was dismissed.

3.3 This most recent application makes the same proposal to erect three holiday lodges each with a plug in point to charge an electric vehicle and a hot tub on an area of decking. Each lodge would be 14.6m by 6.30m. The only identifiable difference with this application is that it includes within the description of development "the demolition of the portakabin".

3.4 The Applicant has submitted a planning statement in which it explains that the Raddle already benefits from 6 timber clad cabins and he is keen to increase the tourism offer of the vicinity in order to -

- Provide additional accommodation (the site is close to Alton Towers, 3.5 miles, the new JCB Golf Course and A50 to Alton Growth Corridor, also 3.5 miles)
- Offer new employment opportunities in the area
- Sustain the ongoing viability of the Raddle PH

3.5 The applicant did not seek any pre application advice from the Council regarding the application.

3.6 Details of the application scheme can be viewed at:

<http://publicaccess.staffs Moorlands.gov.uk/portal/servlets/ApplicationSearchServlet?PKID=128617>

4. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

SMD/1987/0440 – Change of use of grazing land to form car park area. Approved.

SMD/1992/0907 – Extension to car park and cellar area. Approved.

SMD/1997/0025 – Siting of five holiday chalets. Approved.

SMD/2002/1028 – Removal of stables and erection of holiday let chalet. Approved.

SMD/2007/0776 - Permanent siting of 4 holiday chalets and use of cottage as holiday let for a temporary period of 5 years. Refused - Appeal Dismissed.

SMD/2007/1161 – Permanent siting of 4 holiday chalets and use of cottage as holiday let for a temporary period of 5 years. Refused.

SMD/2008/1344 – Erection of utility block and 6 holiday wigwam cabins. Refused, 10.02.2009. - Appeal Dismissed

SMD/2013/0104 – Erection of wellbeing centre, 3 holiday chalets and 3 wig wams. Refused, 10.04.2013.

SMD/2013/0912 – Construction of self-catering holiday accommodation consisting of 3x lodges, 3x wigwams and the construction of a well-being centre. Refused.
SMD/2017/0398 – Alterations and extension at The Raddle Inn and erection of 3 Holiday Lodges. Refused.
SMD/2017/0816 - Alterations and extensions at The Raddle Inn and erection of 3 Holiday Lodges. Refused – Dismissed at Appeal.

5. PLANNING POLICIES RELEVANT TO THE DECISION

5.1 The Development Plan comprises of:

- Saved Local Plan Proposals Map / Settlement Boundaries (adopted 1998).
- Core Strategy Development Plan Document (adopted March 2014)

Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan (1998)

5.2 Development boundaries within the 1998 Adopted Local Plan are still in force until such time as they are reviewed and adopted through the site allocations process. Following consultation last year a Preferred Options Site Allocation DPD is currently out for consultation.

Adopted Staffordshire Moorlands Core Strategy - 26th March 2014 (CS)

5.3 The following Core Strategy policies are relevant to the application:-

- SS1 Development Principles
- SS1a Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
- SD1 Sustainable Use of Resources
- SS6C Rural area strategy
- SS7 Churnet Valley Area Strategy
- E3 Tourism and cultural development
- DC1 Design Considerations to protect residential amenity
- DC3 Landscape and Settlement Setting
- R1 Rural Diversification
- SD4 Noise Pollution and Amenity Impacts
- T1 Development and Sustainable Transport

Supplementary Planning Guidance/Documents

- Design Principles for Development
- Churnet Valley Masterplan

Emerging Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan

5.4 The Council agreed to publish the Local Plan Submission Version for representations in February 2018. At this point, the Council agreed that the Local Plan was “sound”. Formal representations were then invited from residents, businesses and other stakeholders to provide them with the opportunity to support or challenge the soundness or legal compliance of the Local Plan. This stage in the process followed three previous public consultations since 2015 which had informed the preparation of the Local Plan alongside a comprehensive evidence base.

5.5 In June 2018, the Council subsequently agreed to submit the Local Plan Submission Version to the Secretary of State for examination. An examination in public is ongoing in order to determine whether the Local Plan is sound and legally compliant. Hearing sessions were conducted in October 2018 and the Inspector issued his initial post-hearing advice in January 2019 which set out some actions for the Council and a range of modifications that would be necessary to make the plan sound. The full schedule of modifications was agreed by the Council and the subject of public consultation between 18th September 2019 and 31st October 2019. The schedule consisted of modifications that the Inspector has deemed necessary to make the Local Plan sound. Following the consultation, the Inspector concluded that further hearing sessions were necessary to consider; proposals for safeguarded land at Gillow Heath in Biddulph, housing land supply, Local Green Spaces in Cheddleton (Ox Pasture), Biddulph (Dorset Drive and implications for the emerging neighbourhood plan) and Blythe Bridge. They were held on 4th and 5th February.

5.6 On 27th February, the Inspector issued his post hearing advice. Key recommendations in the letter include:

- The proposed safeguarded land at Gillow Heath, Biddulph should be removed. Neither should the site be allocated for housing as requested by the landowners as the case for exceptional circumstances has not been met. The land will remain Green Belt as per the Local Plan Submission Version agreed by the Council in June 2018
- No further housing allocations in Biddulph are required
- No further amendments to the housing trajectory are required aside from pushing back the predicted commencement of the Wharf Road, Biddulph site (excluding BDNEW) until 2022/23.
Monitoring of housing supply will determine if a full or partial Local Plan review is required within 5 years
- Land at Ox Pasture (Cheddleton) and Dorset Drive (Biddulph) should revert back to the Local Green Space designations as per the Local Plan Submission Version as agreed by the Council in June 2018.
- Other modifications were considered during the recent hearings sessions are necessary to make the plan sound, including; updating neighbourhood area housing requirements (Policy SS4) to reflect the latest monitoring data, updating the employment land area for the Tunstall Road allocation to reflect the masterplan and other adjustments to the wording of Policy SS4 and Policy DC2.

5.7 No further representations will be sought by the Inspector. As such, the Local Plan policies as proposed to be modified in September 2019 along with the Inspector recommended revisions (February 2020) provide a strong indication of the final policies likely to be adopted in the Local Plan. The Inspector's final report is expected within 2 months and will reflect the post hearing advice. The Council will be able to consider the adoption of the Local Plan at this point. As such, the plan is at a very advanced stage of preparation with some of the key outstanding objections now having been resolved following the February 2020 hearing sessions.

5.8 In this context, the Council's position on the weight to be given to the policies contained in the Local Plan Submission Version in terms of the three criteria set out in Paragraph 48 of the NPPF is considered below:

- The stage of preparation – the Local Plan is now at an advanced stage of preparation as the main modifications have been subject to consultation
- The extent to which there are unresolved objections to relevant policies this varies depending on the policy in question – the Inspector wishes to explore outstanding objections on a limited number of issues at the February hearing sessions further before drawing conclusions.
- The degree of consistency of the relevant policies in the emerging plan to this Framework – policies have been modified to address soundness issues identified by the Inspector to date. It is the Council's view that the policies (as modified) are consistent with national policy. The Inspector has yet to draw final conclusions, particularly on the matters subject to further hearing sessions.

5.9 Given the above, the majority of policies (as modified) can be given substantial weight. However, policies that are subject to the February hearing sessions can only be given moderate weight as they are subject to outstanding objections and scrutiny.

Emerging Policies

5.8 The following policies are considered to be relevant to this application:

- SS1 Development Principles
- SS1a Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
- SS2 Settlement Hierarchy
- SS10 Other Rural Area Strategy
- DC1 Design Considerations
- DC3 Landscape and Settlement Setting
- SD4 Noise Pollution and Amenity Impacts

Supplementary Planning Guidance

5.9 The following documents supplement and provide an evidence base to the development plan:

Staffordshire Moorlands Design Guide (2018)
Landscape Character Assessment (2008)

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) revised.

5.10 The following sections of the NPPF are particularly relevant to this application:

- 2: Achieving sustainable development
- 6: Building a strong, competitive economy
- 12: Achieving well-designed places.

6. CONSULTATIONS

Site notice Expiry date for comments: 8th June 2020

Press notice Expiry date for comments: N/A

Neighbours Expiry date for comments: 6th May 2020

Public Comments

6.1 The Council has not received any letters of objection or support for the proposal.

Parish Council

6.2 The Raddle plays a major part in driving and sustaining tourism in the area and within our Parish, with visitors becoming regulars and visiting the area year on year. With the current crisis unfolding and the knock on affect this will have on the British (and subsequently the local) economy Checkley Parish Council thinks that supporting this business to expand will sustain local tourism and provide valuable jobs and work experience for our community. Once the current lockdown restrictions are relaxed British residents will be looking at holidays over the summer, but they may not be looking at going abroad for some time and could opt for the preferable option of holidaying within the UK. In the current climate it's important to encourage businesses to develop to increase employment opportunity and boost the local economy. Checkley Parish Council feels that this sustainable addition will have a positive impact on our local area.

7. OFFICER COMMENT AND PLANNING BALANCE

7.1 The Council's consideration of the previous applications and the Planning Inspector's appeal decision has narrowed the issues considerably. The officer's report for the previous application addressed issues in turn and made the following conclusions that shall not be revisited here, they are:

- The lodges would not be unreasonably affected by quarry noise and they would not constrain the continued operation of the neighbouring quarry.
- The SCC – Rural County Environmental Advice Team could accept that the lodges impact of on the landscape would be satisfactory.

- Existing screening density and root protection could be safeguarded and enhanced.
- Appropriate visibility splays could be provided at the access

7.2 The main issue for consideration with this resubmitted proposal has not changed from when it was previously submitted 3 years ago. The issue is whether or not the proposed holiday lodges would be sustainable rural tourism in the context of local and national planning policies, taking particular account of the location of the site and whether future users would have a choice of transport modes.

7.3 The Council when it refused to grant planning permission and the Planning Inspector when he dismissed the subsequent appeal, had decided that the proposed holiday lodges would not be development for sustainable rural tourism. In those respects there was irreconcilable conflict with policy, and there has not been any change in circumstances since that time. The applicant's offer with this resubmission is to remove a shabby portakabin from his land before installing the lodges. In terms of addressing the main issue of sustainability this would serve no useful purpose. However, it would appear to be presented as an additional benefit which he hopes might outweigh the harm and policy conflict that has already been identified.

The CS strategy for 'Other Rural Areas' set out at SS6c

7.4 The small nearby settlement of Hollington is defined as a smaller village in Policy SS6b of the Council's Core Strategy Development Plan Document (CS). Hollington does not have a defined boundary, but the Raddle Inn is in an 'Other Rural Area' of countryside located outside of Hollington which consists of dwellings and farmhouses, principally concentrated around School Bank to the south-east of the site. The village offers limited facilities. These comprise of a church and the Star Inn public house.

7.5 CS Policy SS1 establishes development principles for the District, including that development should deliver easy access to jobs, shops and transport services by all sections of the community. CS Policy SS1a broadly reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development found in the National Planning Policy Framework (the NPPF). Due to the site's location, CS Policy SS6c explains that in 'Other Rural Areas' development will be restricted to that which meets local need, supports rural diversification and sustainability of rural areas, promotes sustainable tourism or enhances the countryside.

7.6 CS Policy SS6c is supportive of proposals that enhance tourist opportunities by supporting sustainable tourism developments and measures in the Churnet Valley in accordance with Policy SS7. CS Policy CS7 explains that the Churnet Valley is identified as an area for sustainable tourism and rural regeneration. To support the delivery of the Council's CS in this area, the Churnet Valley Masterplan Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) has been produced. The SPD establishes the overarching approach to development in the area. Despite the clear and obvious merits of this area, the appeal site is outside of, and to the south of the masterplan's boundary as shown in the SPD. In these circumstances CS Policy SS6c is

supportive of proposals that enhance tourist opportunities by allowing for small-scale tourism developments in other areas (in accordance with policies E3 and R1).

Impact on the character and appearance of the area

7.7 The proposed holiday lodges would be small-scale tourism close to the village of Hollington. Each lodge would have a consistent design, appearance and layout, and broadly reflect the existing holiday lodges behind the public house. The lodges would be sited behind a dry stone wall lining the road. Due to varying ground levels within the site, each lodge would be slightly more or slightly less elevated than its neighbour. The proximity of each lodge to the road would not depart from the relationship formed by nearby buildings on Quarry Bank. While their siting may restrict the ability to form a continuous landscape screen next to the road, ample space would remain within the site so that additional landscaping could be planted. This could be secured through a planning condition. Moreover, a planning condition could be imposed to secure further net biodiversity gains for birds.

Journey numbers by private car and the proposals connectivity with other tourist destinations and amenities, particularly by public transport, walking and cycling.

7.8 Given the limited facilities and services in Hollington, prospective visitors would be reliant on the private car for travel to and from the public house. While a substantial number of vehicle trips may already occur to and from the public house, CS Policy E3 says that new tourist and visitor accommodation should be developed in locations that offer, or are capable of offering, good connectivity with other tourist destinations and amenities, particularly by public transport, walking and cycling. Croxden Abbey is promoted as a pleasant walk, but despite the proposal linking to public footpaths and roads in the area, due to the local area's terrain, some future visitors would be likely to be deterred from travelling by bicycle or on foot. Alton Towers is around 4.5 miles from the site. This is beyond what visitors are likely to want to, or be able to cycle or walk. Still, not every journey made by visitors or staff would be by car once at the site, especially if the appellant's minibus is used. Some visitors may not also wish to travel at all while at the site.

7.9 At the appeal the Inspector considered the appellant's evidence who had explained that visitors to each lodge may arrive one day, stay overnight, before departing the next day resulting in a single traffic movement each day. However, the Inspector reasoned that this did not factor in each lodge being occupied on consecutive nights by separate people and weekend periods and school holidays where occupancy rates are likely to be higher. He accepted that the lodges could attract a 50% occupancy rate during the week, but this could be influenced by certain events such as those held at the golf course at Rocester. Overall, it was considered that the proposed holiday lodges would result in harm through a "moderate" increase in car journeys.

7.10 Whilst some of the journeys to the site could be made by electric vehicles, which are a recognised sustainable transport mode, given the growing market share that they enjoy and the wider network of electric vehicle charge points capable of sustaining their use across the country (The NPPF at paragraph 103 says that

opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas, and this should be taken into account in both plan-making and decision-making). There is, however, no guarantee of visitors using such vehicles. Nor could their use be imposed. Even so, the provision of the electric vehicle charge points would encourage visitors to use electric vehicles which would accord with the thrust of the development plan, emerging LPSV Policy T2 and NPPF paragraphs 84 and 110 e). However, this benefit does not outweigh the overall effect and harm of an increased number of car journeys. As a result, the proposed holiday lodges would not be a location that offers, or is capable of offering good connectivity with other tourist destinations and amenities, particularly by public transport, walking and cycling.

Benefits to the locality and the ongoing viability of the public house

7.11 The applicant identifies a need for the proposed lodges based on the availability of accommodation across the area, a point that had been considered by the Inspector at the appeal. However, for new build accommodation to be exceptionally supported CS Policy E3 also requires proposals to support or complement existing accommodation, facilities or attractions. There is no doubt that visitors using the existing lodges make use of the public house, and that future occupants of the proposed lodges would logically do the same, and also make use of the shop. The proposal could also result in around three full-time and eight part-time jobs, which may well provide young people with employment and the opportunity to gain an education and workplace experience.

7.12 The proposal could result in an annual re-spend of in excess of £31,714. This would accord with the Council's aim to enhance the role of Staffordshire Moorlands as a tourism and leisure destination as the average daily spend of visitors staying in the area is almost twice that of a day visitor. However, it is unclear to what extent the proposed lodges are required to support or complement the public house and the existing lodges, even with the number of public houses said to be closing each week. There was some claim at the appeal that the shop would not be economically viable without the proposed lodges, but this was not supported by substantive evidence and this application is not submitted with additional evidence in these regards. Thus, despite the potential links, and the Parish Council support for the proposal, it is still not certain that the proposal would ensure that the public house, the existing lodges and the proposed shop are able to develop and modernise, and be retained for the benefit of the community in accordance with Framework paragraph 92 d).

The effect of removing the Portakabin

7.13 The Portakabin appears to have once provided modest toilet facility on the land. However, it does not appear to be currently in use and is of a deteriorating condition which, without restoration or refurbishment, suggests it is approaching the end of its life. The unit is approximately 6metres from the roadside completely screened by a dense clump of trees. Removing the Portakabin would not address any of the issues in hand, it would not improve connectivity with other tourist destinations and amenities or opportunity to use public transport, walking and cycling. The portakabin does not feature prominently within the landscape and

removing it would not make any notable improvement to the character and appearance of the area, there are no benefits in these regards that should weight in favour of the proposal.

Conclusion and Planning Balance

7.14 On the whole, the proposal leads to tension between policies in the development plan due to the competing interests of them, coupled with the inevitable tension between supporting the rural economy, delivering good connectivity and use of sustainable modes of transport, and enhancing tourism in the area. On balance, it is considered that the proposal is substantially the same as the previous one and there have been no material changes in circumstances since that application was refused by committee and dismissed at Appeal. It is still considered that the proposed holiday lodges would not be sustainable rural tourism in the context of local and national planning policies taking particular account of the location of the site and future user's choice of transport. The proposed removal of the portakabin would not alter or off-set these concerns. It is concluded that the proposal would be contrary to CS Policies SS1a, SS6c, E3 and R1 as the proposal has not demonstrated that it is required to support or complement existing accommodation, facilities or attractions.

8. RECOMMENDATION

A. That planning permission be REFUSED for the erection of three holiday lodges for the following reason(s):

- 1. The proposal leads to tension between policies in the development plan due to the competing interests of them, coupled with the inevitable tension between supporting the rural economy, delivering good connectivity and use of sustainable modes of transport, and enhancing tourism in the area. On balance, the proposed holiday lodges would not be sustainable rural tourism in the context of local and national planning policies taking particular account of the location of the site and future user's choice of transport. It is concluded that the proposal would be contrary to CS Policies SS1a, SS6c, E3 and R1 as the proposal has not demonstrated that it is required to support or complement existing accommodation, facilities or attractions.**

B. In the event of any changes being needed to the wording of the Committee's decision (such as to delete, vary or add conditions/informatives/planning obligations or reasons for approval/refusal) prior to the decision being issued, the Head of Development Services has delegated authority to do so in consultation with the Chairman of the Planning Applications Committee, provided that the changes do not exceed the substantive nature of the Committee's decision.

Informative

1. The application is for a sustainable form of development which complies with the development plan and the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework. In the spirit of paragraph 38 of the NPPF amendments were secured to reduce the impact of the scheme.

