

**STAFFORDSHIRE MOORLANDS DISTRICT COUNCIL
PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE**

19th October 2023

Application No:	SMD/2023/0326	
Location	Land adjacent to The Royal Oak PH, High Street, Dilhorne, ST10 2PE	
Proposal	Erection of 5no. holiday lodges and associated facilities building, relocation of beer garden, reconfiguration and formalisation of public house car park.	
Applicant	Mr Cunningham	
Agent	Hewitt & Carr Architects	
Parish/ward	Dilhorne	Date registered: 21.08.2023
If you have a question about this report please contact: Chris Johnston tel: 01538 395400 ext. 4123 christopher.johnston@staffsmoorlands.gov.uk		

REFERRAL

The application is before committee due to the large number of representations received.

1. SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATION

REFUSE

2. DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE AND ITS SURROUNDINGS

2.1 The site is on the edge of the small village of Dilhorne, which is within the North Staffordshire Green Belt. As the village does not have a “Development Boundary” defined in the Council’s Local Plan, the site is also deemed to be in the “countryside”. It comprises all the land belonging to the Royal Oak Public House to the rear of the pub building. The Royal Oak faces High Street in the middle of the village. The land to the rear of it, to the north-west of the building, includes the pub car park, an adjacent area of grass with picnic tables used as a pub garden and also, adjacent to the rear boundary to the north-west, part of a rough open field. The site also includes the access to the pub car park which is off New Road which runs to the side of the pub. The access also leads to both the car park and a separate driveway which runs through the site to the rear of other properties which lie to the north-east side of the pub.

2.2 Buildings and houses lie to the south-west, south-east and north-east of the site whilst open land and fields lie to the north-west.

2.3 The site lies within a “High Risk” former coal mining zone.

3. THE APPLICATION AND DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSAL

3.1 This is a full planning application for a row of five timber holiday lodges in the field to the north-west (rear) of the car park and which would face the fields with their backs to the car park. These would have a semi-circular “pod” design (not unlike a shepherd hut without the wheels) and a max height of 3.7 metres and a footprint of 8.0 x 3.6 metres. Each lodge would include a dining lounge with kitchenette area, a double bed, a bunk bed and shower room. A parking area with tandem parking for two cars would lie to the side of each lodge. A single-storey timber hut with dual-pitched roof would also be built next to the row of five pods and close to the car park access and which would face the car park. This would have a slightly larger footprint than the pods and a slightly greater height of 4.0 metres. This would accommodate laundry facilities, WCs, a store and an open bike and dog washing area.

3.2 The application also includes the extension of the pub car park over the existing pub garden/outdoor seating area and the reconfiguration to provide 38 marked parking spaces (the current car park does not have spaces marked out but the application forms state there is enough space for 26 cars). This is to “improve car parking arrangements”. The car park would also be extended over the current driveway to the separate properties. Instead a new driveway would be formed immediately adjacent to the existing driveway just within the field boundary. This would also provide the access to the five holiday lodges and would be separated from the new pub car park by a post and rail fence. A new pub garden would be formed on a narrow strip between the back wall of the pub and row of pub parking spaces. The access off New Road would continue to be used, unaltered and with no new accesses proposed off the public highways. It would operate as a shared access for the pub, holiday lets and the rear of adjacent properties.

3.3 The application forms state that two new full-time workers would be employed as a result of the proposal.

3.4 The application is accompanied by a Coal Mining Risk Assessment Report and a Planning Statement.

3.5 The application files including the drawings, reports and other details of the proposal together with consultation and notification responses can be viewed on the Council website at:

<http://publicaccess.staffs Moorlands.gov.uk/portal/servlets/ApplicationSearchServlet?PKID=171704>

4. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

The most recent planning application relating to the site is as follows:

SMD/2022/0658: Outline application for one dwelling. Refused.

5. PLANNING POLICIES RELEVANT TO THE DECISION

5.1 The Development Plan comprises:

Adopted Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan - Sep 2020

5.2 The following Local Plan policies are relevant to the application:-

- SS1 Development Principles
- SS9 Small Villages Area Strategy
- SS10 Other Rural Areas Strategy
- SD1 Sustainable Use of Resources
- E4 Tourism and Cultural Development
- DC1 Design Considerations
- DC3 Landscape and Settlement Setting
- T1 Development and Sustainable Transport

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).- July 2021

Para 11: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

Section 6: Building a Strong Competitive Economy

Section 12: Achieving Well Designed Places

Section 13: Protecting Green Belt Land

6. CONSULTATIONS

6.1 A site notice was posted and displayed next to the site access on 19.9.23 inviting comments within 21 days from the date it was posted. Letters were also sent out to adjacent properties shortly after the application was received and 21 days was given for comments in response.

Public response to consultation

6.2 Ninety-eight letters of support have been received for the application, mostly outlining the economic benefits of the proposal in providing jobs and adding to the tourism potential of the area.

6.3 Three letters of objection were received from local residents. The points raised are as follows:

- Insufficient parking provision leading to additional highway safety hazards.
- Increase in noise and disturbance from more tourist accommodation in the village
- Harm to the Green Belt

6.4 Seven further letters have been received neither supporting or objecting to the application but all of which outline the economic benefits to the area and to the pub business as a result of the proposed lodges and some of the letters consider the car park improvements to be beneficial.

Dilhorne Parish Council

6.5 *“No objections, subject to neighbours approval, for the following reasons :-*

1. *The reconfiguration and formalisation of the public house car park will be of great benefit. The existing car park is unmarked and therefore vehicles are parked randomly often making the car park full, often with only 20 or so vehicles parked there, which then means vehicles are parked on the roadside near to the public house, which caused issues for the village. With the introduction of 38no marked parking this will alleviate the problem of vehicles parking on the roadside.*
2. *Re relocation of the beer garden to in front of the public house will be much safer for both visitors and staff, as they will not have to walk over the car park area to access it.*
3. *The erection of 5no. holiday lodges will generate business for the public house and also will mean additional staff will be required to service the lodges, good for employment in the area.*
4. *Although the lodges will be located on part of the land that is currently in agricultural use which lies within the North Staffordshire Green Belt, the area of land to be used for the lodges is not overwhelming.*
5. *A permanent caravan site which lies on Green Belt land at nearby Charlie Bassetts Public House which was granted permission (SMD/2022/0634) by your Planning Committee for 14no permanent pitches on that site, would lend weight in favour of approval for this application.*
6. *Should this application be refused as stated in the Planning Statement (15.3 and 15.4) the applicant would have the “fall-back” position to use the land in question as a touring site as Permitted Development as a certified caravan site under the Caravan Act. This is something the Council would not like to see on a site in the middle of the village.*
7. *Policy E4 of your Local Plan “Tourism and Cultural Development” was introduced to boost tourism, this application, if approved will boost tourism in the area and benefit the local economy.*

Finally, if this application is approved then we would ask that the following conditions be attached to the approval:-

- a. *The lodges cannot be occupied by any one party for more than 14 days, this to prevent them being lived in permanently.*
- b. *Should the lodges prove to be uneconomic and removed then the land cannot be built on in the future.”*

SCC Highways Authority

6.6 Recommendation Summary: Conditional

Site Visit Conducted on: 04-Oct-2023

CONDITIONS

1. The development hereby permitted shall not be brought into use until the access drive rear of the public highway has been surfaced and thereafter maintained in a

bound material for a minimum distance of 10m back from the site boundary in accordance with details to be first submitted to and approved in writing by the Local planning authority. The access shall thereafter be surfaced in accordance with the approved details.

2. The development hereby permitted shall not be brought into use until the access, parking, servicing and turning areas have been provided in accordance with the approved plan 01287 AL(0)01 C. The parking, turning and servicing areas shall thereafter be retained unobstructed as parking, turning and servicing areas for the life of the development.

3. The development hereby permitted shall not be brought into use until details of a surface water drainage interceptor, connected to a surface water outfall, have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The drainage works shall thereafter be constructed in accordance with the approved details prior to the development being first brought into use.

REASONS

ALL to comply with NPPF Paragraph 111; to comply with SMDC Local Plan Policy DC1; in the interests of highway safety.

3. To prevent surface water flowing onto the carriageway off the extended surfaced area in the interests of highway safety.

NOTES TO PLANNING OFFICER

Proposal is outside the area of the existing car park and will not remove any existing car parking spaces. Two parking spaces are proposed for each lodge. Spaces are not dimensioned but scale at approx 9.6m long x 2.4m wide. 6m would normally be expected to the rear of a parking space to allow manoeuvring.

Access is not dimensioned, but scales at approx 5m. As the access is gated and fenced, this will not affect the highway and is a matter for the developer. The access directly off the highway has been surfaced at some point for part of its width. However, it is breaking up and in need of maintenance. Proposed site plan includes annotation 'Car Park to be surfaced with tarmac' but also shows the existing crumbling 'tarmac' adjacent to the access off New Road as if its to remain. Extent of the proposed surfacing is not clear. Condition above requires surfacing to be provided for 10m rear of the site boundary.

The increase in the surfaced area will require surface water drainage interceptor and outfall, to prevent surface water flowing onto the highway.

Current records show that there were no Personal Injury Collisions on New Road within 50m either side of the access in the previous five years.

Environmental Health

6.7 Comments awaited and will be reported at the Committee meeting.

Coal Authority

6.8 No objection subject to conditions requiring further intrusive site investigations and if necessary remedial measures to be undertaken to ensure the development is

unaffected by any ground instability or mine gas. The Authority commented as follows:

“Within the application site and surrounding area there are coal mining features and hazards which need to be considered in relation to the determination of this planning application.

The Coal Authority records indicate that the site is likely to have been subject to historic unrecorded underground shallow coal mining. Voids and broken ground associated with such workings can pose a risk of ground instability and may give rise to the emission of mine gases. The site also lies within a Surface Coal Resource Zone. The applicant has obtained appropriate and up-to-date coal mining information for the proposed development site. This information has been used to inform a Coal Mining Risk Assessment (or equivalent) (July 2023, prepared by Sladen Associates) to accompany the planning application.

The report is able to identify that potential unrecorded workings, if present, in the shallower Alecs coal seam may possibly be at such a depth that they should be considered a hazard deserving more detailed risk assessment. It also indicates that there is no record of mine gas emissions in the area requiring action but given the possible presence of relatively shallow workings, mine gas should be considered a potential hazard for more detailed risk assessment.

Whilst the report does acknowledge that the proposed small single storey, timber framed buildings would not be highly sensitive to minor ground movements and affords a low risk, it proposes that two 30m deep rotary probe boreholes are put down in the general vicinity of the proposed new structures to investigate the potential for shallow workings.

The intrusive site investigations should be designed and undertaken by competent persons and should be appropriate to assess the ground conditions on the site in order to establish the coal-mining legacy present and the risks it may pose to the development and inform any remedial works and/or mitigation measures that may be necessary.

It should be noted that wherever coal resources or coal mine features exist at shallow depth or at the surface, there is the potential for mine gases to exist. These risks should always be considered by the LPA. The Planning and Development Team at the Coal Authority, in its role of statutory consultee in the planning process, only comments on gas issues if our data indicates that gas emissions have been recorded on the site. However, the absence of such a comment should not be interpreted to imply that there are no gas risks present. Whether or not specific emissions have been noted by the Coal Authority, local planning authorities should seek their own technical advice on the gas hazards that may exist, and appropriate measures to be implemented, from technically competent personnel.

It should be noted that where SUDs are proposed as part of the development

scheme

consideration will need to be given to the implications of this in relation to the stability and public safety risks posed by coal mining legacy. The developer should seek their own advice from a technically competent person to ensure that a proper assessment has been made of the potential interaction between hydrology, the proposed drainage system and ground stability, including the implications this may have for any mine workings which may be present beneath the site.

The Coal Authority concurs with the recommendations of the Coal Mining Risk Assessment Report; that coal mining legacy potentially poses a risk to the proposed development and that intrusive site investigation works should be undertaken prior to development in order to establish the exact situation regarding coal mining legacy issues on the site.”

SMDC Waste Collection Service

6.11 No issues regarding waste collections. Any bins would need to be presented on New Road or High Street.

7. OFFICER COMMENT AND PLANNING BALANCE

Introduction

7.1 The main issues with the proposal are as follows:

- Whether or not the proposal amounts to inappropriate development in the Green Belt and if so, whether or not there are any “very special circumstances” to outweigh the harm to the Green Belt
- The principle of the development in this location and sustainability
- The impact on the character and appearance of the area.
- The impact on residential amenity.
- The impact on ground stability.
- The impact on highway safety.

Whether or not the proposal amounts to inappropriate development in the Green Belt.

7.2 The site is in the Green Belt and Policy SS10 of the Local Plan, the strategy for the countryside, states there will be strict control over inappropriate development in the Green Belt. The NPPF in paragraphs 149 and 150 lists the exceptional types of development which are not inappropriate in the Green Belt and which are therefore not harmful to its openness. New buildings for tourist/visitor accommodation purposes are not listed. Limited infilling in villages is listed but it is not considered the site for the five lodges could be classed as “infill” as this part of the site does not sit in a gap between buildings and also appears as being outside the built-up edge of the village, closer to the open countryside to the north-west than the nearest buildings either side of the pub site. The change of use of land is listed and also the redevelopment of previously developed land. However, for both, this is only providing the openness of the Green Belt is preserved and there is “no conflict with

the purposes of including land within it". The site where the new buildings would be located is on a separate parcel of the land to the pub despite being within the same ownership. This parcel of land is a field and is therefore not previously developed. Furthermore, the proposal involves the provision of six separate buildings, on greenfield land which clearly does have a significant impact on openness as this open Green Belt site has not been preserved. The proposed holiday lodge development therefore does not fall under any of the categories listed in paras 149 and 150 of the NPPF and is therefore deemed to be inappropriate development. By definition in the NPPF, inappropriate development in the Green Belt is harmful to its openness and should not be allowed unless there are "very special circumstances" which are considered to outweigh the level of harm to the openness and the operation of Green Belt policy.

7.3 The application agent has put forward a number of points which he considers to amount to "Very Special Circumstances". These mainly relate to the economic benefits to the area and benefits to the local community as a result of supporting local village pubs.

7.4 The proposal in helping to address the undersupply in the District of overnight tourist accommodation, as identified in the Council's Tourism Strategy (adopted Feb 2023) is one such circumstance put forward. The Strategy outlines that tourism in the District is dominated by day visitors and that overnight stays should be encouraged as this provides income for businesses such as local pubs, eating places and food shops. Self-catering overnight accommodation is particularly encouraged for this reason.

7.5 It is recognised that the proposal would indeed bring some form of local economic benefit. However, it is uncertain that such benefits would be significant enough to be deemed to amount to Very Special Circumstances. The focus of tourist development in the District is the Churnet Valley where there are a significant number of tourist attractions including large-scale attractions such as Alton Towers and the scenic quality of the landscape and the presence of long-distance walking and cycling trails are other assets which have the potential to attract overnight visitors. However, the site is not in the Churnet Valley. The closest visitor attraction is Foxfield Steam Railway, 2.5 miles away by road but no mention of other nearby attractions. The Planning Statement also states that the site is next to "Advisory Cycle Routes" and encloses a map of the routes, which shows that most if not all of the country lanes between Cheadle and Weston Coyney are Advisory Cycle Routes. It is therefore not considered that the site being on such a route could be regarded as 'Very Special'. There does not appear to be any nearby National Cycle Routes. The site is close to a number of public footpaths but again, this is not considered to be a significant tourist attractor given that none of these appear to be significant "walking trails" such as those on the Long Distance Walking Path network, or National Trails or even Staffs Moorlands Walking Trails. In terms of employment it is claimed in the application forms that just two new full time jobs would be created. Overall, it is not considered that the proposal would lead to a substantial enough boost to the tourist economy or local economic or employment benefits that amount to "very special circumstances" strong enough to overcome the particular level of harm to the openness of the Green Belt.

7.6 The Planning Statement also states that the proposal in providing five holiday lets would help to sustain and support the existing pub which is a particular advantage given that public houses are closing at a rate of 50 per month according to the Altus Group. However, whilst there is no doubt that such schemes can secure the long-term viability of pubs as business and community facilities of some worth, there is no further information given about the viability of the particular pub on site or any indication that the pub is under threat.

7.7 The final point which the Applicant argues could be regarded as a “very special circumstances” according to the Planning Statement is the “fall-back position” of being able instead, as an alternative to the five lodges applied for, to operate a caravan site on the field for up to five touring caravans in accordance with a licence granted by the Caravan and Motorhome Club under permitted development without requiring planning permission. The agent claims such a use would be more visually intrusive as although touring caravans are more transient in nature, the materials (normally white metal) would be a greater contrast with their surroundings than the more muted appearance of timber clad pods. However, the Council considers that a caravan site with up to five touring caravans in this location would in fact be preferable in landscape appearance terms and also crucially in terms of impact on Green Belt openness as touring caravans are indeed temporary and transient and not permanent fixtures seen all year round. Even if all five pitches were occupied, there would actually be no greater “scope” of visible development than the five pods which are of similar size and height as standard touring caravans. Five touring caravans would possibly even amount to a lesser scope development as touring caravans would not essentially require a permanent facilities block unlike the five pods proposed. It is therefore considered that the “fall-back position” of a caravan site would not result in any greater degree of harm than the scheme proposed and therefore cannot amount to a “very special circumstance” used to approve five lodges and a facilities block.

7.8 In summary, the proposed development is inappropriate development in the Green Belt which is by definition in the NPPF, harmful to its openness and there are not considered to be any very special circumstances which outweigh the harm to the Green Belt and therefore the proposal does not comply with Policy S10 of the Local Plan or Section 13 of the NPPF in this respect.

The principle of development against Policy E4 of the Local Plan, “Tourism and Cultural Development.”

7.9 The policy supports tourist facilities and accommodation in the District where it complies with two parts. The first part requires that such development is in locations that offer, or are capable of offering either:

- A) good connectivity with other tourist destinations and amenities, particularly by public transport, walking and cycling; or
- B) in locations in or close to settlements where local services, facilities and public transport are available; or
- C) in areas specifically identified for tourism development in the Churnet Valley Masterplan or other relevant documents.

7.10 It is not considered the proposal would be compliant with Test “A” as the nearest tourist destination is 2.5 miles away via road (Foxfield Steam Railway), although this can be reached via an infrequent bus service from the village. It could be reached via walking and cycling although for the former, this would be on paths across fields and the latter, via country lanes. It is expected travel to the nearest tourist destination would, if not entirely, would mostly be via the car. However, I consider there is broadly a compliance with Test “B” because the site can be reached via public transport (from Cheadle and Stoke) and is adjacent to a pub serving food and also a short walk to another pub serving food (Charlie Bassett’s), although there is no general store/food store in the village for those not wanting to eat at a pub. Point “C” does not apply but overall, the proposal would achieve some compliance with the first part of Policy E4.

7.11 The second part of Policy E4 states that new accommodation, attractions and facilities should:

- A) support the provision and expansion of tourist, visitor and cultural facilities in the rural areas where needs are not met by existing facilities; and
- B) all development shall be of an appropriate quality, scale and character compatible with the local area, protect the residential amenity of the area, enhance the heritage, landscape and biodiversity of the area and shall not harm interests of acknowledged importance.

7.12 With regard to Test “A”, there is general support for self-catering overnight accommodation in the District in the Council’s Tourist Strategy adopted in February of this year and which also outlines an undersupply of such accommodation. It is noted that in January 2023, a caravan site with 14 pitches for touring caravans, camper vans or motorhomes was approved a short distance away to the rear of the Charlie Bassett’s pub (approved at Planning Committee – SMD/2022/0634). However, whilst this could be claimed to help with any under-provision of overnight accommodation in this area, the accommodation is of course restricted to those who own a caravan or similar mobile accommodation. The proposal at The Royal Oak involves permanent pod-type overnight accommodation which is unrestricted and there is no other examples of this rather “niche” type of accommodation in the area. A search online revealed the only other holiday-let type accommodation available in the area was three “AirBnB” hosts about a mile to the north of the village. I therefore consider the proposal would be compliant with Test “A”.

7.13 With regard to Test “B”, it is considered the scale of the proposed development is not inappropriate in this location on the edge of a village and that the design is acceptable. The limited scale and height of each pod and the amenity block together with the distance from the nearest residential properties does not raise any immediate residential amenity concerns in terms of privacy and noise and disturbance (there is likely to be greater levels of noise and disturbance from the current use of the pub car park and the beer garden) although this comment is given without prejudice to the comments of the Council’s Environmental Health Section which will be reported at the Committee meeting. However, in terms of visual amenity and landscape impact, the buildings, although small and of limited height would still be very visible additions in an open field. Although the village does not have a defined “Development Boundary” in the Local Plan, a built-up north-western

edge, comprising the pub building and dwellings to the north, is reasonably identifiable. It is considered the proposed development, comprising six buildings and a new access road would represent an easily visible encroachment of development into the open countryside to the north-west, where the land then slopes downwards then rises further towards the west where there are public footpaths. The development would also be visible from the road to the south.

7.14 It is worth noting that in May 2023, an outline application for a dwelling (SMD/2022/0658) on a plot adjacent to the north-east boundary of the site and immediately to the rear of the neighbouring residential property known as “Briar Dale”, was refused on the grounds of harm to Green Belt openness but also because it represented a harmful encroachment into the countryside to the detriment of the character and appearance of the village. The proposed lodges and amenity building would be positioned even closer to the open countryside which lies to the north-west and even further from the built-up part of the village than the refused dwelling and would therefore represent an even greater encroachment into the countryside than the refused dwelling and therefore the proposed development, with a cumulative built footprint greater than the refused dwelling, is deemed to be more harmful to the character and appearance of the area than the recently refused dwelling scheme. It is considered the development would amount to significant harm to the rural setting of the village as well as the openness of the Green Belt. Accordingly the proposal fails to comply with Test B

7.15 It is not considered the proposal would harm the settings of the nearest listed buildings which lie on the opposite side of the road and to the other side of the pub (the pub itself is not listed) and would also not lead to any biodiversity harms (no nearby designated nature reserves or identified protected species). The impacts on “heritage” and “biodiversity” are considered to be neutral. However, the impact on the landscape is deemed to be harmful and so there is, overall, no enhancement of the heritage, landscape and biodiversity of the area and therefore the proposal does not comply with Test “B” of the second part of the policy and therefore the proposal does not comply with Policy E4 overall.

Impacts of the car park works

7.16 The additional hard-surfacing required for the car park extension would be deemed to be an “engineering operation” which is listed in paras 149 and 150 of the NPPF and is therefore not inappropriate development in the Green Belt providing this preserves the openness of the Green Belt. It is considered the openness of the Green Belt is preserved as although the current beer garden would be surfaced over, a new grassed over beer garden would be provided adjacent to the rear wall of the pub of similar size to the current beer garden. This would also lead to no additional impacts on the visual and residential amenities of the area particularly as there is no actual expansion of the car park towards dwelling although this comment is given without prejudice to the comments of the Council’s Environmental Health Section which will be reported at the Committee meeting. Overall, it is not considered the car park extension and reconfiguration would harm the openness of the Green Belt or the visual and residential amenities of the area.

The impact on ground stability

7.17 The ground in this area has been affected by historical coal mining in the area and therefore it needs to be demonstrated that any significant new development requiring ground extraction and ground foundation works does not further affect ground stability. A Coal Risk Assessment report was produced and submitted by the agent and the consulted Coal Authority considers the proposed development if approved would require further intrusive ground investigations and if required, remedial measures to stabilise the site before the commencement of works. This can be achieved by way of a planning condition in the event that planning permission was granted for the development. The Coal Authority asks the local planning authority to look into the possibility of any mine gas present. The Council's Environmental Health Section has been consulted and their eventual comments will be available at the meeting in this respect. However, as things stand, the application appears to be in line with the requirements of Policy SD1 of the Local Plan.

The impact on highway safety of the proposed holiday lodge development and car park works

7.18 The improvement and extension of the current pub car park to provide more usable spaces is not objectionable. The access off the public highway is considered to be of sufficient quality in order to safely accommodate the increase in vehicular movements as a result of the holiday lodge development. The local highways authority (SCC) raises no objection to the proposal providing that new surfacing is provided 10m back from the edge of the public highway and that a drainage interceptor is installed. It considers the new access road to the lodges, the additional parking provision for the lodges and the size and design of the parking and turning areas to be acceptable. The proposal would therefore not be detrimental to highway safety with the safeguard of conditions and there is therefore no contravention with Policy T1 of the Local Plan.

Conclusion and Planning Balance

7.19 The proposed development of five holiday lodges, an amenities building and associated new access road and parking areas in an open greenfield site is deemed by the NPPF to be inappropriate development in the Green Belt and is harmful to its openness. The NPPF states that such development should only be allowed if there are Very Special Circumstances which are considered to outweigh the harm to the Green Belt. It is recognised that the proposal would bring some economic benefits, assist with the tourism potential of the area and also help to sustain village pubs. However, it is considered that the assessed benefits of the proposal do not outweigh the particular level of harm to the openness of the Green Belt. Furthermore, the proposed buildings would represent a significant encroachment of development into the open countryside to the north-west of the village significantly harming the rural setting of the village and the overall character and appearance of the area. This is contrary to policies DC1 and DC3 and also the Local Plan strategy for tourist development, Policy E4 which requires such development to enhance the landscape, biodiversity and heritage of the area. The proposed car park works are not inappropriate development in the Green Belt and would not harm the visual or

residential amenities of the area. However, overall, for the above reasons, the application does not comply with the Council's Local Plan and is also contrary to the government planning guidance contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and therefore the application should be refused.

8. RECOMMENDATION

A. That the application be REFUSED for the following reasons:

1. The application site is in the Green Belt. Policy SS10 'Other Rural Areas Strategy' of the Council's Local Plan (adopted September 2020) requires strict control over inappropriate development in the Green Belt. The government planning guidance contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) at paragraphs 149 and 150 sets out the forms of development which are not inappropriate development in the Green Belt. It does not include new tourist accommodation buildings and the proposed development is not considered to fall into any of the other categories of development listed in paras 149 and 150. The proposed development in providing five holiday lodges and an associated amenities building is therefore deemed to be inappropriate development in the Green Belt and is therefore by definition, harmful to its openness. Inappropriate development should only be allowed where very special circumstances, considered to outweigh the harm to the Green Belt, have been demonstrated. However, no such very special circumstances exist. The proposal is therefore contrary to Section 13 of the NPPF and Policy SS10 of the Council's adopted Local Plan.

2. The proposed development of five holiday lodge buildings and an associated amenities block, by virtue of their cumulative scale and siting, would appear as a significant encroachment of development from a small village into the open countryside to the north-west of the site, harmful to rural setting of the village and the overall rural character and appearance of the area. It would also not enhance the landscape, biodiversity or heritage of the area. The proposal is therefore contrary to policies SS10, E4 'Tourism and Cultural Development, DC1 'Design Considerations' and DC3 'Landscape and Settlement Setting' of the Local Plan.

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/in formatives/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.

Location Plan

Ordnance Survey © Crown copyright 2023. All rights reserved. Licence number 100051789



Dilhor

58

Site Location Plan 1:1250