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| **Report to be read in conjunction with the Decision Notice.** |
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| **Application Ref:** | 3/2021/0335 |  |
| **Date Inspected:** | 11/05/2021 |
| **Officer:** | AB/JM |
| **DELEGATED ITEM FILE REPORT:**  | **APPROVAL** |
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| **Development Description:** | **Extension of existing holiday lodge park to provide for the siting of 19 additional holiday lodges. Resubmission of 3/2019/0851.** |
| **Site Address/Location:** | **Ribble Valley View, Old Langho Road, Langho, BB6 8AW** |
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| **CONSULTATIONS:**  | **Parish/Town Council** |
| The Parish Council strongly object to the application for the following reasons:* This development will not sit well in the landscape. The existing development is intrusive and visually unsympathetic to the landscape. There is also light pollution from the existing lodges being illuminated daily not just during an expected holiday period, this would increase with the additional lodges.
* This is development creep onto green agricultural land. These lodges are no different to a house on a green field site. The parish council feels that more should be done to protect our farming heritage and green field sites.
* This development will also put more vehicles onto roads that are already overloaded. There is already an increase of at least one car per lodge, this application for a further 16 lodges will add yet more vehicles.
* The parish council is concerned about the viability of the business venture with concern that the development will prove unprofitable and then the lodges will be sold off for homes. This has happened in the past. Further concerns were raised that the majority of lodges were occupied by owners who live in them all year round, with the residents in these lodges also circumventing Council tax. Due to the level of concern a member of the parish council has visited the site after dark and seen that the majority of the existing lodges were illuminated which demonstrated these are still permanently occupied. It was felt that some of the lodges are being used as permanent addresses and not in keeping with this or the previous planning application.
* The parish council ask if the question could be raised as to if the existing sewage systems and other utilities can stand such an increase in population.
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| **CONSULTATIONS:**  | **Highways/Water Authority/Other Bodies** |
| **LCC Highways:** |  |
| No objections subject to appropriate conditions. The Local Highways Authority request £4600 to be secured to allow for the surfacing of the remaining length of Public Footpath 3-6-FP5, between the development and Dinckley Bridge. |
| **Lead Local Flood Authority:** |  |
| No objections subject to appropriate conditions. |
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| **CONSULTATIONS:**  | **Additional Representations.** |
| One objection letter has been received and raises the following concerns:* The design and access statement does not show all perspectives and angles of the development and appears to purposely exclude properties within Highwoods Park.
* No considered landscaping plan has been undertaken from the position of our properties.
* Site noise is already significant and likely to continue when used for holiday purposes. This peaceful area of the Ribble Valley will likely be disrupted by noise, which due to the elevation of the site will carry to neighbouring properties.
* There will be more traffic in an area which didn’t have it.
* This is significant overdevelopment of a peaceful area.
* Why now ask for more lodges? Was this a means to evade initial scrutiny at planning?
* The proposal is out of character of the area, and the layout and density are too large and overbearing.
* The beautiful landscape has been altered significantly.
* There has been no supportive evidence how the site would contribute to the economy/ jobs in the area.
* A holiday site will undoubtedly bring more traffic into the area before and after the security barriers. This poses a significant danger to pedestrians, cyclists, and other homeowner car users. There is limited public transport available to the site. Traffic will also cause light pollution in an area that is without any light source.
* Noise and disturbance resulting from use.
* Given that the current site has not been built to previous approvals it is unlikely that future development would adhere to any further approval.
* Previous planning conditions in particular landscaping have not be adhered to or carried out.
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| **RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY:**3/2019/0851 – Extension of existing holiday lodge park to provide for the siting of 29 additional holiday lodges. Refused.3/2018/0506 – Change of use of agricultural land to allow extension to lodge park and the erection of an additional 12 lodges (Amendment to application 3/2015/0880 approved 16 December 2016). Approved with Conditions.3/2015/0880 – Change of use of agricultural land to allow extension to lodge park and the erection of an additional 12 lodges and informal recreational area and footpath. Approved with Conditions.3/2010/0417 - Proposed change of use of agricultural land to form a pitch static caravan holiday park with warden unit, reception, grounds maintenance store and associated landscaping. Approved with Conditions. |
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| **RELEVANT POLICIES:** |
| **Ribble Valley Core Strategy:**Key Statement DS1 – Development StrategyKey Statement DS2 –Sustainable DevelopmentKey Statement EN2 – LandscapeKey Statement EN5 – Heritage StatementKey Statement EC1 – Business and Employment DevelopmentKey Statement EC3 – Visitor EconomyPolicy DMG1 – General ConsiderationsPolicy DMG2 – Strategic ConsiderationsPolicy DMG3 – Transport and MobilityPolicy DME1 – Protecting Trees and WoodlandsPolicy DME2 – Landscape and Townscape ProtectionPolicy DME3 - Site and Species Protection and ConservationPolicy DME4 – Protecting Heritage AssetsPolicy DMB1 – Supporting Business Growth and the Local EconomyPolicy DMB3 – Recreation and Tourism DevelopmentPolicy DMB5 – Footpaths and Bridleways**National Planning Policy Framework** |
| **ASSESSMENT OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT:** |
| **Site Description and Surrounding Area:**The application relates to an area of land immediately adjoining the existing lodge park to the south-west. The site lies within the open countryside and is located approximately 1.5 miles from the settlement of Billington, adjacent to Brockhall Village. To the south-east of the site, adjacent the site access, is the Black Bull Inn fronting Old Langho Road and Grade I Listed St Leonards Church is also in close proximity.The site is typical of greenfield farmland with boundary hedgerows and intermittent tree planting. Land levels slope gently down to the north-west of the site.  |
| **Proposed Development for which consent is sought:**This is a re-submission of a previously refused application for the extension of the existing holiday lodge park known as Ribble Valley View to provide for the siting of 19 additional timber holiday lodges. The previous planning application, ref 3/2019/0851, proposed the siting of 29 additional holiday lodges and was refused on 30 June 2020 due to it being considered to be of *‘significant detriment to the character, appearance and visual amenities of the area and inherent character of the defined open countryside’*.This revised application seeks to overcome the reason for refusal reducing to 16 additional units from the original proposal of 29. The units would be available for purchase and for rent as holiday homes. The applicant has decided to expand the business, based on the success of the existing park and to encourage more visitors into the local area and economy. Further revision has resulted in an increase in numbers but a reduction in site area and internal road network which reduces the visual impact. |
| **Principle of Development**Core Strategy Key Statement EC1 supports in principle developments that contribute to farm diversification and strengthening of the wider rural economy.Key Statement EC3 relates specifically to the visitor economy stating that proposals that contribute to and strengthen the visitor economy of Ribble Valley will be encouraged. The proposed development would contribute to the tourism economy and as such the proposal accords with the general intentions of Key Statements EC1 and EC3. The application is accompanied by a letter from Hoseasons which states that the domestic lodge sector is extremely buoyant at present with high demand nationwide. The adjacent public house, The Black Bull, and other businesses locally would also benefit from additional tourists that visit the area.The application site is located in the Open Countryside. Policy DMB3 relates specifically to recreation and tourism development. Tourism and visitor attractions are generally supported subject to the following criteria being met:*1. The proposal must not conflict with other policies of this plan;**2. The proposal must be physically well related to an existing main settlement or village or to an existing group of buildings, except where the proposed facilities are required in conjunction with a particular countryside attraction and there are no suitable existing buildings or developed sites available;**3. The development should not undermine the character, quality or visual amenities of the plan area by virtue of its scale, siting, materials or design;**4. The proposals should be well related to the existing highway network. It should not generate additional traffic movements of a scale and type likely to cause undue problems or disturbance. Where possible the proposals should be well related to the public transport network;**5. The site should be large enough to accommodate the necessary car parking, service areas and appropriate landscaped areas; and**6. The proposal must take into account any nature conservation impacts using suitable survey information and where possible seek to incorporate any important existing associations within the development. Failing this then adequate mitigation will be sought.*The proposed development site is closely related to the existing lodge park and is also located in close proximity to other buildings including the Black Horse Inn. The proposals represent an expansion of an already established tourism site. The site is well served by road, situated close to the A59 which is the main route through the borough, and would not generate a significant number of additional vehicle movements when compared with the existing situation. The Council’s Planning Policy section has raised no ‘in-principle’ objections and it is considered that the principle of development is acceptable. However, further consideration must be given to the potential impact of the development on the landscape and visual amenity of the area and the ecological impacts of development.Regarding the designated heritage asset, Chapel of St Leonard, this is set back from the road and the site is well-contained by boundary trees. There is therefore limited intervisibility between the heritage asset and lodge park. The proposed lodge park extension is further from the listed building than the existing site and would have no adverse impact on the setting of the heritage asset taking into account the present situation.The concerns of the Parish Council relating to the potential use of lodges as permanent residential accommodation are noted. However, the application must be determined based on what has been applied for which is holiday lodges for short-term let only. The applicant has agreed to the imposition of a planning condition that would restrict occupation of the units to 28 days in a calendar year to any one person or group and the Local Planning Authority would be able to take enforcement action as necessary if the condition was breached.**Effects Upon the Landscape/Visual Amenity**The proposed development is located in the Open Countryside but lies close to the village of Brockhall Village and small cluster of buildings known as Old Langho. Key Statement EN2 requires development to be in keeping with the character of the landscape. This is supported by Policy DMG1 which states that particular emphasis will be placed on visual appearance and the relationship to surroundings, including impact on landscape character and criterion 3) of Policy DMB3 above. It is therefore clear that whilst the development of tourist and holiday accommodation is acceptable in principle in rural areas, great care must be given to ensure that the visual appearance of the development does not harm the character and visual appearance of the area. The site is categorised as Undulating Lowland Farmland and is within the Lower Ribblesdale landscape character area identified as being a well settled area. The existing lodges are visible from Old Langho Road on approach from the south due to lack of tree planting. There is also a public right of way that runs directly through the application site and the proposal is for this to be re-routed and upgraded.It is acknowledged that the number of proposed new lodges has been significantly reduced when compared with the previous application and the lodges are proposed to be sited in the north-western section of the site. Additional soft landscaping is also proposed when compared with the previous submission and the application is supported by a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) which identifies the area as having medium susceptibility to change.The proposals include alterations of the existing land levels as part of a cut and fill exercise. This would result in the proposed lodges being positioned on low ground and a raised platform being created to the south-east of the lodges to help screen the development from public viewpoints from Old Langho Road. New perimeter hedgerows, woodland and shrub planting and retention of existing trees seek to soften the visual appearance of the development to aid assimilation into the surrounding countryside. The landscape proposals would help filter views towards the existing lodge park as well as the proposed resulting in an overall benefit. There would remain views from the public footpath through the site and by footpath users on approach from the north however these users already experience views of the existing lodge park.Taking all of the above into account, it is considered that the proposals would not result in an undue negative impact to warrant refusal taking into account the amendments to the scheme and landscaping proposals. Further revisions has resulted in an increase in numbers but a reduction in site area and internal road network which reduces the visual impact.  |
| **Effect on Residential Amenity:**In terms of its impact on the residential amenity of nearby residents, the proposed lodge park extension is situated a greater distance from residential properties than the existing lodges. No concerns have been raised by Environmental Health in relation to noise and disturbance and new guests would be required to abide by site rules. |
| **Ecology and Trees:**In terms of its impact on local wildlife and ecology, the application site is grazing land although there are several mature trees and hedgerows within and on the edge of the site. There are some signs of badger activity to grassland adjacent to the western boundary, but the impacts generated by the proposal are considered to be minor and would have no measurable long-term effects on the badger population as no setts are affected. Nesting birds would be restricted to the hedgerow and trees and shrubs on the site and there is negligible ground-nesting bird potential. There is considered to be low quality foraging for bats on account of the exposed nature of the application site. However, there are very high-quality foraging areas in near vicinity. Two trees within the site have roost potential evaluated as ‘moderate’. These trees will be retained as part of the landscaping of the site. It is important that high levels of lighting are avoided. The submitted Ecological Report confirms that lighting is to be low level bollard lighting although final details of lighting would need to be submitted and agreed by the local planning authority to ensure impact on protected species, namely bat, is minimised.The applicant intends to undertake native landscaping including new tree and hedgerow planting which would provide habitat enhancement in accordance with DME3 of the Core Strategy. |
| **Highways:**The Country Surveyor (Highways) has raised no objections to the proposals. There would be a requirement that a footpath be created to allow safe pedestrian access through the site. As such, the applicant has proposed to divert and upgrade the existing PROW through the site.The Highways Officer has also requested a financial contribution of £4,600 to be secured to allow for the surfacing of the remaining length of Public Footpath 3-6-FP5, between the development and Dinckley Bridge. The monies will also be used to improve the accessibility of the footbridge over Dinckley Brook.Payment of the money has been secured prior to the decision and this has been confirmed by LCC. This negates the need for any S106 and the planning condition would ensure the improvements are implemented before occupation. |
| **Conclusion:**Taking into account the above, it is considered that the proposals would not result in any undue visual or landscape impacts. It would provide visitor accommodation which would be of economic benefit to the applicant and other businesses in the local area. The proposed scheme of landscape screening would provide enhance of habitat for local wildlife and the scheme would also ensure the upgrading of the PROW through the site and additionally to the accessibility of the footbridge over Dinckley Brook to the north of the site.It is recommended that the application be approved subject to appropriate planning conditions including those necessary to ensure that the site is used only for short-term holidays and that all proposed landscaping is implemented and maintained. |
| **RECOMMENDATION**: | That planning consent be granted. |