

**Report to be read in conjunction with the Decision Notice.**

<b>Application Ref:</b>	3/2021/0215	 Ribble Valley Borough Council <a href="http://www.ribblevalley.gov.uk">www.ribblevalley.gov.uk</a>
<b>Date Inspected:</b>	30/03/2021	
<b>Officer:</b>	AB	
<b>DELEGATED ITEM FILE REPORT:</b>		<b>REFUSED</b>

<b>Development Description:</b>	<b>Proposed extension of existing campsite to provide additional 10 caravan pitches, 4 camping glamping pods. Erection of a proposed toilet and welfare facilities building and associated landscaping works.</b>
<b>Site Address/Location:</b>	<b>Marl Barn Wigglesworth Road Slaidburn Lancashire BD23 4SX</b>

<b>CONSULTATIONS:</b>	<b>Parish/Town Council</b>
The Parish Council are concerned about the expanse of the development and feel there will possibly be a detrimental visual impact of the site especially from Longtons Lane leading to Grunsagill and from the road over Champion Common.	

<b>CONSULTATIONS:</b>	<b>Highways/Water Authority/Other Bodies</b>
<b>LCC Highways:</b>	
No objections subject to appropriate conditions.	
<b>AONB Partnership:</b>	
The landscape character of this site is very open, rolling upland farmland and the proposal will have significant impact on the local character, in particular introducing 4 camping pods into the extended site. The applicant has not given adequate consideration to the landscape impacts of the proposal, nor any explanation of how any effects will mitigated or minimised.	

<b>CONSULTATIONS:</b>	<b>Additional Representations.</b>
One letter of objection has been received and raises the following concerns:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Light and noise pollution.</li></ul>	

<b>RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY:</b>
3/2020/0834 - Erection of an agricultural shed for cattle and sheep. Approved.
3/2011/0164 - Application for the modification of condition no. 13 of planning consent 3/2005/0245P, to allow the eastern, four-bedroom holiday cottage to be used as a permanent residential dwelling. Refused and appeal dismissed.

<b>RELEVANT POLICIES:</b>
<b>Ribble Valley Core Strategy:</b> Key Statement DS1 – Development Strategy Key Statement DS2 –Sustainable Development Key Statement EN2 – Landscape Key Statement EC1 – Business and Employment Development

Key Statement EC3 – Visitor Economy  
Key Statement DMI2 – Transport Considerations  
Policy DMG1 – General Considerations  
Policy DMG2 – Strategic Considerations  
Policy DMG3 – Transport and Mobility  
Policy DME2 – Landscape and Townscape Protection  
Policy DME3 - Site and Species Protection and Conservation  
Policy DME6 – Water Management  
Policy DMB1 – Supporting Business Growth and the Local Economy  
Policy DMB3 – Recreation and Tourism Development

### **National Planning Policy Framework**

#### **ASSESSMENT OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT:**

##### **Site Description and Surrounding Area:**

The application site is located near Tosside in the Forest of Bowland AONB. The site is accessed along an approximately 250-metre-long tarmac access track which extends from the south side of Wigglesworth Road. As existing the site comprises a small caravan and campsite, holiday lets and an existing agricultural building.

The area is characterised as landscape character type ‘Rolling Upland Farmland’, a gentle landscape of rolling hills with a strong sense of remoteness, isolation and tranquillity. At present the campsite consists of a camping field, 8 hardstanding pitches, further grass pitches (suitable for use for approximately 4 months of the year) and a portable toilet and shower facility building.

It is noted that there appears to be no planning history for the existing caravan site although aerial photos confirm that it has been in situ for a minimum period of 10 years such that it would be immune from planning enforcement action. The applicant has confirmed that the present caravan/camping site was implemented under permitted development rights for caravan sites and recreational campsites.

##### **Proposed Development for which consent is sought:**

The application proposes to extend the existing caravan and camping site to provide an additional 10 caravan pitches, 4 glamping pods and a purpose-built toilet and welfare facilities building to cater for increase in demand. The proposed expansion would be located predominantly to the north of the existing site around the existing access track. The caravan pitches would measure 6m x 8m with an electricity point for each. The proposed glamping pods would be 2.5m wide, 3.4m long and 2.5m in height and would incorporate cedar cladding.

The new toilet and shower facility building would be located to the south of the existing site and would be constructed from natural stone with stone window and door surrounds and a blue slate roof. It would measure 18m x 7.5m and would have a height of 4.4 metres.

##### **Principle of Development**

Core Strategy 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 accords with the general intentions of Key Statement EC3. Key Statement EC1 ‘Business and Employment Development states that *“Developments that contribute to farm diversification, strengthening of the wider rural and village economies or that promote town centre vitality and viability will be supported in principle”*.

The application site is located in the Forest of Bowland. Core Strategy Policy DMG2 requires development outside of defined settlement areas to meet at least one of six considerations one of which is the following:

*4. The development is for small scale tourism or recreational developments appropriate to a rural area.*

In terms of compliance with Policy DMG2, the main consideration is whether the proposal is for a 'small-scale' tourism development of a type that is appropriate to a rural area. Tourism and recreational development of the type proposed is by its nature located in rural areas. It is considered that the site, taken as a whole, would remain small-scale should consent be granted although any further expansion of the site beyond the application proposals may not be considered as such.

The application is supported by information about the existing caravan and campsite business and explains that the applicant hopes to capitalise on the high demand for this holiday type, attracting visitors to the area to help support the local economy including other local businesses. The glamping pods are an attempt to further diversify the existing business to attract guests that may not have access to a caravan or motorhome.

Whilst regard must be given to the economic and social wellbeing of the AONB, the most important consideration is the protection, conservation and enhancement of the landscape and character of the area.

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.*

In the Forest of Bowland AONB additional criteria apply as follows: -

- 1. The proposal should display a high standard of design appropriate to the area.*
- 2. The site should not introduce built development into an area largely devoid of structures (other than those directly related to agriculture or forestry uses).*

The proposed development is for the expansion of an existing site which is located close to buildings of permanent construction at Marl Barn. There is already access from the site to Wigglesworth Road and the proposed site expansion would not generate significant additional levels of traffic. The main consideration is the impact of the development of the landscape and scenic beauty of the Forest of Bowland.

#### **Effects Upon the Landscape/Visual Amenity**

Great weight is afforded to the conservation and scenic beauty of the Forest of Bowland AONB as stated in The Framework and reiterated in Key Statement EN2 of the Core Strategy which requires

the Forest of Bowland to be protected, conserved and enhanced. Development in such areas should be of a high standard of design and should be in keeping with the character of the landscape.

The existing site is well-located so as to avoid any uninterrupted close or long-distance views of the proposed development. The site is bounded by dry stone walls so that from Wigglesworth Road to the north any tents and/or caravans are reasonably well-screened. The proposal seeks to extend the caravan and campsite north onto open agricultural land bringing it closer to Wigglesworth Road and over the brow of a gentle slope in the land such that the extended area would be more prominent in the landscape. The proposal to section the site off from the remainder of the agricultural field with timber fencing would mean that there would be unrestricted views of the site which would include the stationing of highly visible caravans, cars and motorhomes.

The erection of the proposed toilet and welfare building to the south of the existing site would be constructed using natural materials in keeping with the area and its height of 4.4m would mean that it would not be prominent addition. Importantly, its location south of the existing caravan and campsite, between the caravan and campsite and the holiday let and agricultural buildings to the north, would mean it would be screened by existing development and would be seen as part an established group of buildings.

In the officer's view, the location of the proposed new caravan and camping pod pitches would be assessed more favourably if located to the south of the existing site where it would be well contained and screened from public viewpoints and experienced as part of a group. This option has been discussed with the applicant who has presented a case to explain why the land to the south could not be used. This is based on the argument that the land is crucial to the farming enterprise and is used as a lambing or holding field.

As such, the application has been determined as submitted. It is considered that the proposed extension of the caravan site would prove harmful to the visual appearance and character of the landscape. The AONB Officer comments that the landscape character of the site is very open, rolling upland farmland and the proposal will have significant impact on the local character, in particular introducing four camping pods into the extended site. The applicant has not given adequate consideration to the landscape impacts of the proposal, nor any explanation of how any effects will mitigated or minimised. As such, the proposals are contrary to Key Statement EN2 and policies DMG1, DMG2 and DMB3 of the Core Strategy and paragraph 172 of the Framework.

#### **Other Considerations**

There are no features within the site such as hedgerows and trees. The land which is the subject of this application is agricultural grazing land and as such it would have a low ecological value.

The County Highways Officer has raised no objections to the proposal. The existing access provides good visibility and is considered suitable to deal with the additional vehicle movements that would be generated by the proposed development. The layout of the site would provide sufficient turning, manoeuvring and parking space.

#### **Conclusion**

Taking into account all of the above, it is considered that the proposals would result in undue visual and landscape impacts, failing to conserve and enhance landscape and scenic beauty.

It is recommended that the application be refused.

<b>RECOMMENDATION:</b>	That planning consent be refused for the following reasons:
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1. The proposed development, by virtue of its siting, form and design, would form a prominent and incongruous feature that would fail to conserve and enhance the visual amenity and landscape character of the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty contrary to

Core Strategy Key Statement EN2 and Policies DMG1, DMG2 and DMB3 and paragraph 172 of the NPPF.