

APPLICATION REPORT – 19/01042/FULMAJ

Validation Date: 12 November 2019

Ward: Lostock

Type of Application: Major Full Planning

Proposal: Reconfiguration of existing caravan holiday park site from touring caravan pitches to static caravan pitches, provision of static caravan pitches in adjacent tented camping area, hard and soft landscaping, roadways and associated works

Location: Royal Umpire Caravan Park Southport Road Ulnes Walton Leyland PR26 9JB

Case Officer: Mike Halsall

Applicant: G and E Harrison Ltd

Agent: Lichfields

Consultation expiry: 11 December 2019

Decision due by: 6 March 2020

RECOMMENDATION

1. It is recommended that the application is approved, subject to conditions.

SITE DESCRIPTION

2. Royal Umpire Caravan Park is an established holiday park operated by Harrison Leisure UK Ltd, offering touring caravan pitches and camping. It is located on Southport Road, Croston close to Leyland Garden Centre, The Highfield Public House and the former Mill Hotel site. It is accessed from Southport Road and the proposed development would be accessed through the existing site.
3. The site has an extensive planning history. The original permission for the site (ref: 80/00972/FUL) was granted on appeal in January 1982 and permitted a touring caravan site with reception, toilets, washing facilities and shop.
4. There have been numerous subsequent applications regarding amendments of conditions, extension to the site and a managers bungalow etc. Its current status is a touring caravan site. No static caravans have been approved on the site other than for the occupation of employees. The site is allowed to be used year round (permission ref: 95/00822/FUL) subject to a S106 legal agreement that no static caravans are allowed (except the ones used by employees), no caravans to remain on site for an aggregate period exceeding 35 weeks in any one calendar year and no person to reside at the site (except employees) for an aggregate period exceeding 35 weeks in any one calendar year.
5. A planning application was refused in 2016 for the change of use of a field to caravan park for the siting of 94 static holiday caravans and associated hard standings and access roads (accessed through existing caravan site). The reason for refusal was as follows:

“The proposed development is inappropriate development in the Green Belt and therefore harmful by definition. The factors put forward as very special circumstances are not

considered to outweigh the harm to the Green Belt by reason of its inappropriateness. The proposal is therefore contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework.”

6. The current proposal relates to an eastern part of the site that comprises of access roads and touring caravan plots and a western part that is currently undeveloped greenfield land used for camping. The current proposal would involve a much smaller element of greenfield land than that proposed for development under the previously refused planning application.

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

7. The proposal includes for the reconfiguration of the existing caravan holiday park site from touring caravan pitches to static caravan pitches and the provision of additional static caravan pitches within the adjacent tented camping area, along with associated hard and soft landscaping, roadways and other associated work. The proposal would effectively replace 201 touring pitches and land used for tent pitching with 150 static pitches and associated infrastructure.
8. The applicant's supporting statement explains that the layout of the eastern part of the site, currently used for locating touring caravans, would remain broadly similar albeit the number of pitches would be reduced from 201 to 114. The caravans would be used only for holiday purposes and none of them would be available for residential use.
9. Additional static pitches are proposed in an area of land to the immediate west of the existing caravan site, which is currently used for tented camping. No new buildings are proposed at the site. The proposals would involve the removal of the existing toilet block building. The other existing buildings on site would be retained / reused for the continued operation of the site.
10. The proposed lighting would be located adjacent to the access roads and footpaths and would be low level to avoid nuisance and light pollution. It is likely that 'Willaby Vogue' caravans would be used, that are circa 3.4 m in height. The applicant anticipates that all the statics would be clad in the same colour (brown) to help reduce the prominence of the units and provide consistency.

REPRESENTATIONS

11. Representations have been received from 5 individuals, including Cllr Paul Sloan, raising objections on the following grounds (summarised):
 - Static caravans are permanent, substantially higher than touring caravans and would give rise to visual intrusion and harm to the openness of the Green Belt
 - The caravans would become permanent homes unless occupancy restrictions are in force
 - Strain on local services
 - Anti-social behaviour and noise
 - There are other alternative sites
 - Increased risk of flooding, more discharge into river Lostock
 - Highways impacts
 - Light pollution
 - Green fields, wildlife and trees would be decimated
 - The previous refusal was for fewer caravans
 - The bus services are not 7 days /week
 - The business' profits have been high with an increase in turnover from £17m to £22m between 2017 & 2018 with Gross Profit from £5.5m to £7.6 in the same period – therefore overplaying the need for change to static caravans
 - No special circumstances exist
 - Harm to users of public footpaths
 - Landscape and visual impacts
 - Harm to biodiversity

12. It would be possible to make any planning consent subject to a condition to stop the caravans from becoming permanent dwellings.
13. Other relevant material considerations, which have been raised within representations are assessed in full in the planning considerations section below.

CONSULTATIONS

14. Lancashire County Council Highway Services (LCC Highways): Have responded to request that the applicant implement the following highway improvements to improve accessibility and safety for walking as an alternative mode of travel to the car:
 - Provide a 2.0m wide footway on the north side of Southport Road from the existing site access to the nearest bus stops in the east i.e. to the access to Leyland Garden Centre.
 - Improvement to PROW-FP 11, which has now been diverted over the existing access approximately 43m west of the existing PROW-FP 11, to facilitate safe and suitable access for walking and for wheel/push chair use. Including the provision of low level lighting.
15. While the condition of walking routes are essential in promoting walking as a sustainable alternative to the car, the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) also requires developments to have access to high quality public transport facilities. The existing bus stops near the site require improvements to deal with the anticipated transport impacts of the proposed development and to improve accessibility, safety and make the bus stops attractive and convenient to encourage use of public transport. LCC Highways have, therefore, also requested that the applicant carries out improvements to the four bus stops near the site. These are the two bus stops to the east of the site access and the two to the west. The bus stop improvements should be to quality disability compliant standard to include raised kerbs and boarding areas; bus stop bay and worded markings; clearways etc.
16. The applicant has agreed to the above improvements requested by LCC Highways.
17. United Utilities (UU): Have responded to state that they have reviewed the submitted Drainage Impact Assessment Strategy and can confirm the proposals are acceptable in principle. UU have requested conditions be attached to any grant of planning permission relating to surface and foul water drainage.
18. Environment Agency (the EA): No response has been received. This application does not fall into any of the categories of development to which the EA now respond.
19. Ulnes Walton Parish Council: Have responded to object to the planning application on the following grounds:
 - the static caravans are significantly larger than touring caravans and would be on site permanently. As this would have a far greater adverse impact on the openness of the Green Belt, the proposal is considered to be inappropriate development within the Green Belt; and
 - there are well documented issues with flooding in Croston and the surrounding area and the Parish Council is of the opinion the increase in surface water run-off resulting from the additional hardstanding will exacerbate these issues.
20. Greater Manchester Ecology Unit (GMEU): Have responded to state that they are satisfied that the condition of the site would not have altered substantively in terms of biodiversity since 2016 and the current application can proceed to determination in respect of ecology with a number of conditions/informatives to ensure that biodiversity is suitably protected. GMEU have suggested conditions and informatives in relation to roosting bats, great crested newts and birds.

21. Lead Local Flood Authority: No response has been received. It is considered that the response from UU is adequate to control any risks from surface water flooding and this issue is addressed in more detail below.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Principle of the development

22. The application site is located within the Green Belt and falls within the definition of previously developed land provided within the Framework. Section 13 of the Framework confirms that the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence.
23. Green Belt serves five purposes:
- a) to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
 - b) to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
 - c) to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
 - d) to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
 - e) to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.
24. Development will only be permitted within the Green Belt, in accordance with the Framework, if it is considered appropriate development or where very special circumstances can be demonstrated. The Framework confirms that 'very special circumstances' will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.
25. Paragraph 145 of the Framework states that a local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt but lists a number of exceptions to this rule. The proposal is not for new buildings but rather for the use of land for the siting of static holiday caravans. Paragraph 146 sets out certain other forms of development that are also not inappropriate in the Green Belt provided they preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it.
26. The applicant's agent is of the opinion that the proposal falls within the remit of the exception from inappropriate development in the Framework relating to the material change of use in the land for the purposes of outdoor recreation, subject to the openness of the Green Belt being preserved and the five purposes being sustained. This is disputed and is discussed below in more detail.
27. The proposed driveways and hard standing areas would be constructed in an area of land which is predominantly open, to the west of the existing caravan plots. These elements of the development amount to engineering operations and paragraph 146 of the Framework states that this type of development may also not be *"inappropriate in Green Belt provided they preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it"*. The hard standing areas would be used to site the new static caravans and visitor vehicles. Whilst the siting of such caravans/vehicles maybe to some extent intermittent, owing to their size and numbers, they would not preserve the openness of the Green Belt and the effect upon openness would be a relatively permanent one.
28. It is acknowledged that the site is screened from longer distance views by other buildings and vegetation and this would be increased by proposed boundary planting as part of the scheme. However, the development as a whole would represent an encroachment into the countryside, and in that respect, the proposal would conflict with one of the purposes of the Green Belt listed above which is *"to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment"*.
29. For the above reasons, it is concluded that the siting of the static caravans (with visitor vehicles) would not preserve the openness of the Green Belt, would result in encroachment

of the countryside and hence the proposal would amount to inappropriate development in the Green Belt. This is consistent with the Council's stance on the previously refused scheme for static caravans on this site, and the pre-application advice issued to the applicant in June 2019.

30. As previously noted, inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved, except in very special circumstances. When considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt. 'Very special circumstances' will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.
31. In light of the above, an assessment needs to be made as to whether there is 'any other harm' caused by the development that needs to be added to the harm caused by its inappropriateness.

Is there any other harm?

Visual impact

32. There is a gentle downwards slope across the site from south to north as the land gradually descends to the River Lostock separated by fields to the north and a lesser slope from west to east.
33. Part of the application site (the western side) is currently used to pitch tents, although this is implemented under the 28 day Permitted Development rule for the temporary uses of land and, therefore, the associated impacts are limited. Similarly the part of the site currently used for touring caravans (eastern side) is restricted so that no caravans are to remain on site for an aggregate period exceeding 35 weeks in any one calendar year and no person to reside at the site (except employees) for an aggregate period exceeding 35 weeks in any one calendar year. Static caravans and their associated development would, therefore, have a much greater impact on visual amenity than how the site is currently used.
34. Given the number of static caravans and size of the site it is considered the site would have a strong visual presence, but this would be greater from certain directions than others. The main views of the site would be from the west, particularly from the public footpath that runs along the west boundary and views from afar from the north. A landscaping scheme has been submitted in support of the proposal which identifies tree planting to the site boundaries, particularly to the north and west. Therefore, when the proposal is considered alongside these proposed mitigation measures, the visual impact of the proposal would be limited.

Impact on neighbours

35. Policy BNE1 of the Chorley Local Plan 2012 - 2026 states that new development must not cause harm to any neighbouring property by virtue of overlooking, overshadowing, or by creating an overbearing impact.
36. The nearest residential properties to the site would be Gradwell's Farm to the south and the properties on Moor Road to the southwest. Gradwell's Farm is shown within the 'blue edge' of the application so is within the control of the applicants. The properties on Moor Road are separated from the site by an area of land and a mature tree boundary. It is considered that noise and disturbance from the site should be limited and given the location of the site some distance from the nearest residential property it is considered the living conditions of the occupants of these properties would not be adversely affected.

Highway safety

37. The proposal would utilise the existing access onto Southport Road. A Transport Assessment has been submitted with the application which has been considered by Lancashire County Council as the Highway Authority (LCC Highways) for the borough. Details of the response from LCC Highways is detailed above.

38. The applicant has confirmed through their agent that they are willing to carry out the improvement works, outlined previously in this report, as part of any planning permission, therefore the application is considered acceptable in this respect subject to these being secured.

Ecology

39. A proposed landscaping scheme has been submitted with the application which has been reviewed by the Council's ecology adviser. They have confirmed that the proposal is acceptable in ecological terms, subject to conditions and informatives being attached to any grant of planning permission.

Public rights of way

40. Public Right of Way no.11 Ulnes Walton runs along the west boundary within the site for approximately 200m. Its route is clear as it has a stone surface across the field and has a stone surface across the field. The siting of the static caravans would not interfere with the route of the footpath. The proposal is considered acceptable in relation to the footpath.

Impact on a designated heritage asset

41. Gradwell's Farm is a Grade II listed building located approximately 60m to the southeast of the nearest proposed caravan. The existing caravan park is nearer than the site now proposed to the listed building and there is a mature tree line between them. It is considered that the proposal would preserve the setting of the adjacent listed building and sustain the significance of the designated heritage asset.

Drainage

42. As noted previously in this report, United Utilities have reviewed the submitted Drainage Impact Assessment Strategy and have no objection to the application subject to conditions.
43. The hierarchy for disposal of surface water from new developments is outlined within National Planning Practice Guidance as follows:
- into the ground (infiltration);
 - to a surface water body;
 - to a surface water sewer, highway drain, or another drainage system;
 - to a combined sewer.
44. The applicant's submitted strategy identifies that the site is not suitable for infiltration drainage due to its location in slowly permeable clayey soils. A network of drainage ditches are located north of the site which ultimately discharge into the River Lostock approximately 200m north of the site.
45. The proposed drainage strategy is for surface water flows from static caravans to be directed to grass via rainwater downpipes with driveway areas to be covered in permeable paving to mimic greenfield runoff. Surface water flows from the proposed access roads would be collected via gullies within the highways, before being directed into a swale at the north west of the site via a network of pipes. Due to the shallow nature of the receiving land, drainage ditch flows are restricted to 11.6l/s by means of a pumped solution, flows in excess of this are attenuated within the swale.
46. A rising main then directs surface water flows up to the land drainage ditch to the north of the site, where it then discharges into the land drainage ditch via gravity connection.
47. Surface water is proposed to be via a sustainable drainage system which is the preferred method in the hierarchy of drainage options set out in the National Planning Practice Guidance. The connection into the drainage ditch at the north of the site would require Land Drainage Consent from Lancashire County Council as Lead Local Flood Authority prior to any construction works.
48. A foul drainage network has been developed for the whole of the site which directs foul flows from the static caravan plots down to the north west corner of the site using gravity via

a network of sewers. Flows are then pumped up to the highest part of the site i.e. south east corner, before connecting via gravity to United Utilities combined sewer within Southport Road.

49. The proposal is considered acceptable in this respect, subject to conditions requiring; the scheme to be developed in accordance with the submitted Drainage Impact Assessment Strategy; foul water to be drained on a separate system to that of surface water; and for no surface water to drain directly into the public sewer.

Lighting

50. It would be expected for a holiday park site to be lit at night and, therefore, there is potential for light pollution, however it is considered that an acceptable low level lighting scheme could be secured via a condition, both to minimise the visual impact of the site at and also to ensure it does not impact on foraging bats.

Other harm to the Green Belt

51. It is not considered there is additional harm from technical matters that could not be overcome via the imposition of appropriate conditions.
52. Therefore, there needs to be very special circumstances sufficient to outweigh the harm to the Green Belt caused by the inappropriateness of the development.

Applicant's Case for Very Special Circumstances

53. Any material consideration can be considered to weigh in favour of a development but a judgment must then be made as to whether they are very special and secondly whether they are sufficient to outweigh the harm caused by inappropriateness and any other harm to the Green Belt.

Are there any material considerations in favour of the development?

54. The agent has put forward a case for very special circumstances with the application, as summarised below.
55. *The approach to very special circumstances focuses on three key aspects; the need for the development, a lack of alternative sites and that other 'special' reasons also exist (including the benefits that would result from the proposed development).*

The need for the development

56. *Crime and anti-social behaviour problems at the site are resulting in a reduction in occupancy rates year-on-year and impacting upon the amenity of occupants of dwellings in the local area and local businesses. The applicant believes these issues are associated with touring pitches and would be eradicated by the transition to static pitches. In contrast, if the viability of the Royal Umpire Holiday Park cannot be secured, then the long-term implications are stark. The Park's closure would result in economic and social consequences. The jobs that the park supports, both directly and indirectly through bringing tourism to the area, could be lost as trade would be diverted to another location, possibly outside of Chorley.*
57. *The caravan sector in the UK has seen strong levels of growth in recent years, particularly since the EU referendum in 2016. Market analysis suggests that holidaymakers are opting to have more domestic trips rather than go abroad, due to concerns over poor exchange rates, value for money and potential future border complications. It is said that this market growth is also fuelled by hotter weather in the UK summertime, such as the heatwave spikes in June/July 2018.*
58. *There is little in the way of caravan park provision generally in Chorley, meaning that the park plays a vital role in serving the area. There is proven demand for growth and the expansion of the Park will be essential to capturing this revenue locally.*

59. Whilst the caravan sector overall has seen high levels of growth, there has been a strong market shift towards static pitches, which have seen very high levels of demand in recent years. In particular, high-end luxury accommodation with generous spacing standards and attractive landscaping are rising in popularity. It is thought that these luxury self-catered units are attracting a younger, more affluent demographic who may previously have opted for a holiday abroad.
60. Touring pitches are not seeing the same increase in popularity and as a result of this market shift, our client is experiencing a drop-in demand for touring pitches at the site, year on year. Occupancy rates for years 2015 to 2019 are set out below:

Year	No of bookings	Visitor nights	Occupancy rate
2015	5,289	170,291	46%
2016	4,953	165,251	45%
2017	4,672	161,036	44%
2018	4,536	158,996	43%
2019 (to Oct)	3,592	144,836	39%

61. Overall, on the basis of both local and national evidence, it is clear that the proposed development is critical in continuing to serve the changing market and sustaining the long-term viability of the Park.
62. The Royal Umpire Holiday Park is a long-established business which is currently threatened by a national market shift; the current facilities are no longer meeting the requirements of the market or the needs of the business.

Economic benefits

63. The Park makes an important contribution to the local economy by bringing visitors to the area. It supports a number of local businesses, for example by using a local garage for the servicing, maintenance and repair of vehicles. Visitors of the park also provide custom to the surrounding shops, public houses, café's, restaurants and so on.
64. Accommodation costs typically account for just 35% of a tourist's typical total expenditure, resulting in significant revenue streams for the local area in the form of shopping, entertainment, travel, eating and drinking etc.
65. In addition, a number of significant economic benefits are expected from the development. The development would have a positive impact on economic benefits in terms of employment opportunities, indirect employment, economic output and visitor economy impact.
66. During the construction phase the delivery of 150 static pitches will generate the following economic benefits:
1. capital investment in the region of £4.5 million (excluding purchase and installation of static caravans);
 2. supporting approximately 10 direct full-time equivalent [FTE] construction jobs per annum throughout the estimated 5-year build period;
 3. supporting a further 15 indirect/induced 'spin off' FTE jobs within the supply chain and related services per annum throughout the build period; and
 4. delivering an uplift in construction economic output (Gross Value Added) in the region of £1.4 million per annum.
67. Compared to the economic impact of the existing site, the economic benefits associated with the operation of the proposed static pitches can be summarised as follows:
1. an uplift of c.150,000 visitor nights (gross) per annum; and
 2. an uplift of approximately £7.9 million in gross annual visitor expenditure.
68. These represent significant material benefits in support of the proposed development and has the potential to have a beneficial impact on the tourism industry within Chorley and the wider county.

Environmental benefits

69. *The proposals will lead to a reduction in the number of pitches from 201 to 150, which will lead to a reduction in the capacity for associated activity and vehicular movements, which improves the effect on openness. The development is also spread across a larger area which reduces the density of the development, further reducing the impact on openness.*
70. *When compared to the previous application that was submitted at this site [19/00094/FULMAJ], and following pre-application advice from Chorley Council, the development footprint has been reduced considerably in order to accommodate a substantial high-quality landscaping scheme which helps to preserve the rural character of the site, improves visual amenity and maximises the ecological value of the site.*
71. *The proposals can be seen in the accompanying Landscape Masterplan and include:*
- *proposed native woodland planting;*
 - *proposed species rich hedgerows;*
 - *proposed native scrub planting;*
 - *meadow grass planting;*
 - *attenuation pond;*
 - *habitat piles and hibernacula;*
 - *amenity grass;*
 - *bird nesting boxes;*
 - *ornamental shrub planting; and*
 - *hard landscaping.*
72. *A Landscape and Ecological Management Plan has also been produced by Urban Green to provide a framework for the landscape and habitat creation and long-term management and maintenance of the proposed redevelopment on site. The proposed scheme would offer significant net gains and biodiversity, which would be sustained and enhanced in the long-term.*

Social benefits

73. *There are clear social benefits arising from the economic growth that would be generated by the proposals. The application proposals will safeguard a long-established family business that has been operating in the area for around 35 years. The Royal Umpire Holiday Park supports a number of local businesses and these jobs will also be safeguarded by the application proposals.*
74. *As set out in the preceding sections of this report, the proposals would generate a significant increase in local spending which will further support local businesses and provide employment opportunities for members of the local community.*
75. *The application proposals would also address the crime and antisocial behaviour problems which have been ongoing at the site in relation to large groups of guests using the touring pitches. This is generating noise, criminal damage and increasing the perceived risk of crime. Our client firmly believes that providing static pitches at the site will eradicate this problem.*
76. *In addition, our client is willing to provide a footway on the verge within the adopted highway between the site access and the bus stop to the east, to improve accessibility and safety for those using public transport.*

A lack of alternative sites

77. *The Royal Umpire Holiday Park is an established business, with a specific catchment and an established economic role within the village. The fundamental driver behind rural tourism destinations is their rural location, and access to local services. There is a clear operational requirement for development associated with the Park to be located within it.*
78. *It is considered that the proposed site is the most appropriately situated parcel of land available, given its relationship to the surrounding built development and the existing levels of containment and the opportunity to provide a logical western boundary by way of*

landscaping. In addition, the park is situated in a sustainable location, being located in proximity to a range of local services.

79. Notwithstanding this, the vast majority of land in the Borough is designated as Green Belt, as such it is not considered that suitable alternative sites outwith the Green Belt exist.
80. It is of significance that the Development Plan as a whole supports rural tourism development in the countryside (particularly caravan parks), despite the fact that the majority of the countryside in Chorley is allocated as Green Belt. Clearly, in this context, there is an expectation that such development will be located in the Green Belt.

Summary

81. During the assessment of the planning application, the applicant's agent also requested that the improvements requested by LCC Highways to four bus stops in the vicinity of the site and public footpaths be taken into account into the assessment of whether very special circumstances exist. These are material considerations that weigh in favour of the development, albeit they are required in order to improve accessibility to and from the site and safety for walking as an alternative mode of travel to the car.
82. There are clearly economic development benefits associated with the scheme to the local area as an extension of an existing rural business. This is a material consideration in determining the planning application.

Are these sufficient to outweigh the harm cause to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness added to any other harm?

83. Policy does aim to encourage economic development and encourage tourism both at a national level in the form of the Framework and at a local level.
84. Paragraph 83 of the Framework states that "*planning decision should enable sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments which respect the character of the countryside;*"
85. Paragraph 141 of the Framework advises local planning authorities should plan positively to enhance the beneficial use of the Green Belt, including looking for opportunities to provide access and to provide opportunities for outdoor sport and recreation.
86. Core Strategy policy 13 covers the Rural Economy and aims to support rural based tourist attractions, visitor facilities, and recreational uses and allow caravan and camping uses on appropriate sites subject to there being a proven demand.
87. There is clearly policy support for the proposal. The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development to which there are three dimensions: economic, social and environmental so a judgement has to be made as to whether the benefits outweigh the harm.
88. The benefits put forward clearly have weight in the planning balance. In accordance with the Framework when considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt. It is considered in this case that the weight afforded to the benefits outweighs the harm to the Green Belt identified.

Do these factors actually amount to very special circumstances?

89. Although the above factors are accepted to contribute to outweigh the harm, it needs to be considered if the circumstances put forward amount to very special circumstances.
90. A strong national or regional economic benefit can be judged to be a very special circumstance that may override green belt policy, however although it is considered the proposal would have an economic benefit to the area it is not considered this could be classed as very special in isolation. It would not be on a significant large scale and in addition it is an argument that could quite readily be repeated by numerous rural businesses in the borough. That said, when the other social and environmental benefits of

the scheme are considered alongside the economic benefits, it is considered that these amount to very special circumstances.

Balancing exercise

91. A careful balancing of material considerations needs to be applied to the application.
92. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. On the other hand, the Framework aims to support rural businesses and to increase opportunities for tourism and access to outdoor recreation.
93. The material considerations put forward provide sufficient weight in favour of the proposal and in terms of the Framework in this case it is considered the economic, social and environmental benefits outweigh the environmental dimension from Green Belt harm of the holiday static caravans development. Very special circumstances exist sufficient to clearly outweigh the harm that would be caused by reason of inappropriateness and the Framework.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

94. The application would be liable for CIL, but the chargeable rate is £0.

CONCLUSION

95. The proposed development is inappropriate development in the Green Belt and, therefore, harmful by definition. The factors put forward as very special circumstances are considered to outweigh the harm to the Green Belt by reason of its inappropriateness. The proposal would therefore comply with The Framework and the application is recommended for approval.

RELEVANT HISTORY OF THE SITE

Ref: 80/00971/FUL **Decision:** WDN **Decision Date:** 29 December 1980
Description: Touring caravan site for 186 caravans, together with reception, toilets, washing facilities. Phase 3

Ref: 80/00972/FUL **Decision:** REFFPP **Decision Date:** 9 June 1981
Description: Touring caravan site for 54 caravans with reception, toilets, washing facilities and shop

Ref: 80/00973/FUL **Decision:** WDN **Decision Date:** 5 December 1980
Description: Phase 2. Touring caravan site for 111 caravans together with reception, toilets, washing facilities

Ref: 82/00143/REM **Decision:** PERRES **Decision Date:** 25 May 1982
Description: Touring caravan site and associated reception area and toilet facilities, along with outfall sewer

Ref: 82/00272/FUL **Decision:** PERFPP **Decision Date:** 25 May 1982
Description: Retention of existing permanent play structures, and change of use of existing car park to play area with 4 temporary play structures

Ref: 85/00385/FUL **Decision:** REFFPP **Decision Date:** 10 September 1985
Description: Change to static caravans from touring on 18 pitches

Ref: 88/00459/FUL **Decision:** REFFPP **Decision Date:** 2 August 1988
Description: Use of land fronting moor road for craft fair and collectors market for fourteen days per annum

Ref: 88/00577/FUL **Decision:** PERFPP **Decision Date:** 6 September 1988
Description: Siting of static caravan for manager's accommodation

Ref: 88/00578/OUT **Decision:** REFOPP **Decision Date:** 6 September 1988

Description: Outline application for erection of club house for on site residents

Ref: 89/00080/FUL **Decision:** REFFPP **Decision Date:** 22 August 1989

Description: Use of part of site for winter storage of caravans

Ref: 89/00646/OUT **Decision:** PERFPP **Decision Date:** 26 September 1989

Description: Extension to existing office/shop to form games room/club room for caravanners only

Ref: 91/00871/FUL **Decision:** PERFPP **Decision Date:** 10 December 1991

Description: Erection of garage and compound for tractors and mowers

Ref: 92/00527/FUL **Decision:** PERFPP **Decision Date:** 30 March 1993

Description: Variation of conditions on 9/80/972 and 9/83/509 to allow the re-layout of existing touring caravan pitches on the area presently allocated for caravan rallies

Ref: 93/00305/OHL **Decision:** PEROHL **Decision Date:** 8 June 1993

Description: 33000 volt overhead line diversion

Ref: 93/00649/FUL **Decision:** PERFPP **Decision Date:** 9 November 1993

Description: Construction of cafe and shop

Ref: 94/00448/FUL **Decision:** PERFPP **Decision Date:** 27 September 1994

Description: Temporary siting of residential park home

Ref: 94/00449/FUL **Decision:** PERFPP **Decision Date:** 27 September 1994

Description: Retention of a residential park home

Ref: 95/00822/FUL **Decision:** PERFPP **Decision Date:** 24 April 1997

Description: Removal of condition no 2 on Permission 9/91/406 to increase the park use from 46 weeks to the full year

Ref: 97/00467/FUL **Decision:** PRRRTF **Decision Date:** 18 August 1997

Description: Renewal of planning permission 9/94/449 for the retention of a residential park home for assistant manager

Ref: 97/00468/FUL **Decision:** PRRRTF **Decision Date:** 18 August 1997

Description: Renewal of planning permission 9/94/448 for the retention of a residential park home for occupation by site operative

Ref: 04/00164/FUL **Decision:** REFFPP **Decision Date:** 30 April 2004

Description: Permanent retention of two residential park homes for occupation by employees of the caravan park

Ref: 04/00333/FUL **Decision:** PERFPP **Decision Date:** 4 June 2004

Description: Erection of 2 agricultural buildings

Ref: 04/01056/FUL **Decision:** WDN **Decision Date:** 15 November 2004

Description: Retention of 2 caravans for occupation by caravan park employees for a temporary period of 3 years

Ref: 06/00857/FUL **Decision:** REFFPP **Decision Date:** 29 September 2006

Description: Erection of dwelling for staff (to replace wardens flat and staff caravans)

Ref: 08/00829/FUL **Decision:** PERFPP **Decision Date:** 18 September 2008

Description: Demolition and replacement of reception and toilet block. Re-location of internal site access road. Erection of detached bungalow

Ref: 16/00451/FULMAJ **Decision:** REFFPP **Decision Date:** 11 November 2016

Description: Change of use of field to caravan park for the siting of 94 static holiday caravans and associated hard standings and access roads (accessed through existing caravan site).

RELEVANT POLICIES: In accordance with s.38 (6) Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004), the application is to be determined in accordance with the development plan (the Central Lancashire Core Strategy, the Adopted Chorley Local Plan 2012-2026 and adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance), unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Consideration of the proposal has had regard to guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) and the development plan. The specific policies/guidance considerations are contained within the body of the report.

Suggested conditions

1. The proposed development must be begun not later than three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: Required to be imposed by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plans below:

Title	Plan Ref	Received On
Site Location Plan	1374.2 Rev B	19 February 2020
Masterplan	1374.1 Rev C	1 November 2019
Soft Landscape	UG225_LAN_DRW _SL_01 Rev P03	1 November 2019

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

3. The drainage for the development hereby approved, shall be carried out in accordance with principles set out in the submitted Drainage Impact Assessment Ref: 2019 - 076, Dated: 23.09.2019 which was prepared by Flood Risk and Drainage Solutions. For the avoidance of doubt no surface water will be permitted to drain directly or indirectly into the public sewer. The development shall be completed in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure a satisfactory form of development and to prevent an undue increase in surface water run-off and to reduce the risk of flooding.

4. Foul and surface water shall be drained on separate systems.

Reason: To secure proper drainage and to manage the risk of flooding and pollution.

5. Prior to occupation of the development, a sustainable drainage management and maintenance plan for the lifetime of the development shall be submitted to the local planning authority and agreed in writing. The sustainable drainage management and maintenance plan shall include as a minimum:

- a. Arrangements for adoption by an appropriate public body or statutory undertaker, or, management and maintenance by a resident's management company; and
- b. Arrangements for inspection and ongoing maintenance of all elements of the sustainable drainage system to secure the operation of the surface water drainage scheme throughout its lifetime.

The development shall subsequently be completed, maintained and managed in accordance with the approved plan.

Reason: To ensure that management arrangements are in place for the sustainable drainage system in order to manage the risk of flooding and pollution during the lifetime of the development.

6. Any oak trees to be removed will be assessed for bat roosting potential by a licenced ecologist and the findings supplied to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.
Reason: To ensure compliance with relevant biodiversity legislation.

7. No existing tree on the site shall be uprooted, felled, pruned, trimmed, topped or lopped until a survey to plot all trees (including species, number, stature and location) has been carried out and submitted to the Local Planning Authority. The survey shall identify which trees are to be retained during the course of development and which are to be replaced and when. The replacement tree planting shall be carried out in accordance with details which will have been approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In order that the Council may be satisfied with the details of the proposal having regard to the quality of the trees on the site.

8. Tree felling, or vegetation clearance works will be avoided between March and August inclusive, unless the absence of nesting birds has been confirmed by further surveys or inspections that have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Council.

Reason: To ensure breeding birds are protected during construction.

9. During the construction period, all trees and hedges to be retained shall be protected in accordance with BS 5837:2012 'Trees in relation to design, demolition & construction'. No construction materials, spoil, rubbish, vehicles or equipment shall be stored or tipped within the area(s) so fenced. All excavations within the area so fenced shall be carried out by hand.

Reason: To safeguard the trees to be retained.

10. All planting, seeding or turfing comprised in the approved landscaping scheme, ref. UG225_LAN_DRW_SL_01 Rev P03, shall be carried out in the first planting and seeding seasons following the occupation of any buildings or the completion of the development, whichever is the sooner, and any trees or plants which within a period of 5 years from the completion of the development die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species, unless the Local Planning Authority gives written consent to any variation.

Reason: In the interest of the appearance of the locality.

11. Details of any lighting to be installed shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority before any such installation is carried out. The installation shall then be implemented precisely in accordance with these agreed details which shall then not be varied. Furthermore, no additional external lighting shall be installed without the express written permission of the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To safeguard the amenities of the area, to minimise the possibility of inconvenience to nearby residents and for the protection of bats.

12. No part of the development hereby approved shall commence until the scheme of off-site works of highway improvement has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority in consultation with the Highway Authority.

Reason: In order to satisfy the Local Planning Authority and Highway Authority that the final details of the highway scheme/works are acceptable before work commences on site.

13. No part of the development hereby approved shall be occupied or opened for trading until the approved scheme referred to in Condition 12 has been constructed and completed in accordance with the scheme details.

Reason: In order that the traffic generated by the development does not exacerbate unsatisfactory highway conditions in advance of the completion of the highway scheme/works.

14. Within 10 days of commencement of construction works hereby approved on site, full details of the improvements to the diverted PROW-FP11 shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Prior to the occupation of any of the static caravans on site, the PROW shall be improved and available for use by the public in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: The approved development will place additional pressure on the PROW which is in need of improvement and to ensure that a usable, suitable route is available for the public and occupiers of the site.

15. The caravans shall be occupied for holiday purposes only and shall not be occupied as a person's sole or main place of residence. The operators of the caravan park shall maintain an up-to-date register of the names of all owners of caravans on the site and of their main home addresses and shall make this information available at all reasonable times to the local planning authority.

Reason: In accordance with the terms of the permission.

16. No more than 150 caravans shall be stationed at the site.

Reason: In accordance with the terms of the permission, and as the site is located within the Green Belt where uncontrolled development would be harmful.