

FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

REPORT TO: **PLANNING COMMITTEE**

DATE: **31st AUGUST 2022**

REPORT BY: **CHIEF OFFICER (PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT
AND ECONOMY)**

SUBJECT: **FULL APPLICATION – CHANGE OF USE OF
LAND FOR THE SITING OF HOLIDAY
CARAVANS**

**APPLICATION
NUMBER:** **063910**

APPLICANT: **MR & MRS D KNOWLES**

SITE: **LAND ADJOINING WOODBANK
COAST ROAD
GRONANT
FLINTSHIRE**

**APPLICATION
VALID DATE:** **17/12/21**

LOCAL MEMBERS: **COUNCILLOR G MADDISON
COUNCILLOR G BANKS**

**TOWN/COMMUNITY
COUNCIL:** **LLANASA COMMUNITY COUNCIL**

**REASON FOR
COMMITTEE:** **MEMBER REQUEST GIVEN CONCENS ON
ACCESS GROUNDS, THE PROLIFERATION OF
HOLIDAY ACCOMMODATION IN THE LOCALITY
AND REQUIREMENT TO ASSESS THE
PROPOSAL RELATIVE TO THE BACKGROUND
HISTORY, AND POLICY FRAMEWORK.**

SITE VISIT: **YES**

1.00 SUMMARY

1.01 This full application proposes the change of use of approximately 0.6 hectares of land on the southern side of the A548 Coast Road, Gronant, for the siting of caravans for holiday accommodation purposes.

- 1.02 Amended plans have been received in the progression of the application proposing a reduction in the number of units from 11 to 7, on which further consultation has been undertaken.

2.00 RECOMMENDATION: TO GRANT PLANNING PERMISSION, SUBJECT TO THE FOLLOWING:-

- 2.01
1. Time Limit on Commencement
 2. In accordance with approved plans
 3. Materials to be submitted and approved
 4. Occupation of caravans for holiday accommodation purposes only
 5. Register of occupation to be kept available to the Local Planning Authority
 6. Site/Finished Floor Levels to be submitted and approved
 7. No development including site clearance to commence, until a detailed hard & soft landscaping scheme incorporating supplementary planting has been submitted and approved.
 8. Implementation of landscaping scheme
 9. Details of external lighting to be submitted and approved
 10. Details of vehicular footway crossing to be submitted and approved
 11. Facilities to be provided for the parking and turning of vehicles
 12. Positive means to prevent the run off of surface water onto the highway to be submitted and approved
 13. No development including site clearance to commence until a Woodland Management Plan has been submitted and approved
 14. Foul water only to connect into public sewerage system
 15. Connection point to existing public sewerage system to be made

3.00 CONSULTATIONS

3.01 **Local Members**

Councillor G Maddison – Request site visit and Planning Committee determination, given concerns about overdevelopment for holiday accommodation purposes in the area and increase in vehicular movements associated with the development.

Councillor G Banks – Request site visit and Planning Committee determination to assess the proposal having regard to planning history, and policy framework.

Llanasa Community Council – Object on the following grounds:

1. Access
2. Flooding
3. Lay-By

The lay-by in front of the site is flooded for approximately 8 months of the year. Access to the busy coast road would be affected by traffic entering and leaving the site. The installation of caravans on the site would increase the risk of flooding.

Highway Development Control – No objections, recommend that any permission includes conditions in respect of access, parking / turning and surface water run-off.

Community and Business Protection – No adverse comments

Dwr Cymru/Welsh Water – Advise that only foul drainage from the development shall discharge into the public sewerage system. Request connection point to the main public sewerage system be made at SJ09833522.

Council Ecologist – Following the submission of an Ecological Assessment, raise no objection subject to the imposition of conditions in respect of lighting and woodland management

Natural Resources Wales – No objection following the submission of an Ecological Assessment, which confirms there is no potential impact on protected species on site. Provided pollution prevention guidelines are adhered to, there will be no impact on The Dee Estuary Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Special Protection Area (SPA), Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Ramsar located approximately 20m and 840m to the north of the site.

Council Forestry Officer – Following the submission of a Tree Survey undertaken in accordance with BS5837, raise no objection subject to the imposition of conditions in relation to supplemental planting and woodland management.

4.00 PUBLICITY

4.01 Neighbour Notifications

20 letters of objection have been received, the main points of which can be summarised as follows:

1. detrimental impact on highway safety
2. proliferation of holiday accommodation uses within the locality
3. detrimental impact on the character of the site and wider surroundings
4. lack of security presence or on - site management proposed which will impact on the living conditions of occupiers of nearby dwellings.

5.00 SITE HISTORY

5.01 059986 – Use of land for the siting of holiday caravans
Refused 16/7/19

061115 – Use of land for the siting of holiday caravans
Refused 18/6/21

6.00 PLANNING POLICIES

6.01 Flintshire Unitary Development Plan

- Policy - STR1 New Development
- Policy - STR6 Tourism
- Policy - STR7 Natural Environment
- Policy - GEN1 General Requirements for Development
- Policy - GEN3 Development in the Open Countryside
- Policy -D1 Design Quality, Location and Layout
- Policy - D2 Design
- Policy - D3 Landscaping
- Policy - L1 Landscape Character
- Policy - WB1 Species Protection
- Policy - WB2 Sites of International Importance
- Policy - WB3 Statutory Sites of National Importance
- Policy -AC13 Access and Traffic Impact
- Policy - AC18 Parking Provision and New Development
- Policy -T4 New Static Caravans and Chalets Holiday Sites

Supplementary Planning Guidance

- Supplementary Planning Guidance Note 3 - Landscaping
- Supplementary Planning Guidance Note 4 – Trees and Development
- Supplementary Planning Guidance Note 8 – Nature Conservation and Development

National Planning Policies:

- Planning Policy Wales – Edition 11 (Feb.2021)
- Future Wales: The National Plan 2040 (FWP 2040)
- Technical Advice Note 5 – Nature Conservation and Planning
- Technical Advice Note 12- Design
- Technical Advice Note 13 – Tourism
- Technical Advice Note 18 - Transport

7.00 PLANNING APPRAISAL

7.01 Introduction

This is a full planning application which seeks permission to change the use of land to allow for the siting of 7 No holiday caravans on land adjoining Wood Bank, Coast Road, Gronant.

7.02 The site is currently vacant, the land unmanaged, with the majority of the site heavily overgrown and the fencing along the northern boundary is in a poor state of repair. It is located within the open countryside as defined in the Flintshire Unitary Development Plan.

7.03 The application site amounts to approximately 0.6 ha in area and is located along the A548 Coast Road, abutting an existing layby, with the northern boundary bound by post and rail fencing, fronting the site. The boundaries to the east, south and west of the site are heavily confined by well-established mature trees and hedgerows, with the land steadily rising to the south, as such the site is situated in a prominent position within the existing landscape. There is currently no access onto the application site from the layby or from the public highway.

7.04 The fields opposite the development site are within the Dee Estuary Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) Special Protection Area (SPA) /Ramsar designated for the wintering bird populations and the Dee Estuary Special Area of Conservation (SAC) is some 840 m from the site but no SAC features (primarily estuarine and dune habitats) are affected.

7.05 Planning History

By way of the background planning history at this location a recent application for the siting of 19 No caravans, was refused under 061115 in June 2021, for the following reasons:-

- 1. The proposal would represent overdevelopment of the site which would be detrimental to both the character of the site and its wider surroundings. This is contrary to Planning Policy Wales (PPW) – Edition 11, together with criterion b of Policy STR6, criterion a of Policy GEN1, criteria a, b, c & e of Policy D1, Policy D2, Policy L1 and criterion a of Policy T4 of the Flintshire Unitary Development Plan.*
- 2. In the absence of a Tree Survey undertaken in accordance with BS5837, it is not possible to confirm the impact of the proposed development on key landscape features within the site and on its boundaries. This is contrary to Planning Policy Wales (PPW) – Edition 11, criterion c of Policy GEN1, and Policy TWH1 of the Flintshire Unitary Development Plan; in addition to Supplementary*

*Planning Guidance Note 3 – Landscaping and Supplementary
Planning Guidance Note 4 – Trees and Development*

3. *The proposal would result in a net loss in biodiversity provision given the scale of development proposed and limited opportunity for new planting within the site. This is contrary to Planning Policy Wales (PPW) – Edition 11; Technical Advice Note 5 – Nature Conservation and Planning; criterion c of Policy STR7, criterion c of Policy GEN1, and WB1 of the Flintshire Unitary Development Plan together with Supplementary Planning Guidance Note 8 – Nature Conservation & Development.*
4. *In the absence of confirmation of the proposed site access widths and gradients, it is not possible to confirm that a satisfactory access can be secured to serve the proposed development at this location. This is therefore contrary to criterion e Policy GEN1 and criterion b of Policy AC13 of the Flintshire Unitary Development Plan.*

7.06 Proposed Development

The amended plans submitted as part of this current application propose the erection of a total of 7 No caravans on the site, with the formation of a new vehicular access off the lay –by referenced in paragraph 7.03 and associated works. The caravans would be sited around an internal access road with turning head on the lower part of the site, with a number of trees /ground cover requiring removal and ground regraded to facilitate the siting of the caravan bases.

- 7.07 The application has been supplemented by a Tree Survey undertaken in accordance with BS5837 and Ecological Assessment, which help to aid consideration of the application

Main Planning Considerations

- 7.08 The main planning considerations to be taken into account in determination of this application include:-

- i. the principle of development
- ii. scale/design/form
- iii. impact on trees /woodland
- iv. impact on ecology
- v. adequacy of access
- vi. impact on living conditions of occupiers of nearby residential properties
- vii. flooding

7.09 Principle of development

Consideration of the application is principally undertaken having regard to Policy T4 of the Flintshire Unitary Development Plan. This states that development of new static holiday caravan or chalet sites will be permitted where:

- a. The scale of the proposal together with the number, siting and layout of units, circulation roads and service buildings is appropriate to the characteristics of the site and locality
- b. the scheme incorporates substantial internal and structural landscaping
- c. the proposal would not have a significant adverse impact on features or areas of landscape, nature conservation or historic value
- d. where appropriate, easily accessible from the local highway network and is accessible by a choice of modes of travel, particularly by foot, cycle or public transport; and
- e. the proposal would not have a significant adverse impact on the amenity of nearby residents, other users of nearby land/property or the community in general.

These issues are addressed below

7.10 Scale / Form / Design

The proposed number of caravans on the site has been reduced to 7 from the 19 units proposed in the previous application 06115. This reduced scale of development combined with firstly, the introduction of smaller clusters of caravans in a less regimented form and secondly the retention of key trees within the site with supplementary planting provides for a more fluid layout which would be sympathetic to the site and surroundings. As a result this would overcome concerns previously expressed in relation to refusal reason 1 of 061115.

7.11 Impact on Trees / Woodland

The Council's Tree Officer has advised that following submission of a Tree Survey as part of the application, that there is no objection to the proposed development subject to the imposition of conditions to secure additional structural planting and woodland management. As a result this would overcome the concerns in respect of reason for refusal 2 of 061115.

7.12 Impact on Ecology

Consultation on the application has been undertaken with Natural Resources Wales (NRW) and the Council's Ecologist recognising the potential impact of development on the site itself, and its proximity to the Dee Estuary SSSI/SPA/Ramsar and the Dee Estuary Special Area of Conservation some 500m from the site.

7.13 Following the submission of an Ecological Assessment as part of this current application, NRW and the Council Ecologist raise no objection to the application subject to the imposition of conditions in respect of lighting and woodland management. As a result this would overcome the concerns in respect of reason for refusal 3 of 061115.

- 7.14 Adequacy of Access
Consultation on the details submitted has been undertaken with the Highway Development Control Manager, who raises no objection to the principle of development being served from the existing highway network in capacity terms. In addition and following the submission of additional information in relation to site levels and gradients as part of this application there is no objection subject to the imposition of conditions in respect of access, parking /turning and surface water run-off. As a result this would overcome reason for refusal 4 of 061115.
- 7.15 Impact on Living Conditions
It is important to ensure that the living conditions of occupiers of existing residential properties located in proximity to the site are safeguarded. The nearest residential properties to the site are Woodbank and Birchill located approximately 30m and 44m respectively to the west, although they are screened from the site by existing landscaping. A property Rose Villa is located approximately 75m to the north west on the north side of the A548.
- 7.16 Consultation on the application has been undertaken with the Council's Pollution Control Officer, who has raised no objection to the development given the separation distances from the site to existing properties. There is however considered to be a requirement to control external lighting associated with the development, which can be secured by condition.
- 7.17 Flooding
Concerns have been raised regarding potential flooding associated with the development given its topography. The site is not located within a Flood Zone and no issues have been raised by Natural Resources Wales to this effect. The drainage proposals associated with a development would need to be taken into account / addressed in the event of a scheme being supported.
- 7.18 Other Matters
In addition and whilst concerns have also been raised regarding the proliferation of holiday caravan sites along the A548, the planning policy framework and in particular Policy T4 does allow consideration to be given to the establishment of new sites, subject to compliance with the criteria as referenced in paragraph 7.09 of this report.
- 7.19 The controls / restrictions to further holiday accommodation within the locality, principally relate to the landscape on the north side of the A548. Here the character is more open and in closer proximity to the coastal sand dune system, around Talacre, Gronant and Gwespyr, which have been extensively affected by caravan site development.

8.00 CONCLUSION

The reduction in caravan numbers /amended site layout as proposed, offers an acceptable and sympathetic form of development at this location. The application satisfactorily addresses the 4 reasons for refusal forming application 061115, in that it would provide for an acceptable scale of development, and now safeguard key trees / woodland, ecological habitat and provide for a satisfactory access. It is therefore recommended that planning permission be granted subject to the imposition of conditions as referenced in paragraph 2.00 of this report.

8.01 Other Considerations

The Council has had due regard to its duty under Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and considered that there would be no significant or unacceptable increase in crime and disorder as a result of the recommended decision.

The Council has acted in accordance with the Human Rights Act 1998 including Article 8 of the Convention and in a manner which is necessary in a democratic society in furtherance of the legitimate aims of the Act and the Convention.

The Council has had due regard to its public sector equality duty under the Equality Act 2010.

The Council has had due regard to its duty under Section 3 of the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and considered that there would be no significant or unacceptable impact upon the achievement of wellbeing objectives as a result of the recommended decision.

LIST OF BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Planning Application & Supporting Documents
National & Local Planning Policy
Responses to Consultation
Responses to Publicity

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