

Name of Applicant Type of Certificate	Proposal	Map/Plan Policy	Plan Ref. Expiry Date
Mr. D. Hannon 'B'	Removal of 17 existing amenity blocks and replacement with 23 amenity blocks; erection of five new permanent pitches - Houndsfield Lane Caravan Site, Houndsfield Lane, Hollywood, B47 5QR	GB	10/0140-DK 27.05.2010

Councillor S. R. Peters has requested that this application be considered by the Committee, rather than being determined under delegated powers.

RECOMMENDATION: that, subject to the satisfactory views of the Drainage Engineer and the Environment Agency, permission be **GRANTED**.

Consultations

Wythall PC	Consulted: 02.03.2010. Response received 11.03.2010. No objection.
WH	Consulted: 02.03.2010. Response received 15.03.2010. No objection.
WMC	Consulted: 02.03.2010. Response received 15.03.2010. No objection.
EA	Consulted: 02.03.2010. No response to date.
ENG	Consulted: 02.03.2010. No response to date.
EHO	Consulted: 02.03.2010. Response received 12.03.2010 as follows: The development is considered to be of low risk, however the potential for gas generation and migration from the former landfill site, 50 metres to the south is not known. The developer should submit information either detailing the gas protection measures proposed for the proposed amenity buildings or a gas monitoring strategy for approval by the LPA prior to any development commencing.
LP	Consulted: 02.03.2010. No response to date.
Tree Officer	Consulted 02.03.2010. Response received 16.03.2010 as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ No objection subject to conditions C10, C13 - C17. Condition C10 to include new tree planting as part of landscaping scheme.
Strategic Housing	Consulted 02.13.2010. Response received: 12.03.2010 as follows: The Strategic Housing Manager fully supports the application for the following reasons: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The proposals that include the provision of five additional permanent pitches on the unused Transit part of the site help address the needs for additional pitches identified in the 2008 Gypsy and Traveller Housing Needs Assessment both locally and countywide. 2. The application includes the urgently required upgrading of the existing site facilities and provides new daytime living accommodation on each individual pitch that will meet current day government guidance. 3. The upgrade and extension of the site is a requirement of the recently approved government grant that has been awarded and the transfer of the ownership and management of the site to Rooftop Housing in accordance with the Cabinet approval given following an options appraisal.

WCC Gypsy Services Manager Consulted: 02.03.2010. No response to date.
National Gypsy Council Consulted: 05.03.2010. No response to date.
Publicity Press Notice published 11.03.2010, expires 01.04.2010.
Site Notice posted 03.03.2010, expires 24.03.2010.
No responses received to date.

The site and its surroundings

The application site (Houndsfield Lane Caravan Site) is located in the Green Belt to the east of Hollywood and comprises a main site containing permanent caravan pitches and a smaller transit caravan site to the west. The access road to the site from Houndsfield Lane connects all of the permanent pitches which are aligned to the north and south of the central access road and the pitches are separated by the existing amenity buildings. These consist of pitched roof brick built structures. Some of the pitches have mobile homes stationed on a permanent basis. There is a service area and a Drop-In centre located close to the entrance of the site. There are two residential properties (Iona and Tunroe Cottages) which are located to the south west of the application site. The River Cole is close to the eastern boundary of the site.

Proposal

The proposal is for the removal of the existing amenity blocks and their replacement with new amenity blocks of a larger size in the same position. Five additional amenity blocks will be provided to serve five pitches on the existing transit site. Each of the proposed accommodation blocks, or 'pods', to be provided will consist of a lobby, lounge, kitchen and bathroom. 20 of the proposed pods will be arranged in identical doubles and there will be three single pods. The pods on the former transit site will have provision for disabled access and the appropriate parking provided close to them.

Relevant Planning History

B14500 Remodelling of, and extension to, existing gypsy caravan site. Granted 21.11.1986.

Relevant Policies

WMSS QE3
WCSP CTC.1, D.18, D.38, D.39, SD.2, SD.4, T.1
BDLP DS2, DS13, S18, S29, WYT13, ES1, ES2, ES3, ES5, TR11
Others PPS1, PPG2, PPS7, PPG13, Circular 01/2006

Notes

There are four main issues to be considered in determining this application:

- (i) whether the proposal is acceptable in principle and the impact on Green Belt openness and character and whether this is justified in terms of identified need;
- (ii) the impact of the proposal on the amenity of neighbouring properties, on wider public amenity and upon the living conditions of existing occupiers of the site;
- (iii) whether the proposal can be adequately serviced in terms of access, parking and drainage; and
- (iv) whether the proposal is acceptable in terms of the risk of flooding.

The location of the site in the Green Belt and the nature of the application mean that the most relevant policies in the determination of the application are policies SD.2, CTC.1, D.18 and D.39 of the Worcestershire County Structure Plan, policies DS2, S18 and WYT13 of the Bromsgrove District Local Plan and the advice of PPG2 and Circular 01/2006.

Green Belt

Development in the Green Belt is considered inappropriate unless it is for one of the specific exceptions identified in Planning Policy Guidance Note 2 and within policy DS2 of the BDLP. It is noted that the proposed accommodation pods would be larger in terms of footprint than the existing accommodation blocks, which each have a floorspace of 20m². The new pods would be 70m² in terms of area in the case of the doubles and 37m² in the case of the single pods. It should also be noted that there would be 2 double pods and a single pod provided on the existing transit site which currently an area of hardstanding. This would result in a loss of openness, particularly on the transit site to the west of the main site.

Since development in the Green Belt is inappropriate, it must be considered whether very special circumstances exist. I note the substantially developed character of the site which contains caravans, mobile homes, accommodation blocks and associated parking and servicing areas. The site is specifically identified on the BDLP Proposals Map for use as a gypsy caravan site. This designation includes the existing site and a corridor to the north, south and east surrounding it. The current proposal falls within the designated area and the nature of the proposal would not conflict with the designation.

In considering application of gypsy sites or pitches, paragraph 58 of Circular 01/2006 advises that the likely impact on the surrounding area needs to be assessed as well as the existing provision of sites in the area and identified need.

In terms of the need to provide additional pitches, Members should note the views of the Strategic Housing Officer on this matter. The Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) for The South Housing Market Area of the West Midlands Region January 2008 identifies a need for 289 additional pitches to be provided to 2013 in the sub-region (comprising 8 districts of Worcestershire and South Warwickshire). The GTAA identifies a potential need for a further 3 pitches between 2010 and 2013 in Bromsgrove. The proposed development will meet this requirement. The lack of availability of appropriate accommodation for gypsies could result in increased pressure on Green Belt areas to meet the requirement.

The combination of the existing character of the site, the designation of the site and the evidence base supporting the need for additional pitches amount to very special circumstances in this instance to allow development in the Green Belt.

Residential Amenity

The site, located to the north of Houndsfield Lane is self contained in respect of its relationship to residential properties. The only properties in close proximity are Iona and Tonroe Cottages to the south. The curtilage of Iona is not directly shared with the existing transit site. I note that pod No. 23 lies further than 10 metres from the boundary of the garden of Iona and 9 metres from the boundary of Tonroe Cottage. I note the boundary treatment between the site and these properties and the position of the pitch for No. 23 on the opposite side of the accommodation pod. I do not consider that the proposal would result in a detrimental loss of light or privacy to either of the neighbouring residential properties. It should be noted that the proposed pods on the existing transit site will be configured for disabled access and appropriate parking. Members should note that there is a 20 metre separation distance between the single pod on No.23 and double pods on the existing transit site. There is also a 20 metre separation distance between the double pods which will replace the existing accommodation blocks on the main caravan site. These will be separated by two caravan pitches and I consider that the orientation of the pods would be acceptable in terms of the privacy of future occupiers. In this respect, the proposal accords with the provisions of policy S18 of the BDLP.

Servicing

Policy S18 requires that gypsy sites can be appropriately serviced in terms of access, parking and drainage. The views of Worcestershire Highways and the Drainage Engineer are awaited.

Flood Risk

The River Cole runs north to south adjacent to the eastern boundary of the site and part of the site falls within the 1/100 flood risk zone on the Environment Agency Map. A Flood Risk Assessment has accompanied the application. This concludes that the site is not affected by flooding in the 1 in 100 storm event including an allowance for climate change. The views of the EA are awaited.

Conclusion

Whilst the proposal is located in the Green Belt, it lies within a site allocated for a gypsy caravan site in the BDLP. The need for additional pitches has been identified and the replacement of the existing accommodation blocks will be of benefit to existing and future occupiers of the site.

RECOMMENDATION that, subject to the satisfactory views of the Drainage Engineer and the Environment Agency, permission be **GRANTED**:

1. C1
2. C3

3. C10 (to include details tree planting)
4. C13
5. C14
6. C15
7. C16
8. C17
9. Prior to the commencement of the development hereby approved, the applicant shall submit information detailing the gas protection measures to be undertaken on the site to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority.

Notes

This decision has been taken having regard to the policies within the West Midlands Spatial Strategy, the Worcestershire County Structure Plan (WCSP) June 2001 and the Bromsgrove District Local Plan January 2004 (BDLP) and other material considerations as summarised below:

WMSS	QE3
WCSP	CTC.1, D.18, D.38, D.39, SD.2, SD.4, T.1
BDLP	DS2, DS13, S18, S29, WYT13, ES1, ES2, ES3, ES5, TR11
Others	PPS1, PPG2, PPS7, PPG13, Circular 01/2006

It is the Council's view that the proposed development does not comply with the provisions of the development plan but that there is a very special circumstance in this instance which justifies granting permission.