



Appeal Decisions

Inquiry opened on 4 July 2023

Site visit made on 11 July 2023

by Diane Lewis BA(Hons) MCD MA LL M RTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 26th September 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/R2520/W/22/3300527

Plot 8 Land off A17 adjacent to the River Witham, Sleaford Road, Beckingham, Lincolnshire, LN5 0RQ

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
- The appeal is made by Ms Naomi Varey against the decision of North Kesteven District Council.
- The application Ref 22/0090/FUL, dated 30 December 2021, was refused by notice dated 13 May 2022.
- The development proposed is Change of use from equestrian to residential to accommodate 1 static caravan, 1 touring caravan (parking), a brick and tile built day room, parking for 2 vehicles and associated service roads.

Summary of Decision: The appeal is dismissed.

Appeal Ref: APP/R2520/W/22/3300540

Plot 9 Land off A17 adjacent to the River Witham, Sleaford Road, Beckingham, Lincolnshire, LN5 0RQ

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
- The appeal is made by Mr Michael Pemberton against the decision of North Kesteven District Council.
- The application Ref 22/0091/FUL, dated 30 December 2021, was refused by notice dated 13 May 2022.
- The development proposed is Change of use from equestrian to residential to accommodate 1 static caravan, 1 touring caravan (parking), a brick and tile built day room, parking for 2 vehicles and associated service roads.

Summary of Decision: The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary matters

1. These two appeals, together with fifteen other appeals¹, concern development of land to the north of Beckingham village and the A17 Sleaford Road. A hearing into all appeals, arranged to open on 29 November 2022, was postponed on 25 November 2022. Having reviewed the appeals and considered the request on behalf of the appellants, the Planning Inspectorate changed the procedure to an inquiry. I was appointed as the Inspector and a Case Management Conference took place on 2 May 2023. The discussion centred on the management of the appeals, arrangements and programme for the inquiry and the expectations on all participants. There was no discussion of the merits of respective cases.

¹ Linked appeal references are listed in Appendix 1 at the end of the Decisions.

2. The Inquiry opened on 4 July 2023 and closed on 14 July, sitting for a total of 6 days on 4, 5 and 6 July and 12, 13 and 14 July. In addition to the appellants and the Council, the Secretary of State for Defence appeared as a rule 12 party². Beckingham Parish Council also gave evidence. Certain topics were the subject of round table sessions with the remaining matters dealt with through the formal presentation and cross-examination of evidence. An accompanied site visit took place on 11 July to Beckingham Defence Training Estate (the DTE) and the appeal sites.
3. On 28 June 2023 the Secretary of State issued 17 screening directions, one for each appeal site and directed in each case that the proposed development is not Environmental Impact Assessment Development, having considered possible cumulative effects.
4. As stated in the bullet points above, this document relates to two separate appeals. The appellant for Plot 8 is no longer the intended occupier of that plot but is one of the named occupiers for Plot 9³. The evidence suggests the appellant for Plot 9 no longer has an interest in the land. Therefore one decision document will cover both appeals. Each appeal will be determined on its merits but to avoid unnecessary repetition, reasoning and conclusions common to both sites are not duplicated. The effects and reasoning applicable to a specific to a plot are highlighted as necessary. Also, much of the evidence applies to all 17 appeals and so a considerable amount of the reasoning is the same as in the Decisions on the other 15 appeals.
5. An application for a partial award of Costs was made by the Council against the appellant group⁴. This application is the subject of a separate Decision.

Development site and proposals

6. The appeal sites for Plots 8 and Plot 9 are part of a larger triangular shaped area of land of approximately 2 hectares (ha) bounded by the A17 to the south, the River Witham to the west, a water recycling centre to the east and the DTE lands to the east, north and west.
7. When looked at overall, the proposed layout is of three rows of regular sized plots served by an access road along the eastern boundary and a service road between each row of plots. Plots 16 and 17, in a fourth row towards the apex of the triangle, appear slightly larger. A grassed area annotated to the north and grassed areas identified along the River Witham are not within the red line of any application/appeal site. Plot 8 is at the far western end of the second row of plots to the north of the A17, with Plot 9 adjacent to the east.
8. The site ownership certificates dated 6 June 2022 submitted with the appeals stated that the landowners of the sites are Douglas Price and Richard Smith. This is consistent with the Land Registry entries dated 5 June 2023⁵. The Land Registry information also shows how their wider land ownership relates to the land immediately to the south and including the A17 highway owned by Lincolnshire County Council⁶.

² The Town and Country Planning (Determination by Inspectors) (Inquiries Procedure) (England) Rules 2000 SI 2000:1625

³ Inquiry Document 13 and confirmed by email dated 17 July 2023 from WSP

⁴ The appellant group is the term used to describe all appellants.

⁵ Core Document 53c Part 1 and Part 2.

⁶ Core Documents 53a and 53b

9. Works to facilitate a material change of use of the Land began on 21 December 2021 through the laying of hardcore. At that time touring caravans were also brought onto the Land. As a result of an injunction granted by the High Court⁷, currently no more than 14 tourer caravans should be on the Land at any one time. The laying of additional hardcore/hardstanding was allowed to provide a base for the caravans, plus the provision of dayrooms and connections to basic utility services.
10. The Order also sets out the procedure and triggers in relation to planning applications for residential use and any subsequent appeals. Following dismissal of any such appeal (including any statutory appeal to the High Court) a Defendant so affected shall within 28 days cease their residential use of the Land and remove their caravan(s) from the Land and remove the dayroom, footings/foundations and all hardcore/hardstanding laid since December 2021 within 56 days.
11. The site visit confirmed that the Land is divided into pitches accessed by hardsurfaced tracks, similar to but not the same as the layout indicated on the submitted site layout plan. Not all the pitches were occupied. Noticeable differences had occurred in the area around Plot 8. Land at the top of the river embankment had been raised by the deposit of hardcore. A pitch with two touring caravans, a dayroom and various domestic items was on the land and appeared to be for the most part outside the defined area of Plot 8. Plots 8 and 9 were vacant. Other changes from the submitted layout had taken place on the land to the north by Plots 15, 16 and 17.
12. The evidence available indicates the triangle of land was used previously for grazing horses, an agricultural use, rather than the riding or keeping of horses suggested by the word 'equestrian' used in the description of the proposed development. At the Inquiry the appellants agreed the description be amended to read "A material change of use of the land to residential to accommodate 1 static caravan, 1 touring caravan (parking), brick and tile built dayroom, parking for two vehicles and associated service road."
13. The appellants confirmed at the Inquiry the application plans related to Plot 8 and to Plot 9 are those cited in the Council's decision notice⁸. In each case the amended site layout plan outlines in red the pitch being applied for and the length of service road, all consistent with the description of development and the stated address of the site. The red line area for Plot 8 excludes the annotated grassed area to the west at the top of the river embankment. Alterations to the main access onto the A17 are included in the proposals, as stated on the planning application form but no details were provided. The plan of the dayroom shows a simple brick and tile building with a footprint of 7 x 4 metres (m) and ridge height of 4.5m, to provide a dayroom/ laundry and bathroom facilities.
14. In October 2022 the appellant group submitted a preliminary ecological appraisal report and a noise impact assessment (the Nova report). The Nova report considered the development site to be the triangle of land and recommended the installation of 2m high close-boarded fencing on top of a 1m

⁷ Inquiry Document 15

⁸ MW DP-02 Plot 8 proposed elevations and floor plans received 14 January 2022; MW DP-01 Plot 8 proposed site plan received 3 March 2022; MW DP-02 Plot 9 proposed elevations and floor plans received 14 January 2022; MW DP-01 Plot 9 proposed site plan received 3 March 2022.

high earth bund 'between the site and the A17 road'⁹. The site considered in the ecology report is also the triangular area of land. The field survey was carried out on 22 August 2022 and the site was described as comprising hardcore hardstanding and areas of grassland with a hedgerow and a line of trees on the eastern and southern boundaries. The report acknowledged the limitations associated with the timing of the field survey post development and the baseline habitats at the site pre-development were not quantified. The identified ecological constraints and opportunities and recommendations for avoidance, mitigation or further survey applied to the site as defined in the report and not individual plots/appeal sites.

15. The appellant group's evidence on landscape and visual effects (submitted on 9 June 2023) considered a site of approximately 1.9 ha and the proposed site layout and landscape strategy applies to this triangular shaped area. At the Inquiry the appellants confirmed that the landscape strategy is illustrative only. The Council illustrated that Plot 1 on the landscape strategy plan is set back a greater distance from the A17 and the River Witham than shown on the submitted layout plan¹⁰. As a result Plot 1 (as repositioned) partly overlaps proposed Plot 8. Similar repositioning applies to the remainder of the plots in these rows. This assessment was not challenged.
16. A Highways Technical Note¹¹ included plans of a swept path analysis, and visibility splays at the access onto the A17. Proposed improvement works to the main access were not detailed.
17. To conclude, little information was submitted with the planning application or when the appeal was made. The later supporting technical evidence is directed towards the development of the Land as a single site by 'the appellant group' to provide 17 pitches and associated dayrooms and services. However, that is not the proposal for determination. Seventeen separate planning applications were made, resulting in 17 appeals. No explanation was forthcoming as to why this approach was followed. I will determine each appeal on its individual merits, having regard to potential cumulative effects. This approach was not challenged by the main parties. The proposal and site area in the appeals are those shown on the submitted plans considered by the Council when refusing permission, not the development on the ground now. The appellants are hoping for a permanent non-personal permission but also put forward the options of a personal permission or a temporary permission.

Planning policy

18. The Central Lincolnshire Local Plan (CLLP) was adopted by the Council in April 2023. The CLLP contains planning policies and allocations for the growth and regeneration of Central Lincolnshire over the next 20 years¹². The CLLP is the relevant development plan document for determining these appeals. No reference will be made to the policies from the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan adopted in 2017 and relied on in the reasons for refusal.
19. The National Planning Policy Framework issued in July 2021 was updated and replaced on 5 September 2023 by a revised Framework. The only substantive

⁹ The location of the bund and fence is shown on a plan within Appendix C to the report.

¹⁰ Inquiry Document 4

¹¹ Appendix 1 WSP Appendices

¹² Central Lincolnshire refers to the combined area covered by the City of Lincoln, North Kesteven and West Lindsey

revisions relate to planning for onshore wind development in England. None of the revisions apply to the current appeals and no additional comments were sought from the parties.

20. The proposed caravan sites are intended to be occupied by Romani Gypsies. Planning policy for traveller sites August 2015 (PPTS), which should be read in conjunction with the Framework, is a consideration. CLLP Policy S83, in Part Three, sets out the criteria for consideration of proposals for new sites for Gypsies, Travellers or Travelling Showpeople.
21. The Framework requires consideration of whether otherwise unacceptable development could be made acceptable by the use of planning conditions. Planning conditions should only be imposed where they are necessary, relevant to planning, relevant to the development to be permitted, enforceable, precise and reasonable in all other respects (the six tests).

Main Issue

22. The main issue, which is common to all appeals, is informed by the reasons for refusal and the current policy context. The focus is on whether the proposed caravan site would be a well planned, sustainable form of development in an appropriate location, considering:
 - the effects on highway safety, accessibility to services and facilities, the character and appearance of the land and surrounding area, designated heritage assets and biodiversity,
 - the proposed infrastructure and utility services to serve the pitch,
 - the acoustic environment and the effect of the proposed residential use on the operations at the DTE,
 - potential cumulative effects,
 - whether any identified harm may be suitably mitigated through compliance with planning conditions.
23. Other considerations to weigh in the balance are:
 - Intentional unauthorised development.
 - The existing level of local provision and need for sites.
 - The availability (or lack) of alternative accommodation for the appellant or proposed occupier.
 - Other personal circumstances of the appellant or proposed occupier.
24. With reference to reason for refusal No 5, the Council now accepts each proposal, when considered with the proposals for the wider site, would not unduly dominate the village. The Council continues to maintain they are of a scale that does not respect the scale of the settled community.
25. Integral to my decision-making will be exercising duties under the Human Rights Act 1998. Article 8, a Convention Right¹³, affords a person the right to

¹³ Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights, which was enshrined into UK law by the Human Rights Act 1998.

respect for their private and family life, their home and their correspondence. This qualified right requires a balance between the rights of the individual and the needs of the wider community. Central to the principle of a fair balance is the doctrine of proportionality. There is a positive obligation to facilitate the Gypsy way of life to the extent that the vulnerable position of Gypsies and Travellers as a minority group means some special consideration should be given to their needs and different lifestyle in the regulatory planning framework and in reaching decisions on particular cases. The focus will be on the rights of the individual or family unit, rather than the appellant group.

26. Under the Equality Act 2010 public sector equality duty (PSED) I will have due regard to the three aims identified in the Act – to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations. Romani Gypsies are an ethnic minority and have the protected characteristic of race under section 149(7). The decision must be proportionate to achieving the legitimate planning aims.

Reasons

Highway safety

27. Policy S83 Part Three criterion (b) requires the proposal to have adequate and safe vehicular access including for emergency vehicles, other large vehicles and towed loads likely to frequent the site.
28. The CLLP identifies the A17 as one of the key roads in Central Lincolnshire, which is essential for connecting communities and an important route for businesses, including local agricultural and food industries¹⁴. At the Inquiry the route was said to carry a high volume of commercial, port related and tourist traffic. The Parish Council explained the short stretch of dual carriageway immediately north of Beckingham (west bound) is the only section between Newark and Sleaford with this type of opportunity for overtaking and the speed of traffic is high¹⁵. The east bound carriageway near the appeal site is single carriageway, widening to accommodate a right turn filter lane at the junction with Woodgate Lane and Chapel Street.
29. Before development took place there was an established gated access into the field, directly off the A17 on its northern side. The evidence available¹⁶ indicates this access was distinct from the access serving the water recycling centre. The field access was not engineered and was basically a gap formed in the boundary vegetation with an area of hard surfacing in front of a five bar gate. It would not be of a standard or specification to ensure a safe means of access from and to the A17, even to one residential plot. The highway authority requested details of visibility splays and of proposed improvements to provide the required specification but did not object to use of this access point onto the A17 to serve a residential use.
30. The additional details submitted by the appellant confirmed the ability of cars and towing caravans to access and egress the Land and that adequate visibility splays are achievable. I am satisfied from observations on the site visit that

¹⁴ CLLP paragraph 8.2.3

¹⁵ The dual carriageway is subject to a national speed limit of 70 mph for cars, vans, motorcycles and dual purpose vehicles and 60 mph for coaches, buses and goods vehicles.

¹⁶ Core Document 9

visibility is good for users of the access and for the drivers on the A17, helped by the curvature of the carriageway.

31. The highway authority has stated that improvements to the site access should be in accordance with Lincolnshire County Council's section 184 specification¹⁷ and indicated requirements for the geometry of the access and position of access gates. This advice, together with the swept path analysis plan, gives a good indication of the type of works necessary to secure a safe access. A point that has not been demonstrated is whether the access geometry is able to be achieved without encroaching onto Plot 7, as defined on the site layout plan. Also unclear is the amount of land involved outside of the application sites. Details of improvement works and the timing of their implementation would have to be dealt with through a planning condition. Subject to this important proviso, safe site access arrangements could be secured at the main site entrance.
32. No right turn movements are possible because of the dual carriageway and the safety barrier in the central reservation. This could be regarded as enhancing safety, provided suitable and convenient turning opportunities exist. For traffic approaching the site from the east the safest option would be to continue to the A17/Coddington/Stapleford roundabout some 3.1 km beyond the site. An alternative, nearer option at the Barnaby in the Willows junction around 1.6 km away would involve doing a U-turn in the bellmouth of the junction. The Council also identified two nearer secondary accesses on the northern side of the A17 where manoeuvring should be discouraged. For vehicles leaving the site and wishing to travel west, the likelihood is that use would be made of the Woodgate Lane/Chapel Street junction.
33. Therefore safe options exist, although the probability is closer, less satisfactory turning opportunities would be used when approaching from the east. The related risk to safety is less from the development of Plot 8 or Plot 9 alone, whereas the risk would increase with the development of more plots. In the absence of a transport statement there is no estimate of the likely number of trips involved. This matter has a small amount of weight in assessing safety for a single pitch, bearing in mind that the Framework states development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe. CLLP Policy S47 adopts a similar approach.
34. The Parish Council described how vehicles had been driven from the Woodgate Lane junction to the site along the verge on the north side of the A17. Such action would not only put road users but also occupants of the vehicle at very serious risk. The report was first contained in the Parish Council's representation in March 2022. On my visits the vegetation covering the verge did not show any signs of vehicle damage and would preclude vehicle use. The Parish Council also stated that the Highway Authority agreed that the Woodgate Lane junction was unsafe and would be blocked if funding was available, requiring all vehicles to use the junction serving the village at the eastern end of the dual carriageway. However I rely on the comments on the planning applications and appeals to represent the position of the Highway Authority, where no such references were made.

¹⁷ Core Document 1

Conclusions

35. The outstanding matter is to demonstrate and ensure the proposals would have an adequate and safe vehicular access through submission of a Stage 1 Road Safety Audit with associated details of the layout, works and drainage at the main site access onto the A17. The probability is the required works would in part fall outside the red line of the application sites and involve land outside the control of the Plot 8 and Plot 9 appellants, including highway land. To date there is no indication works would encroach onto the adjacent access serving the water recycling centre.
36. The appellants' planning witness referred to the use of a Grampian type planning condition but this is not possible as the development has commenced. The proposed condition relies on the submission of a scheme within 6 months of the date of the decision. The timing of implementation of an approved scheme is unknown. A possibility exists that the access would be provided and on that basis the condition would meet the test of reasonableness.
37. Subject to compliance with a planning condition, the proposed sites would have adequate and safe vehicular access and be in accordance with Part Three criterion (b) of Policy S83.

Accessibility to services and facilities

38. Criterion (f) of Policy S83 Part Three states: For non-allocated sites, the proposal should be located within reasonable travelling distance to both primary health care facilities and schools, preferably by walking, cycling or public transport.
39. GP primary health care facilities are found in Balderton Newark (8.5km away), in Caythorpe (17.8 km) and Ancaster (14.1km), all outside the CLLP area. The Parish Council noted the nearest hospital is in Lincoln.
40. A primary school and a pre-school are located in Brant Boughton, 5.4 km to the east of the Land and there is also a primary school in Claypole (8.4km). The nearest secondary school is the William Robertson Academy at Leadenham (9.5 km). The appellants also confirmed that a school bus visits the site every Tuesday. Whilst a valuable service it is not an adequate substitute for daily school attendance.
41. Beckingham is a Small Village in the CLLP settlement hierarchy (Policy S1) where the expectation is for limited growth as set out in Policy S4. Beckingham has a village hall and a church but no shop. The nearest convenience stores are in Brant Boughton, Leadenham, Claypole and Balderton. Lincoln urban area is at the top of the hierarchy. However, Beckingham is a lot closer to Newark (in the district of Newark and Sherwood) than Lincoln.
42. A 'reasonable travelling distance' is not explained in the supporting text to the policy. However, the context for the CLLP is helpful¹⁸. Apart from Lincoln and the main and small towns, Central Lincolnshire is predominantly rural, and is characterised by a dispersed settlement pattern of villages. Functionally, the rural villages often operate as clusters that share key services, with the larger villages acting as local service centres that communities rely on for basic facilities and as social hubs.

¹⁸ CLLP paragraphs 1.2.4 to 1.2.6

43. Allowing for the rural location, the travelling distances to primary health care facilities and schools are on the margins of being reasonable. As to mode of travel, the only highway accessible from the site is the A17. The highway has no footway by the site access and even if the vegetation on the verge would allow, it would not be safe to walk along the A17 to the Woodgate Lane junction¹⁹. Furthermore, crossing the A17 on foot at the junction requires considerable care, awareness and agility because of the speed of traffic and turning movements. The public footpath under the A17 is on the western side of the River Witham and of no assistance to access the appeal site.
44. Without a footway it is not possible to walk safely from the site to the nearest bus stop in Beckingham, from where there is a limited service to Newark and Lincoln. The Call Connect service requires pre-booking and no confirmation was provided the service would pick-up from the site. There is no cycle route along the A17 and again because of safety I rule out cycling as an option. In summary, travel to all services and community facilities and for leisure and employment relies on the availability and use of a private motor vehicle. I heard from some residents that because of their health they are unable to walk beyond the site and rely on family and friends. I accept residents may well get lifts but the dependency on a vehicle to go anywhere by all site residents could result in isolation and would deter the promotion of social interaction and encouragement of informal recreation.
45. PPTS promotes access and ability to use medical or educational facilities in a broader sense than just the means of making a journey to the service. The ability to have an address and a stable base by all accounts makes booking appointments and use of health and welfare services much easier and with greater certainty. Similarly, taking up educational opportunities for children of all ages and regular attendance at school are encouraged by having stability in home life. PPTS accepts Traveller sites may be in rural areas, which in turn indicates acceptance of reduced opportunities for sustainable travel.
46. Various appeal decisions have been referred to by the appellants and the Council to support their respective cases. Conclusions are case sensitive depending on the characteristics of the site and area and the local policy requirements. The exercise of careful judgement by the decision maker is required on the issue of accessibility and in the overall planning balance²⁰. Consequently, whilst informative to a degree, they do not justify or direct a conclusion in this appeal one way or the other.

Conclusions

47. The sites are just on the limits of a reasonable travelling distance to primary health care facilities and schools. There is no realistic prospect of residents accessing healthcare or schools safely by walking, cycling or public transport with the existing highway infrastructure. The developments are not in full accord with Part Three criterion (f) of Policy S83.
48. The broader view on accessibility in PPTS provides some support for the proposed traveller caravan sites. Nevertheless, the inability to walk safely

¹⁹ The appellants' landscape witness, when considering the public rights of way, described the prospect of walking along the grass verge of the A17 as 'extremely dangerous'. Appendix A LIVIA page 10

²⁰ WSP Appendices Appendix 18 paragraph 10. In this case the site was not accessible by foot and the Inspector concluded the site was poorly located because of the severing effect of the A508. In the overall planning balance the appeal was allowed and a personal planning permission was granted.

anywhere from the sites and the resultant dependency by occupiers on a private vehicle are serious disadvantages. When factoring in cumulative effects more families would be affected.

49. Safe and suitable access to the sites cannot be achieved for all users, resulting in a conflict with paragraph 110(b) of the Framework. The location does not enable the use the sustainable travel modes and does not offer genuine choices for non-car travel and so the development is not supported by CLLP Policy S47 and Policy S53(4). This strong objection is inherent in the location of the sites and is not a matter that could be overcome by a planning condition.

Landscape character, visual impact and design

50. The detailed policy requirements are primarily set out in Policy S53, where the most relevant themes to this issue are context, identity and nature. Proposals should satisfactorily assimilate the development into the surrounding area and make a positive contribution to the sense of place and character. PPTS identifies several matters related to delivering well planned sites, with adequate landscaping and play areas and appropriate boundary treatment.

Context

51. The landscape character is gently undulating, where woodland blocks and tall hedgerows have a strong influence on the sense of openness, enclosure and extent of views. Settlement is scattered and road patterns are winding and irregular.
52. In the locality of the appeal sites a mainly pastoral landscape prevails, a contrast to the more arable nature of the district. The Ministry of Defence firing range introduces a distinct land use and associated features and settlement, including the man made bunds, tracks and security gates, and the low, functionally built accommodation blocks that date back some time. Its presence is neutral when considering the effect of the proposed development on landscape character because of the absence of any physical or visual relationship or interaction.
53. To the south Beckingham is a small compact village that retains much of its historic layout, built form and character. The church is a prominent landmark, its tower visible from the wider surrounding area. To the west the corridor of the River Witham, a peaceful, gently meandering watercourse, is enhanced by the mix of plant species along the banks. By contrast the A17, the primary route serving the area, now bypasses the village and the traffic noise is intrusive in the rural countryside setting. The road corridor and the strong tree belt along its southern boundary define the northern edge of the settlement.
54. In the locality of Beckingham the public rights of way and their use probably are heavily influenced by the A17 and the military training areas. The public footpath northwards along the River Witham under the A17²¹ is unpleasant to walk along and then it becomes heavily overgrown, suggesting very little use. In views from Woodgate Lane the caravan sites are not readily visible due to the local topography and vegetation. Instead, the block of woodland to the west of the site and the military lands are visually dominant. On the site visit there were clear views of the land from the access road to the military ranges

²¹ Core Document 40

but this vantage point would be limited to military personnel. For most people awareness of the development would be when travelling along the A17.

Proposals

55. The submitted proposals for each plot provide a limited level of detail on boundary treatments and surface materials. Within the pitches the caravans and dayroom are shown positioned near the southern boundary, with vehicular access from a service road to the north. The appellants consider the details can be resolved through planning conditions and that landscaping would help nestle the sites into their surroundings and reduce the adverse effects.

Assessment Plot 8

56. Before any development took place the appeal site and the adjacent land was a field of grazing land, reflecting the pastoral landscape in the Terrace Sandlands character area and the agriculture landscape character zone identified by the appellant's landscape consultant. The strong landscape features were the hedgerow and woodland on the boundaries and the corridor of the River Witham to the west.
57. When compared against this lawful, baseline condition, the introduction of a small caravan site and the associated infrastructure would bring a harmful change in the character of the land use and the development would be incongruous within its open undeveloped surroundings. The long, straight 8m wide service road and widened, engineered access onto the A17 to serve an isolated site would be excessive and out of keeping with the rural character. The result would be an unwelcome element of urbanisation very close to the unspoilt river corridor.
58. The plot itself is positioned some distance back from the frontage to the A17 and is well screened by the woodland and hedgerow vegetation along the northern edge to the highway, especially when in full leaf. However, necessary improvements would make the access onto the A17 more prominent and signal the presence of development to passers-by. The caravans and fencing related to Plots 1 and 8 could be glimpsed from the footpath steps on the north west side of the highway but few residents or recreational receptors are likely to frequent this footpath. Overall, the low visual impact would be dependent on the retention of the frontage vegetation.
59. The submitted layout plan does not convey a well designed site and means of access that has taken full account of the local context. For example, the pitch would be in a sensitive position close to the river and there are no details of how this interface would be treated. Within the pitch little thought appears to have been given to the siting of the proposed dayroom in relation to the static caravan, the incorporation of amenity space or space for children's play, arrangements for drainage and for storage of domestic refuse bins. The containment and boundary treatment of the service road serving the single pitch is unspecified.

Assessment Plot 9

60. Plot 9 is not in such a sensitive position in relation to the River Witham but otherwise the reasoning for Plot 8 applies.

Cumulative effect

61. The siting of Plots 8 and 9 and the proposed access arrangements are to allow for a larger development over most of the former field to provide a total of 17 pitches.
62. Based on a maximum of 17 pitches in the proposed very regular linear layout pattern, the land use change to residential would unacceptably increase the urbanising effect and erode the openness of the agricultural landscape around Beckingham. The very close proximity of the wider site to the River Witham corridor would detract from its peaceful, natural character. The caravan site would not reflect the character of the village or the typical settlement and road patterns of the character area.
63. Glimpses of the overall development would be when travelling along the A17. The vegetation along the frontage of the wider site provides a good natural screen, emphasising the importance of its retention. Its effectiveness would vary through the seasons. The required improvement to the site access would necessitate the loss of some vegetation, whatever the scale of development. The addition of a sign identifying the site (as has happened) and related residential features near the entrance would further change the perception of the development and emphasise the encroachment of residential development into the countryside, whether with a small number of plots or all 17 plots. Road users are less sensitive receptors. However, the site is near to a main route and access serving Beckingham. Village residents would frequently pass the site and be very aware of the development.
64. The implications and visual effects of the proposed acoustic bund and fencing are very unclear given the submitted level of detail but the structure along the length of the boundary could be very intrusive. If sited to the north of a retained tree belt the visual impact of the acoustic mitigation would be experienced more by the residents of the site, especially those on plots 1 to 7, rather than by the wider public with no connection to the development.
65. The proposals over the land as a whole fall far short of demonstrating good design. The layout may be functional and effective but the high proportion of hard surfaced areas, both within the pitches and for the network of service roads, is not in keeping with the rural surroundings. The proposed number of caravans plus the dayrooms and parked vehicles would create a quite intense form of development, remembering the appellants wish the flexibility of having twin unit caravans. The illustrative landscape strategy indicates how more green space could be introduced working with a basic linear layout but detailed proposals and measures for implementation and future management and maintenance are not provided. In the illustrative landscape scheme the Council's overlay plan shows that Plot 8 forms part of the proposed wetland scrape and damp meadow mix and area of tree planting along the river.

Planning conditions

66. It is common practice to control the number and type of caravans and require details of a site layout, hard and soft landscaping, boundary treatments and external lighting. The achievement of a good scheme for Plot 8 is constrained by the position of the site and the land available to the appellant. Plot 9 is not quite so constrained. The matter is also closely related to requirements on biodiversity mitigation and enhancement. As it stands there is a lack of clarity

on what is possible to be delivered and hence whether policy requirements can be met. The very unsatisfactory siting and access arrangements and the poor relationship of the two plots to their immediate surroundings would remain.

Conclusions

67. The proposals for Plot 8 and Plot 9 fail to demonstrate good design. The development(s) would not be satisfactorily assimilated into the surrounding area or make a positive contribution to the sense of place and character. The harm to landscape character would be localised and the effect on visual amenity limited, provided landscape features are retained. The proposals conflict with Policy S53, national policy in PPTS and the Framework and therefore with Policy S83 Part Three criterion (a). The larger scale associated with the cumulative development of up to 17 plots would result in a greater level of harm and emphasise the failings of the design approach. Significantly, Plot 8 is not appropriately sited to achieve a well landscaped development on the wider site.

Designated heritage assets²²

68. Beckingham Conservation Area extends over the historic core of the village. The significance is derived from the traditional architectural character and streetscape and the important open spaces, including the churchyard and the field known as the Poor Gardens east of School Lane. Important views focus on the tower of the church and along the main streets in the historic core. Once accommodating a range of essential trades and community services the village is now almost entirely residential. The strong tree belt along the northern boundary is effective in screening the village centre from the A17 and there is very little, if any, intervisibility with the lands to the north. The proposed development of the two appeal sites, whether alone or in conjunction with the additional proposed plots, would not affect the setting of, or views into or out of the Conservation Area.
69. The Church of All Saints in Beckingham is a grade 1 listed building. The history of the church dates to the 12th century and probably it was the manorial church. Latterly the church was of some local importance in religious life. The church then was rebuilt and the tower was added in 1450. The building was restored in the late 19th century. The parish church sits in a green space on the western side of the historic core, beyond which is the park of the former Beckingham Hall and the well wooded grounds of the Rectory, giving way to open countryside along the river. Historically the church has been physically separated from the countryside to the north by the main route through the village and the settlement north of Hillside/Chapel Street. The construction of the A17 bypass strongly reinforced this separation. Whilst the church tower is visible from the Land and Woodgate Lane, this factor is insufficient to persuade me the two appeal sites and related lands are within the setting of the listed building.
70. In conclusion, no conflict arises with Policy S57 or the Framework to conserve the historic environment. The effect on designated heritage assets is neutral in the planning balance.

²² This section is informed by Beckingham Conservation Area Appraisal October 2019 and the Official list entry for the Church of All Saints, Inquiry documents 5 and 6.

Biodiversity

71. In summary, development plan Policy S53 sets out the standards expected from all development to make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the environment within which it is located, including consideration of natural features and habitats. More specifically Policy S60 aims to (i) ensure developments minimise impacts on biodiversity, deliver measurable and proportionate net gains in biodiversity; (ii) protect habitats, species and sites of international, national and local importance, and (iii) protect and enhance the aquatic environment within or adjoining the site, including water quality and habitat. Policy S61 focuses on biodiversity opportunity and delivering measurable biodiversity net gains.
72. The land is within an opportunity area for management of the green and blue infrastructure network identified under Policy 59. The expectation is that green infrastructure principles should be considered and incorporated into a scheme from the earliest stages of the design process. As set out in Policy S61 development proposals should create new habitats and links between habitats in accordance with the biodiversity opportunity area principles set out in Appendix 4 to the CLLP. The first principle is that proposals should avoid development on opportunity areas for management where possible. Where this is not possible, the development layout should ensure that connectivity of the network is maintained. The Council consider the land provides a habitat linkage between the two Local Wildlife Sites.
73. The River Witham Auburn to Beckingham Local Wildlife Site (LWS) is designated for its freshwater habitats and for its unimproved neutral grassland habitat. The Beckingham Ranges LWS supports a neutral grassland habitat, with additional habitats of semi-natural woodland, scrub, inland grazing marsh, associated river/ditch and small pools. Nearly all the triangle of land is outside the LWS designations. The reason(s) for its exclusion are not evidenced.
74. The ecological survey identified a priority hedgerow along part of the eastern boundary to the wider site, 3-4m in height 4-5m in width and including species of hawthorn, blackthorn, elder, dog rose and ivy. The broadleaved woodland belt along the southern boundary of the development site also was identified as a habitat of principal importance, where tree growth was in excess of 5m in height with greater than 90% canopy cover. Tussock grassland was along the River Witham but it was considered unlikely that it would qualify as lowland meadow or other priority grassland habitat types. No evidence of protected/notable species on site was observed during the survey, except for a range of common passerine birds. The adjacent lands were identified as offering suitable habitats for a variety of species.

Assessment

75. Plot 8. A comparison of the application site plan (MW/DP-01) with the habitat plan derived from the ecological survey²³ indicates the development of the proposed pitch may encroach slightly into the tussocky grassland area. The probability is the formation of the internal access road resulted in a loss of neutral grassland. The proposal is to retain the eastern hedgerow along the edge of the access road. A green buffer, ongoing protection and maintenance would be required. Some vegetation loss may occur through more detailed

²³ Ecological Appraisal Report Figure 3

proposals for the site access off the A17. There is good separation distance between the plot and the southern woodland belt. The ecology report found direct loss to the River Witham LWS had been avoided by the erection of post and rail fencing along the western boundary. In summary, the siting of the proposed pitch and access arrangements would not result in the loss of priority habitats. The effect on the aquatic environment would depend mainly on proposals for drainage, as yet unconfirmed.

76. Plot 9. This plot would not be sited in such close proximity to the River Witham and to that extent would probably be in a less sensitive position in terms of impact on biodiversity and securing appropriate mitigation.
77. Mitigation. The appellant relies on planning condition(s) to avoid harmful impacts and to provide mitigation and/ or compensation measures in respect of habitats and species and to secure at least a 10% net gain in biodiversity. Mitigation recommended by the ecological report included close boarded fencing or similar screening along the western boundary, or in the alternative the planting of a tree line/hedgerow. External artificial lighting, a potential direct impact on species including bats and otter, would require careful design. The report accepts that a scheme for biodiversity net gain would require reasonable assumptions regarding the pre-development baseline value of the site based on the classification and condition of remaining habitats present, cross referenced with pre-development imagery of the site.
78. This approach is consistent with that outlined in the Council's guidance on delivering biodiversity net gain in Central Lincolnshire²⁴. However, proposals would be better informed if green infrastructure principles and biodiversity net gain had been considered and incorporated into a scheme earlier in the process, ensuring connectivity of the habitats would be maintained. The net gain calculation and required measures probably would differ for the site alone as opposed to a landscape ecological management plan covering up to 17 proposed pitches over the wider site. Recommended biodiversity enhancement options may be unduly constrained by the size and siting of Plot 8 in relation to the river corridor. A proper understanding of what may be achievable relies on detailed proposals.

Conclusions

79. Insufficient attention has been given to the integration of green and blue infrastructure and biodiversity net gain in the siting and design of the proposed development. The available 'post-development' evidence indicates the development of Plot 8 as a single pitch would have a slight negative effect on habitats and there may be the opportunity for mitigation. The effect on the aquatic environment is uncertain. When the cumulative effect of proposals over the wider site are considered, the siting of Plot 8 may not be compatible with minimising the effects on biodiversity or achieving an acceptable level of mitigation and compensation. Plot 9 is proposed to be sited in a slightly less sensitive position. Compliance with Policies S59, S60 and S61 and criterion (a) of Policy S83 Part Three has not been demonstrated.

²⁴ Delivering Biodiversity Net Gain in Central Lincolnshire April 2023, referred to in the Proof of Evidence of Aecom Limited

Drainage

80. Policy S83 Part Three (e) requires the proposal to be adequately serviced, or capable of being adequately serviced, preferably by mains connections. Furthermore, the proposal should not conflict with other local or national policies relating to protection of the natural environment. These policy criteria need to be read alongside Policy S21 which states non mains foul sewage disposal solutions should only be considered where it can be shown that connection to a public sewer is not feasible. Development should contribute positively to the water environment and its ecology where possible and, in line with the requirements of the Water Framework Directive, should not adversely affect surface and ground water quality. The development plan requirements are consistent with the Framework and with the relevant Planning Practice Guidance on wastewater and water quality. The expectation of the CLLP is that drainage solutions should be factored into the development process as early as possible.
81. A water recycling centre/sewage treatment works (WRC) is adjacent to the wider site. A mains sewer crosses Plots 6 and 7. Connection to the public network would enable the most preferable solution in policy terms. However, in March 2022 Anglian Water advised that Beckingham WRC is small and will struggle with any additional flow²⁵. Significant investment would be required and currently funding is not available. Given this position, connection to the public network would risk overloading the system and cause pollution. It would not be an acceptable solution from a planning point of view. Anglian Water supported the use of septic tanks and understanding the undesirability of issuing 17 permits suggested the use of one septic tank to serve the 17 pitches.
82. The discharge of effluent from a septic tank would be into the ground via an appropriate distribution system of filter drains and therefore could be a source of water pollution. No evidence has been provided to show the ground has adequate soakage characteristics or that an appropriate area of land for the percolation system, a drainage field, could be provided within the appellant's control. Significantly the evidence of the Environment Agency is that the geology of the site is mudstone, which is not permeable.
83. The other option is the installation of a cesspit, which appears to have been acceptable in Beckingham village. No evidence has been presented to demonstrate that a cesspit could be suitably sited within the pitches in relation to the caravans and would have adequate capacity, be properly watertight through its lifetime and have appropriate arrangements for emptying. Whilst a cesspit may be acceptable for one or a small number of pitches, the provision of this form of drainage for most or all plots is not a satisfactory solution and a coordinated approach should be adopted.

Conclusion

84. The available option for disposal of foul drainage appears to be the provision of a cesspit on a pitch. Whilst not a preferred solution, particularly given the plots' proximity to the River Witham LWS, it is not contrary to Policy S83 or Policy S21. The details would have to be approved as part of a site development

²⁵ Core Document 32

scheme so that the siting of the infrastructure took into account of the siting of the static caravan and dayroom within the internal pitch layout.

Living Conditions: Noise

85. Policy S83 Part Three criterion (d) requires the proposal to provide an acceptable standard of amenity for the site's occupants. The PPTS expects proper consideration of the effect of local environmental quality (such as noise and air quality) on the health and well-being of Travellers.
86. Applicable to all forms of development CLLP Policy S53 (7)(b) seeks compatibility between neighbouring land uses unless it can be demonstrated that the ongoing use of the neighbouring site will not be compromised, and the amenity of occupiers of the new development will be satisfactory. Policy S54 seeks positive mental and physical health outcomes through development proposals.
87. The Framework expects development to promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users, recognising the importance of location and potential adverse effects of noise pollution. Noise giving rise to significant adverse impacts on health and the quality of life should be avoided. The Noise Policy Statement for England (NPSE) promotes good health and a good quality of life through the effective management of noise within the context of Government Policy on sustainable development. The NPSE makes a distinction between 'quality of life', a subjective measure that refers to people's emotional social and physical wellbeing and 'health' which refers to physical and mental well-being. Planning Practice Guidance advises that when considering the acoustic environment decision makers need to consider whether or not a good standard of amenity can be achieved.
88. Against this policy context and with equality considerations firmly in mind, the acoustic environment on gypsy and traveller sites should be subject to the same standards as apply to the settled community. A roadside comparator is not acceptable or relevant in assessing permanent sites. This conclusion is consistent with that reached by Inspectors in appeals referred to by the Council and the appellants²⁶.
89. Traffic on the A17 and the activities carried out at Beckingham DTE are the sources of noise requiring consideration. The Nova report confirmed the adjacent water recycling centre was inaudible on site. On that basis the Council was satisfied this potential noise source in isolation does not raise any residential amenity concerns and I will not consider it further.

Road traffic noise

90. The Council's evidence cited the 2018 World Health Organisation (WHO) Guidelines on noise levels for traffic noise, which give a maximum average noise exposure of 53 dB Lden (daytime) and for night time below 45 dB Lnight. Noise levels above the guidelines are associated with adverse effects on health and sleep. The point is made that the noise standards in BS8233:2014 are based on the 1999 WHO Guidelines.

²⁶ Appendices to the Council's hearing statement: Appendix 17 Appeal Decision APP/R2520/W/15/3130962 dated 1 March 2016 paragraph 12, Appendix 23 Appeal Decisions APP/Q3115/W/16/3156409, APP/Q3115/W/18/3205628 dated 13 January 2020 paragraph 46; and WSP Appendix 5 Appeal Decision APP/C3105/W/18/3219199 dated 27 March 2020 paragraph 42

91. The Nova report places Plot 8 and Plot 9 within the amber acoustic zone, reflecting a decrease in noise levels with distance away from the A17. At MP2 (roughly mid-way along the eastern boundary to the wider site) short term noise measurements were 55.0 LAeq,t dB. The day time LAeq sound level map places Plot 8 and Plot 9 within the range 57-60 dB and the night time LAeq sound level map gives a range of 51-54 dB. Maximum night time levels were in the 66-69 dB range.
92. Based on the internal noise level analysis for a mobile home²⁷ the noise levels in a caravan in the amber zone were predicted to be below the BS8233:2014 criteria during both the day and night time periods. As to the external noise level, the Nova report predicted a garden noise level of 58.0, above the BS8233 criteria by +3.0 dB.
93. The mitigation recommended by the Nova report is to control the noise between the source and the receiver by the installation of 2m close boarded fencing on top of a 1m high earth bund between 'the site' and the A17 road. Provided the bunding and fencing is installed as specified²⁸ internal noise levels are predicted to be reduced further and the predicted external noise level of 54.0 dB is within the 50-55 dB BS8233 criteria. The location of the proposed bund would not require any land within or adjacent to Plot 8 or Plot 9.
94. The analysis in Nova report indicates that acceptable internal noise levels (BS8233) are likely to be achieved with a static caravan to BS standard, closed windows, even without the provision of a bund/fence to the stated specification as mitigation. It is accepted practice to use a planning condition to require static caravans to have a specified standard of sound insulation and ventilation (BS3632:2015). Various appeal decisions illustrate this approach, where the precise wording of a condition varies according to the facts²⁹.
95. The proposed touring caravan would not be of a similar standard, but no analysis has been carried on internal noise levels. As a precautionary measure a planning condition could be imposed to preclude its use for sleeping accommodation. Similarly, no noise assessment has been carried out for the proposed dayroom or with windows open in the static caravan to assist ventilation and cooling. The appellants' solution to any adverse effect on living conditions is the use of air conditioning or mechanical ventilation and use of the dayroom for cooking.
96. The acoustic evidence indicates that in terms of road traffic noise an acceptable standard of amenity would be achieved for the residents of Plot 8 and Plot 9 with the bund/fencing as mitigation. Even without the bund internal noise levels would be satisfactory. Guideline values for external amenity space would not be achievable without the bund, but if development was otherwise acceptable the design aim would be achievement of the lowest practicable noise levels.
97. Considering development from a cumulative point of view, the inclusion of Plot 8 and Plot 9 would be a neutral factor. The evidence shows Plots 1 to 7 are in the area most affected by road traffic noise and where off-site mitigation in the form of the bund/fencing would be essential.

²⁷ The Nova report sets out the assumptions underlying the calculation on pages 13 and 14

²⁸ The fencing must have a minimum surface mass of 10 kg/m² and should contain no holes or gaps

²⁹ WSP Appendices 2 to 5

Beckingham DTE

98. Policy 84 is specific to Ministry of Defence (MOD) Establishments, including Beckingham DTE. Part Two of the policy states that development will not be supported where it would adversely affect military operations or capability unless those impacts can be appropriately mitigated in agreement with the MOD. This policy requirement recognises the importance of protecting the role and the ongoing use of these establishments, including their ability to adapt in accordance with MOD operational plans in the national interest.
99. The MOD explained that Beckingham is the Headquarters for the East Midlands and in their view is critical to military defence operations because of the three live firing ranges and extensive dry training area there. The expectation is of a significant increase in the use of the ranges and training area in the near future because of the proposed new cadet training centre to be built at the DTE and the closure of RAF Halton in 2025. Currently live firing on the ranges can occur seven days a week, with night firing (1700-2300 hours) eight times a month. Dry training (including the use of blank ammunition and pyrotechnics) can occur at all times and takes place in the woodland area to the west of the River Witham.
100. All parties agreed that the CIEH Clay Target Shooting Guidance on the Control of Noise (the CIEH guidance)³⁰ is appropriate to apply in this case. The guidance measures noise from clay target shooting using the Shooting Noise Level (SNL) index. The measurement protocol requires duration of a continuous 30 minute period during shooting. A mean SNL, the arithmetic average of individual SNLs, is used to gauge annoyance. The number of individual SNL values depends on the purpose of the measurements. Both the Nova report and MOD use a single SNL, suggesting a degree of caution in interpreting the results.
101. The Nova report accepted that the calculated SNL of 61.0 would be a level where annoyance is likely to occur. However, the report reasoned the site would be suitable for residential development, drawing a comparison with other residential properties at similar distances to the firing ranges and assuming no history of complaints.
102. The MOD carried out monitoring on 25 January 2023 to test the validity of the Nova results. Data was captured when the 400m and 600m ranges were in use. The conditions were considered representative of firing activity and the associated noise that would be experienced by residents on the appeal sites. The calculated SNL was found to be 88.2 dB(A), a level where it is highly likely annoyance will occur.
103. There is a significant difference in the calculated SNL presented by the appellants and the MOD. The monitoring positions were not the same, MP3 being closer to the wider site and more shielded by the block of woodland to the west. However, the CIEH guidance is that in general trees offer little sound attenuation unless the tree belts are sufficiently deep as to give some sound reduction due to the distance involved³¹. The expert evidence from the MOD

³⁰ Core Document 59 Clay Target Shooting: Guidance on the Control of Noise, Chartered Institute of Environmental Health, published January 2003

³¹ CIEH Clay Target Shooting: Guidance paragraph 4.7 "In general trees offer little sound attenuation unless the tree belts are sufficiently deep as to give some sound reduction due to the distance involved. Trees can also be responsible for undesirable echoes and sound scattering effects. If it is felt, in a particular location, that a deep

was similar. The presence of the tree belt is unlikely to have affected results significantly. Of greater relevance the Nova SNL was derived from short term monitoring results over a single 30 minute measurement period, at a time when the period of firing activity was not continuous as the MOD explained. Even allowing for the purpose of the monitoring, the monitoring was insufficient to be representative of firing operations and environmental conditions.

104. According to the CIEH guidance research suggests that there is no fixed shooting noise level at which annoyance starts to occur. Annoyance is less likely to occur at a mean SNL below 55 dB(A), and highly likely to occur at a mean SNL above 65 dB(A). The likelihood of annoyance at levels within this range will depend upon local circumstances. At Beckingham, the background noise level due to traffic on the A17 (55 dB as opposed to 45 dB in the guidance) is one possible factor, although the CIEH guidance commented that "closer examination of sites with relatively higher background levels is necessary before the role of background noise in relation to annoyance can be better understood."³²
105. As to regularity and frequency of occurrence, MOD data over a three year period from 2020 to the end of 2022 shows that the ranges are by no means used every day and the occurrences of 'night time' activity were very small. However, the trend is of increasing levels of use across all three ranges. The probability is this trend will continue, with increased night time activity. Use of the dry training area could add to the amount of noise experienced but no detailed evidence was presented on its use from which to draw any conclusions.
106. In thinking about the likelihood of annoyance, the Nova comparison between the appeal sites and other nearby but unspecified residential properties is not helpful, not least because the houses in Beckingham are south of the A17. The CIEH guidance suggests research was inconclusive as to sensitivities in different communities³³. There is no doubt however that the separation distances between the appeal sites and the firing ranges are well below the recommended minimum of 1km³⁴.
107. Taking all these considerations into account I conclude on the technical evidence that annoyance is likely to occur with the current activity at Beckingham DTE and annoyance is highly likely to occur in the future. No mitigation is proposed in the Nova report in relation to shooting noise and activities on the MOD ranges and dry training area. Internal and external areas of the caravan sites would be affected to varying degrees.
108. The Nova work did not include noise emissions from the MOD facility in the modelling used to produce the noise contour maps and to inform the noise break-in assessment and external noise level assessment. The omission was based on a noise level of 55.0 dB $L_{Aeq,t}$ at MP2 and MP3, the closest measuring points to Beckingham DTE. The 55.0 dB figure at MP3 probably is an

dense belt of trees may offer attenuation, this will require a thorough evaluation over varying weather conditions before final decisions are made and any conditions set.

³² CIEH Clay Target Shooting: Guidance paragraph 6.1

³³ CIEH Clay Target Shooting: Guidance paragraph 6.1 "For a given exposure level, community annoyance was found to vary significantly between shoots, but no particular shoot characteristics or socio-demographic variables were seen to be associated with the degree of annoyance. There is some suggestion in the data that different sensitivities exist in different communities and that this affects annoyance, but the causes of differing sensitivities are not clear."

³⁴ CIEH Clay Target Shooting: Guidance paragraph 4.2

underestimate. The more appropriate reference figure in the Nova data was the SNL of 61.0, again probably an underestimate due to the length of monitoring period. Consequently, the sound level maps and the assessments are not fully representative of the acoustic environment.

Effect on neighbouring military use

109. Planning Practice Guidance puts the onus on the agent of change (here the appellant) to clearly identify the effects of current and permitted activities and to define suitable mitigation measures to avoid existing activities having a significant adverse effect on residents of the proposed scheme. The guidance explains this approach may not prevent all complaints but can help to achieve a satisfactory living or working environment and help to mitigate the risk of a statutory nuisance being found if the new development is used as designed.
110. The Nova report has not fully put into practice this approach in relation to Beckingham DTE, which could possibly increase the risk of complaints if not from existing residents but from future residents. The MOD operational activity is exempt from the statutory nuisance regime under the Environmental Protection Act 1990. Claims under the law of private nuisance can be made, although as illustrated by the case law referred to such claims are fact sensitive and success resulted where exceptional change occurred. However, a possibility is that complaints may put pressure on the establishment to modify training activities and to take reasonable steps to be a good neighbour, as has happened in the past. The likelihood of this occurring is less with a single plot than with a number of pitches. This factor has greater significance when considering the proposed developments on a cumulative basis.

Other considerations

111. A person's tolerance of noise and the likelihood of disturbance are affected by a range of factors, including the nature of the noise, the time, duration and frequency and the character of the area. Appellants in their oral evidence said they were not bothered at night by noise or when outside. However, I need to be mindful that permission usually runs with the land, occupation can change and may well be a home for children, young adults and others who have not had a lifetime of travelling and roadside living.

Conclusions

112. A residential caravan site is a noise sensitive use. The data demonstrates that the acoustic environment of Plot 8 and Plot 9 is adversely affected by two sources of noise, each source having quite different characteristics. The acoustic evidence indicates noise from the MOD facility is most likely to have an adverse effect on amenity, whereas road traffic noise would be less significant and capable of mitigation. The introduction of a residential use close to the MOD facility would not be compatible with the aim of promoting good health and a good quality of life and should be avoided.
113. The proposal fails to comply with criterion (d) of Part Three of Policy S83, Policy S53 (7)(b) and Policy S54. The proposal would not achieve the standard of amenity and the effective management of noise sought through policies in the Framework and the NPSE. The probability of military operations or capability being adversely affected by a caravan site on Plot 8 or Plot 9 is very

low and would be more likely from cumulative development. Even so, Policy S84 is not supportive of the proposed changes of use.

Intentional unauthorised development

114. The Government policy on intentional unauthorised development was confirmed by a Written Ministerial Statement in December 2015 and has remained in place after the publication of the Framework. The policy was in response to concern about the harm caused, particularly in the Green Belt, where development is undertaken in advance of obtaining planning permission. Where this occurs there is no opportunity to appropriately limit or mitigate harm and a planning authority may have to undertake expensive and time-consuming enforcement action. Section 73A of the 1990 Act allows for planning permission to be sought and granted retrospectively but the policy introduces an aspect of intent.
115. In terms of the chronology, Council officers attended the site during the morning of 21 December 2021. Some hardcore had been laid and eight touring caravans had been brought onto the land. The Council say that in accordance with normal practice the officers advised those present to cease work. A temporary stop notice was served later in the day and on 23 December an *ex parte* injunction was obtained by the Council that prohibited further building/engineering works taking place and additional caravans being brought onto the land. A total of 17 planning applications were submitted on 30 December, the forms stating development commenced on 20 December 2021. The Council considered the applications were incomplete and after receipt of the requested information they were validated on 3 February 2022.
116. A second temporary stop notice was served on 17 January 2022 after the court refused to extend the injunction. Following further court proceedings an injunction was secured by consent, dated 7 February 2022. An additional 6 touring caravans and associated hard bases were allowed, together with temporary washing facilities. Therefore a total of 14 touring caravans are permitted across the wider site. Time was allowed for the planning applications and any appeals to run their course.
117. There is no specific information about the involvement of the appellant for Plot 8, if any, in the initial development works and no evidence of her occupation of Plot 8 since late 2021 to the present day. The Injunction Order names the appellant as a defendant, who was not personally served with notice of the proceedings. The only identifiable involvement is the submission of a planning application and appeal on the appellant's behalf, seeking to regularise the situation. The evidence of the occupant of the land known as Plot 8A does not assist in establishing the background.
118. There also is no specific information about the involvement, if any, of the Plot 9 appellant in the initial development works or occupation subsequently. One resident said this appellant stopped living on the site when the injunction was made. However, a planning application and an appeal were submitted on the appellant's behalf to regularise the position.
119. Intentional unauthorised development occurred and involved pre-planning. The laying of substantial amounts of hard core to create pitches and service roads resulted in a significant physical change and the loss of vegetation at the least. No prior engagement took place with the local planning authority to

explore planning constraints, suitability of a residential use and requirements. Use of a sub-standard access has been ongoing and environmental harm has occurred. The appellants probably knew of the intended action, although their direct involvement is unknown. This policy consideration adds a moderate amount of weight against the proposals.

Other matters

Scale

120. The Council considers the scale of the cumulative proposals would not respect the scale of the settled community in Beckingham, having regard to the CLLP spatial strategy and settlement hierarchy, PPTS policy on new traveller sites in open countryside and the preference expressed in the GTAA³⁵ for small family sites.
121. Clearly the 'scale' issue does not apply to either Plot 8 or Plot 9 alone and is directed at a 17 pitch site. A new caravan site with 17 homes would be above the limited growth anticipated within or adjacent to Beckingham village to support its role and function as a small village within the settlement hierarchy (Policies S1 and S4). Having said that, some Traveller sites in Central Lincolnshire have a similar number of pitches and there is encouragement in Policy S83 for expansion of existing sites to accommodate multi-generational households. In view of these considerations, the acceptability of 17 pitches depends on the effects of the development and whether it would be compatible with its surroundings.

Energy efficiency

122. Policy S7 of the CCLP requires all new residential development proposals to include an Energy Statement to demonstrate how the set standards of performance and the Policy S6 design principles for energy efficient buildings would be met. The 'exceptional basis clauses' do not exempt traveller accommodation from meeting this requirement.
123. The policies are directed towards buildings erected on housing sites rather than caravan sites but I agree with the Council that the energy performance of the static caravan and dayroom should be considered. Compliance should be demonstrated prior to a decision rather than submission and approval of an energy statement being dealt with through a planning condition.

Other Policy S83 requirements

124. The proposal for Plot 8 does not conflict with other local or national policies relating to flood risk, contamination, or agricultural land quality. The site plan shows sufficient space for vehicle manoeuvring and parking within the pitch, although this would be subject to confirmation through submission of additional details on layout. In view of the location of the pitch there would be no effect on the amenity of nearby residents through overlooking, overshadowing, loss of light or increase in artificial light or glare. The same reasoning applies to the Plot 9 proposal.

³⁵ Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment Final Report February 2020

Location of Traveller sites

125. The appellants consider that weight should be given to the likely location of new sites in the countryside. The implication is that new sites to meet needs would result in harm to the countryside, a conclusion that is unsupported and over-generalised. Policy allows for traveller sites in a countryside location. Given experience to date and the strategy in Policy S83 for meeting needs, acceptable sites in the countryside will be delivered. The matter has no weight in the planning balance.

Need and supply of traveller sites

Policy and CLP process

126. Meeting the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople in Central Lincolnshire is addressed through Policy S83³⁶. The policy was informed by a Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment Final Report February 2020 (the GTAA) and a subsequent report Central Lincolnshire: Meeting the Accommodation Needs of Gypsies and Travellers dated April 2021 (the 2021 Report).
127. The GTAA identified a need for a total of 41 additional pitches between 2019 and 2040. This need is in respect of an ethnic based definition of Gypsy and Traveller, as opposed to the definition in Annex A to the PPTS, which was found to be discriminatory in the *Lisa Smith* judgement³⁷. This need is broken down into 5 year periods, identifying a need to 2024 of 5 pitches. Beyond this a further 10 pitches are required from 2024-2029, 11 from 2029-2034, and 15 from 2034-2040.
128. The CLLP, in Policy S83 sets out a strategy to meet this identified need and to supply additional pitches. In summary, the components of the strategy are to resist the loss of existing sites, to support in principle proposals to extend existing sites or to provide additional pitches within an existing site, the allocation of two sites for Gypsy and Traveller use and consideration of proposals for new sites on their merits against the stated criteria, including a positive approach towards windfall sites.
129. The CLLP was adopted in April 2023, having undergone the required consultation and examination processes. Through the examination process the appointed independent Inspectors had a duty to assess whether the plan had been prepared in accordance with legal and procedural requirements and if it was sound³⁸. An Inspector's role is not confined to considering representations.
130. The Inspectors identified eleven main issues upon which the soundness of the Plan depended. Gypsy and Traveller accommodation was considered as part of Issue 7 "Whether the policies relating to the type and mix of housing are justified, effective and consistent with national planning policy".³⁹ The Report concisely dealt with the two key matters and explained (i) why a modification was required to the policy in order to increase the need for additional pitches from 32 to 41 over the period 2019 to 2040, and (ii) why the

³⁶ Policy S83 also covers the needs of Travelling Showpeople but my focus is on Gypsies and Travellers

³⁷ *Smith v Secretary of State for Levelling Up Housing and Communities & Others* [2022] EWCA Civ 1391

³⁸ The four tests of soundness are set out in paragraph 35 of the Framework.

³⁹ Core Document 7 Central Lincolnshire Local Plan Review, Inspectors' Report, March 2023 page 49. Appendix 13 to the Hearing statement indicates some of the questions raised by the Inspectors to inform an examination hearing session and the final report.

needs of Gypsies and Travellers will be met over the plan period⁴⁰. To suggest, as the appellants do, that regard was only given to the *Lisa Smith* judgement and scrutiny was absent, misrepresents the examination process.

131. The serious accusation that the Inspectors did not carry out examination of the evidence base on the topic with due diligence and the necessary scrutiny is without foundation and is not a matter to be pursued through the current appeals.

The GTAA

132. The research undertaken drew on a number of data sources and included consultation with a range of stakeholders and surveys of Gypsy and Traveller families where there was a high 91% response rate. This approach is consistent with that outlined in the PPTS. The GTAA was an important part of the evidence base for the CLLP and was accepted to be robust. A detailed critique and re-examination of the GTAA is not merited. Nevertheless, I will address matters raised in the appellants' submissions on need and supply, starting with the approach taken by the GTAA towards in-migration and cross boundary issues.
133. The GTAA considered the results of GTAA's undertaken by neighbouring and nearby local authorities specifically in relation to need and travelling patterns. The indication was of some accommodation need throughout the region but none of those GTAA's suggested an accommodation need arising in their area should be met within Central Lincolnshire. The statutory duty to cooperate was a matter addressed through the local plan process. The Statement of Common Ground included the agreement that Central Lincolnshire will meet all of its housing and employment needs and is not tasked with meeting unmet needs from elsewhere⁴¹. The Inspectors concluded that the duty to cooperate had been met and from my point of view that is final. Nothing the appellants have said persuades me that specific traveller site provision should be made in Central Lincolnshire to accommodate need arising in Newark and Sherwood.
134. It is worth restating that the CLLP is a joint local plan covering three local authority areas. Likewise, the GTAA covered the three local authority areas. In assessing current residential need for the period 2019-2024, the GTAA looked at a number of potential demands, including new family units expected to arrive from elsewhere. A net inflow of 0 units in the study area is entered into the need table. The rationale was that in the absence of any data derivable from primary or secondary sources (beyond anecdotal evidence) on the moving intentions of those outside the study area moving into the area, as in the case of those moving out of the area, it was assumed that the inflow of Gypsies and Travellers into the area will be equivalent to the outflow. Together these amount to a net inflow of 0 units in the study area. The consultation with stakeholders across Central Lincolnshire and neighbouring authorities and the survey work informed this conclusion. No past trend of in-migration was identified and the picture from the survey work and consultation with families residing in the study area is of a stable population.
135. The GTAA presents data on unauthorised encampments from two sources over the whole study area. The MHCLG data, considered by the GTAA to be of limited accuracy, showed a very slight upward trend in the number of caravans

⁴⁰ Core Document 7 paragraphs 238 and 239

⁴¹ See Inquiry Document 10

(to 16) over the period January 2016 to July 2019. The more detailed data from Lincolnshire County Council showed variation in the number of unauthorised encampments recorded per year, with a maximum of 17 in the period 2017/18 and 12 in the 2016/2017 and 2019/20 periods. During the GTAA survey in December 2019 there were no households surveyed on unauthorised encampments within the study area, although there were two pitches on an unauthorised development.

136. Using this data, the estimate of the current residential need for permanent residential site pitches 2019-2024 included 2 pitches for family units on unauthorised developments. No pitches were entered for family units on unauthorised encampments. However, the stakeholder consultation indicated one of the main reasons unauthorised encampments take place is the lack of transit provision. It follows that the GTAA addresses the unauthorised encampments under the heading transit provision and not within the need for additional permanent pitches. The GTAA recommended the three Central Lincolnshire authorities adopt a negotiated stopping policy. There is no evidence in the appellants' reasoning that causes me to question the GTAA analysis.
137. The GTAA, particularly through the household surveys, identified that some multi-generational households were overcrowded and in need of additional pitches. This results in a need of 4 pitches in the first five year period. The break down into the three local authority areas shows this need occurs in West Lindsey. The appellants consider overcrowding also occurs in North Kesteven on the Paddocks and Poplar Meadows sites, based on a comparison of two aerial photographs dated April 2018 and 2023 and information on the planning history. The purported high level of touring caravans is regarded as representing doubled up or overcrowded pitches. It is concluded the GTAA failed to account for at least 10 concealed households in North Kesteven District. In my view this supposition related to a date in 2023 does not provide robust evidence to conclude the GTAA underestimated need, remembering the GTAA findings were derived from extensive face to face on-site household surveys carried out towards the end of 2019. Clearly the GTAA final report dated February 2020 could not take into account information, events or activities that post-dated its completion, such as the caravan count figures for July 2022, also referred to by the appellants.
138. Turning to the supply side of the equation, the current residential supply includes 18 available 'unused residential pitches', of which 4 are on a private site in North Kesteven. The appellant considers these 4 pitches cannot be relied on because 'unused' does not necessarily result in available sites. I note that although the word 'unused' is in the description for the Tables, the word 'vacant' is the descriptive word in the commentary text in the GTAA. These 4 pitches were identified through the survey work on the ground and the appellants produce no factual evidence to contradict the GTAA. There is no justifiable reason to exclude these 4 pitches from supply.
139. Another category of supply is 'number of residential pitches expected to become vacant'. A supply of 2 pitches was derived for the period 2019 to 2024 based on mortality rates. The appellants were troubled by the inclusion of this source of supply. I consider there is nothing objectionable to including 2 such pitches in the supply, although they may not fall within the 'deliverable' category.

140. There are 11 residential pitches planned to be built or be brought back into use, 2019-2024. I am satisfied from the explanation in the GTAA that these pitches are justifiably included. The test for their inclusion is not that they should be available to the appellants now.
141. The GTAA indicated a local target of 5 pitches for the first five years of the plan period and 10 pitches for the period 2024-29 (ethnic definition). After the 2020 GTAA was concluded the supply of pitches was updated to take account of subsequent planning permissions⁴². This information was available to the CLLP examination process⁴³.
142. There is no evidence on the planning history to support the appellants' assertion the permission reduced the number of caravans on the Piggeries site. The description of development and the brief comments in the Council's evidence⁴⁴ indicate permission was granted for the number and type of caravans applied for. A second permission for 12 pitches, although granted retrospectively, illustrates acceptable windfall sites can contribute to the overall stock of traveller pitches. The GTAA data indicates the previously unauthorised development on this site in West Lindsey did not exist in December 2019. An additional 5 pitches on land off Laughton Road, Blyton (also listed in the supply update) demonstrates a successful expansion/intensification of an existing site.

Conclusions

143. The GTAA was a robust evidence base to establish accommodation needs to inform the preparation of the CLLP and make planning decisions. In producing the CLLP a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide 5 years' worth of sites against the locally set target was identified. Recent planning permissions demonstrate the success of the approach in Policy S83 to providing additional pitches. The CLLP was adopted in April 2023 and an annual update of the 5 year supply is not due until next year. That would be the appropriate time to review the requirements for residential pitches over the period 2024 to 2029 and the assumptions in the GTAA underlying the 2024 base figures.
144. The current need of the appellants and the appellant group for a permanent site was not and could not have been identified in 2020 and hence their needs were not included in the locally set target for Central Lincolnshire. In line with the CLLP strategy, meeting their need within the District would be through identification of a windfall site that satisfies the Policy S83 criteria.
145. The probability is that a significant need for additional traveller sites exists across the sub-region. The progress, or lack of progress, of the relevant local authorities in bringing forward a supply of sites to meet outstanding needs should be evidenced based and not reliant on assumptions of the appellant's planning witness. The generally recognised national need for sites is a relevant consideration.

Personal need, alternative sites and family circumstances

146. The stated intention of the appellant for Plot 8 is to live on Plot 9 with her husband John Henry and their two children. According to Mr Henry's unsigned

⁴² Core Document 4 Central Lincolnshire: meeting the Accommodation Needs of gypsies and Travellers April 2021

⁴³ Appendix 13 to the Hearing statement; Core Document 6 Central Lincolnshire Examination Note on Gypsy and Traveller Provision 12 December 2022

⁴⁴ Proof of N Feltham at paragraph 4.15

statement dated 2 June 2023 the family live on the roadside because they were prevented from occupying the plot by the injunction. As a result their children are unable to register for a school and their health and welfare is suffering. They all are at constant risk of being moved on at very short notice and they fear having their vehicles and caravans confiscated by the police.

147. The appellant group named Linchum Price (the appellant for Plot 15) as the future occupier of Plot 8⁴⁵. No statement was submitted on his behalf.
148. Mr Pemberton (appellant for Plot 9) has not provided a statement or other evidence to explain his current or future intentions for Plot 9, if any.
149. The Council's general position is that pitches are available in the District and there is considerable doubt about the appellants' claim they inevitably would be made homeless if the appeal is dismissed. Reference is made to the 'churn' in ownership and occupation across the wider site. Attention was drawn to the lack of information provided by the appellants and reliance had to be placed on high level details obtained through a welfare assessment carried out by officers.
150. More specifically, the Council reported that Plot 8 has not been occupied and no caravan sited there since 2 August 2022. Linchum Price was observed clearing the plot of waste on 1 February 2023 but he had not been seen since and was not resident on the site. The Council has not seen a caravan sited on Plot 9 or observed any occupation. In February 2023 Mr Pemberton informed the Council he no longer owned the site. Neither Mr Henry nor Ms Varey have been seen on site.
151. The personal circumstances of Mr Linchum Price and his need for a pitch have not been substantiated and have very little weight, when considering the merits of Plot 8. The probability is that Mr Pemberton no longer has an interest in Plot 9 or the wider site and any current need for a pitch has not been substantiated. His personal need for a pitch and circumstances have very little weight.
152. Plot 9 is the intended future home of John Henry, his wife Naomi Varey and their children. The fact that Mr Henry and his family do not occupy the pitch does not necessarily mean they have an alternative site. The family's Article 8 rights are engaged. Their statement indicates they have a personal need for a permanent pitch, which would provide the opportunity to access health services and enable the children to attend school and improve their quality of life. Based on this information the interference with their rights would be serious.
153. The interference would arise from exercising a statutory function, be in accordance with the law and be necessary to protect the environment through the regulation of land use. There is little evidence about their travelling patterns, family ties and so on. The oral evidence suggested Mr Henry is currently in Hull, although whether this is on a caravan site or on the roadside was not stated. Overall, their personal circumstances have moderate weight.

Plot 8A

154. At the Inquiry Mrs Bowell gave evidence and explained that she and her husband and their three children moved onto Plot 8A in October 2022. They

⁴⁵ Inquiry Document 13 and confirmed by email dated 17 July 2023 from WSP

clubbed together with other residents to buy the land in 2021 and they moved onto their pitch once it had been brought up to standard. They did not travel and stay on the roadside but previously rented a stopping spot and had lived at Tolney Lane for 8 years. Their two eldest children attend the school bus every Tuesday and their youngest had attended school since an early age. They are all registered with health services in Newark. Mrs Boswell also explained about her medical condition, the essential need for basic facilities and the care and support from her husband and Ms Price on Plot 1.

155. The Council agreed that the Boswell family were 'genuinely full time' residents of Plot 8A, commenting that no planning permission had been sought for the pitch.
156. The evidence of Mrs Boswell confirmed that this family have a strong need for a pitch to ensure their health and wellbeing. If they are not able to stay on their current pitch there would be severe disruption to home and family life and to the children's education and opportunities. The evidence indicates they would attempt to avoid a roadside existence at all costs because of the severe difficulties in light of health and welfare implications.
157. Significantly Plot 8A was not the subject of a planning application and there is no appeal for determination. Any physical overlap with Plot 8 has not been demonstrated by a plan or other documentary evidence. Catering for their needs would have to rely on an alternative pitch elsewhere. Even if a permission was granted on one of the other unoccupied plots on the wider site this would not necessarily help the Boswell family or ensure they would be able to be the occupiers.

Mitigation and planning conditions

Statutory provisions and policy

158. The general power to impose planning conditions when granting planning permission is in section 70(1) of the 1990 Act. Section 72(1)(a) provides for conditions to be imposed on the grant of planning permission for regulating the development or use of any land under the control of the applicant (whether or not it is land in respect of which the application was made), or requiring the carrying out of works on any such land, so far as appears to be expedient for the purposes of or in connection with the development authorised by the permission.
159. Planning Practice Guidance advises that when used properly, conditions can enhance the quality of development and enable development to proceed where it would otherwise have been necessary to refuse planning permission, by mitigating the adverse effect. Planning conditions should be kept to a minimum, and only be imposed where they meet the six tests. Conditions that place unjustifiable and disproportionate financial burdens on an appellant are not reasonable.
160. Planning Practice Guidance also states conditions cannot require that land is formally given up (or ceded) to other parties. Conditions requiring works on land that is not controlled by the applicant, or that requires the consent or authorisation of another person or body often fail the tests of reasonableness and enforceability. It may be possible to achieve a similar result using a condition worded in a negative form (a Grampian condition).

Proposed conditions

161. The lists of conditions prepared by the Council and by the appellant group were discussed at the inquiry and as a result amended lists of conditions were submitted. The two lists cover similar matters, although there are significant differences in the detail of the wording of some conditions. Various matters were addressed by the Council and the appellants in their closing submissions.
162. Conditions are appropriate to control the number and type of caravan on the pitch, to limit occupation to Gypsies and Travellers, to exclude business activity and the parking of larger commercial vehicles on the appeal site and to maintain the required highway visibility splay free of obstruction.
163. As regards outstanding or to be amended proposals, the appellant group rely on a planning condition as the mechanism for the provision and approval of a site development scheme. The scheme for each plot is intended to cover improvements to the main site access, the internal layout of the site, hard and soft landscaping, external lighting, acoustic mitigation (for the static caravan and the provision of an acoustic barrier), surface and foul water drainage, biodiversity net gain plus avoidance, mitigation, and or compensation⁴⁶. The Council's condition covered the same matters but also included an energy statement, which I understand to be acceptable to the appellant(s).
164. In general, such matters are capable of being dealt with by condition, as illustrated in various appeal decisions submitted by the appellant. However, CLLP expects design solutions to be factored into the development process as early as possible with a view to achieving good design. As decision-maker on the acceptability of the proposed material change of use, I have considerable concern about the number of important matters to be resolved through a site development scheme and lack of clarity over proposed solutions for these two sites. Uncertainty on whether a condition can be discharged, raised in the closing submissions on behalf of the appellant group, is a different matter.
165. The unsatisfactory position is reinforced by the approach to pursue individual development sites and the inconsistency with the supporting technical reports. The recommendations on design and mitigation in the ecological report and the Nova report and the illustrative landscape strategy were directed at a single development covering all the Land, not individual pitches and the associated length of service road. A comprehensive approach is more likely than a piecemeal approach to produce a well planned development with enhancements to the environment and promoting opportunities for healthy lifestyles. Whilst verbal assurances were given at the inquiry that residents would work together and support each other if necessary, this is not an acceptable way forward and enforceable mechanisms are required. I place no reliance on the potential for coordinated proposals for the wider site.
166. As noted earlier the application sites are tightly defined around the pitch, the internal access road and main site entrance. As far as the evidence shows the appellants do not control any land outside their defined site. Bearing in mind each proposal is for a single pitch, the scope of mitigation in terms of landscaping and biodiversity would have to be relevant, necessary and reasonable to that development. The provision of an acoustic mitigation could only reasonably relate to noise mitigation for each plot. No explanation has

⁴⁶ The wording of the proposed condition was the same was all appeals/Plots.

been given about the form of surface water drainage, which on the appellants' wording should be based on sustainable drainage principles and include management and maintenance arrangements.

167. The main parties accepted development has begun and a permission would be granted retrospectively. In this situation it is not possible to use a Grampian negatively worded condition to secure the approval of and, if necessary, implementation of works before the development or occupation takes place. A condition would have to be worded with a strict timetable for compliance of submission of the required details (the appellant is seeking 6 months), allowance of 11 months for a decision by the local planning authority and the possibility of an appeal. The process could take up to two years or so. As it stands the timescale for implementation of any approved scheme is unknown.

Sunset Park Homes example

168. In the appellants' bundle of appeal decisions the Sunset Park Homes case⁴⁷ was regarded as being the most comparable to the appeal proposals and was referred to by their planning witness on numerous occasions in oral evidence. The case also was used as an example in terms of approaching the application of conditions in a situation where there are multiple application/appeal pitches forming a wider cohort of development.
169. The Inspector explained there were 21 appeals each relating to a different Plot on the wider site comprising all 21 Plots. The planning history of Sunset Park was extensive, so that in total the appeal sites had a permitted use for 21 static caravans/mobile homes, one on each of the plots and a maximum of 28 touring caravans. The proposal was to increase the number of static caravans to a total of 85 in accordance with the individual planning appeals. No provision was made for any touring caravans on any of the Plots. The development proposed in each appeal was worded Retention of x no. static caravans, reflecting the fact commencement had taken place.
170. The Inspector concluded the proposed developments would be environmentally, socially and economically sustainable and would comply with the development plan as a whole. It was not necessary to take account of the personal accommodation needs of the occupants of the Site. Regarding planning conditions, the site development scheme in all cases was to comprise the internal layout of the site, means of foul and surface water drainage and water supply, external lighting, provision of an electric vehicle charging point and a scheme to achieve biodiversity net gain. Details of landscaping were only required in the scheme for Plots 1, 1A and 2 to address the Whitfield Road frontage. A landscape strategy formed part of the proposals and modification of front boundaries agreed. The Inspector was satisfied it should be possible to accommodate the proposed landscaping in a manner similar to the strategy.
171. This summary highlights the case differed significantly from the current appeals. The proposals were not for material changes of use of agricultural land to caravan sites. Residential development already existed, served by an acceptable means of access. The number of issues in dispute were fewer and were not of a technical nature. The anticipated mitigation was not so extensive or interrelated between plots and reliance could be placed on the submitted landscape strategy. The planning balance was firmly based on compliance with

⁴⁷ WSP Appendix 19

the development plan. There were no inconsistencies in information on land ownership, control of land or occupation. All matters considered, the approach followed in the Sunset Park Homes case is not directly applicable to the greater complexity of the current appeals.

Planning balance and conclusions Plot 8

172. The CLLP is up to date and has a strategy in place to increase the number of traveller sites in appropriate locations, to address under provision and maintain an appropriate level of supply. New sites are considered on their merits against the criteria in Policy S83 Part Three.
173. In summary, the provision of an adequate and safe vehicular access at the junction of the service road and the A17 is dependent on submission of a detailed scheme and compliance with a planning condition. There would be a slight risk to highway safety by reason of the highway layout of the A17 and restricted turning movements at the site entrance. The site is on the margins of being a reasonable travelling distance to primary health care facilities and schools. Realistically all trips to and from the site would have to be by car.
174. The proposal is not well designed or sited, although harm to landscape character and visual amenity would be localised due to the small scale nature of the development. Insufficient attention has been given to the integration of green and blue infrastructure and biodiversity net gain in the siting and design of the proposed development. Minimising impacts and the delivery of proportionate net gains in biodiversity have not been demonstrated. The preferred solution for the disposal of foul drainage is not possible and a less desirable option would have to be adopted.
175. In terms of road traffic noise an acceptable standard of amenity would be achievable with mitigation but an acceptable package of measures remains to be resolved. The residential use is not compatible with the MOD facility close by because of the harmful noise impact on living conditions and an adverse effect on military operations cannot be discounted.
176. An energy efficient proposal has not been demonstrated. The effect on heritage assets is neutral. Matters such flood risk, circulation and parking within the site and neighbour amenity do not give concern.
177. Overall, the proposed traveller site is not a well planned, sustainable form of development in an appropriate location and the strong objections to granting a permission cannot be overcome by imposing planning conditions. The proposal when considered on its merits fails to comply with Policy S83 Part Three, Policy S53, Policies S59, S60 and S61, Policy S7 and Policy S47 regarding use of sustainable travel modes. Policy S84 Part Two (military establishments) is not supportive of the development. No policy conflict arises in terms of Policy S57 (historic environment) and Policy S21 on disposal of foul drainage (subject to compliance with a condition). In conclusion the proposal is contrary to the development plan when considered as a whole. Intentional unauthorised development adds a moderate amount of additional weight against the proposal.
178. In support of the proposal, national need and sub-regional need for additional pitches has moderate weight. The proposed pitch would make a minor addition to pitch supply and in so doing would facilitate the Gypsy way of

life and promote equality of opportunity. In this respect the accommodation need of the occupiers of new Plot 8A is relevant. The personal need and circumstances of the appellant or the intended occupier add little positive weight. By providing a home, the site contributes to the social objective identified in the Framework and PPTS.

179. However, the site is not in an appropriate location to promote health and well-being of the occupiers and the proposal is not well designed. As a result it does not perform well in meeting environmental, social and economic objectives. Policy conflict occurs when the proposal is assessed against the locally specific criteria. The use of planning conditions could offer mitigation but the evidence fails to demonstrate a good standard of development would be delivered and the identified harms would be successfully addressed. Sustainable development would not be achieved and the proposal fails to comply with national policy set out in the Framework and PPTS. To grant a planning permission for an unacceptable site in an inappropriate location would be unlikely to foster good relations between the occupiers and the settled community.
180. The balance is strongly against the development both in terms of development plan and national policy. Personal need and circumstances are insufficient to change the balance. The proposal is not acceptable, whether in terms of a permanent planning permission or a personal permission.
181. Consideration of the plot's contribution to harmful cumulative effects reinforces this conclusion on the unacceptability of the proposed development.
182. The evidence on past, present and future intended occupation of Plot 8 does not show that Article 8 is engaged. Permanent planning permission should not be granted.

Temporary permission

183. In the event permanent permission was not forthcoming I was requested to consider granting a temporary permission for a period of three years. The reason for a temporary permission on other plots is to allow time for the residents of the pitch to find an alternative site, in expectation that the planning circumstances will change in a particular way at the end of the period. This reason does not apply in this case, where no occupation of the pitch is evident. No condition was proposed consistent with occupation by the appellant group or the Boswell family.
184. To require all the details and works associated with a permanent permission would be unreasonable. Mitigation would have to be limited in scope and appropriate to the short time period involved. Over the three year period the probability is the current below standard access would continue in use, habitat and landscape features would not be protected, no biodiversity gain would be achieved and harm to countryside character would continue. No noise mitigation would be secured. Foul and surface water drainage is the one matter proposed to be covered by a site development scheme condition. The sites are not in an acceptable location and residents would be able to get to services and facilities only if they had access to a car. Considerable harm would continue, albeit for a time-limited period. No restoration scheme has been submitted and no reliance can be placed on achieving environmental gains. I also have to

keep in mind that temporary permissions for other pitches would increase the level of harm over the period (the cumulative effect).

185. On the positive side of the balance, benefits resulting from a temporary permission would be small given that there is no shortfall of sites when measured against the locally set target in Central Lincolnshire. The personal need of the appellant or the named occupier have little weight.
186. Weighing up the various considerations and policy requirements, a temporary permission is not justified.

Planning balance Plot 9

187. For essentially the same reasons as with Plot 8, the proposal when considered on its merits fails to comply with Policy S83 Part Three, Policy S53, Policies S59, S60 and S61, Policy S7 and Policy S47. Policy S84 Part Two (military establishments) is not supportive of the development. No policy conflict arises in terms of Policy S57 (historic environment) and Policy S21 on disposal of foul drainage (subject to compliance with a condition). I conclude the proposed material change of use is contrary to the development plan as a whole. The caravan site would not be a well planned, sustainable form of development in an appropriate location and in those terms there is conflict with the Framework and PPTS.
188. The harm would be slightly less than for Plot 8 and there are considerations supporting the development, primarily national need and sub-regional need for additional pitches plus the personal circumstances of Mr Henry and his family. However, these matters are of insufficient weight to justify a permission, whether permanent or a permission personal to the proposed occupiers. This conclusion is subject to a proportionality assessment.

Human rights and proportionality

189. The evidence indicates the appellant has no further interest in the land and the plot is the intended future home of John Henry, his wife Naomi Varey and their children. The plot would be an opportunity for the family to have a settled base, relieving them of the worries, insecurities and hazards associated with living by the roadside. A settled home would be in the best interests of the children, considering their health, well-being and future, which in turn may be expected to be positive for the well-being of the parents. The ability to be close to family and friends also was identified as a particular benefit.
190. Nevertheless, the regulation of land use is in accordance with a statutory framework. The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development by fulfilling environmental, social and economic goals. The CLLP is up to date and consistent with national policy in providing for sustainable growth whilst enhancing the area's environmental assets and natural resources. I have found the proposal is not in accordance with the development plan and would not be a sustainable form of development in an appropriate location.
191. Having carefully considered the balance between private and public interests, I conclude the interference with the rights of the family is necessary and proportionate to safeguard the wider public interest. A permanent planning permission, or in the alternative a personal permission, shall not be granted.

Temporary permission

192. A time limited period of three years is sought, with a view to enabling the family to live on the pitch until an acceptable alternative site comes forward and avoiding continuation of a roadside existence.
193. Referring to the reasoning for Plot 8, the identified harms and policy conflicts would exist for a time-limited period and in that sense the totality of the harm would be reduced, subject to the cumulative effect. The fundamental planning objections to the location of the site and residential land use would remain and the scope for mitigation would be very limited. Balanced against the harm is the fulfilment of a personal need for a pitch and the associated benefits for the family.
194. However, the need of the appellant and his family has not been fully substantiated and the supporting evidence on the family circumstances is somewhat thin. Planning Practice Guidance affirms that permission normally runs with the land unless an applicant has successfully demonstrated an exceptional need. All matters considered my conclusion is that it is necessary and proportionate to dismiss the appeal.

Conclusions

195. The proposed change of use of Plot 8 and Plot 9 are not in accordance with the development plan. Other considerations do not indicate the decisions should be made other than in accordance with the development plan, even for a time limited period. All matters considered, the appeals will be dismissed. These outcomes are necessary and proportionate and will not violate the human rights of the appellants or the intended occupiers. Having due regard to the PSED, the decisions are proportionate to achieving the legitimate planning aims.

DECISIONS

Plot 8 Appeal Ref. APP/R2520/W/22/3300527

196. The appeal is dismissed.

Plot 9 Appeal Ref. APP/R2520/W/22/3300540

197. The appeal is dismissed.

Diane Lewis

INSPECTOR

APPENDIX 1: LIST OF APPEALS

Reference	Case Reference	Appellant
Appeal Plot 1	APP/R2520/W/22/3300464	Ms Michelle Price
Appeal Plot 2	APP/R2520/W/22/3300490	Ms Nicole Price
Appeal Plot 3	APP/R2520/W/22/3300497	Mr Alan Knight
Appeal Plot 4	APP/R2520/W/22/3300505	Mr Alan Knight
Appeal Plot 5	APP/R2520/W/22/3300513	Mr James Evans
Appeal Plot 6	APP/R2520/W/22/3300520	Ms Beryl Price
Appeal Plot 7	APP/R2520/W/22/3300522	Mr Danny Price
Appeal Plot 8	APP/R2520/W/22/3300527	Ms Naomi Varey
Appeal Plot 9	APP/R2520/W/22/3300540	Mr Michael Pemberton
Appeal Plot 10	APP/R2520/W/22/3300559	Mr Drewey Price
Appeal Plot 11	APP/R2520/W/22/3300567	Mr Billy Joe Loveridge
Appeal Plot 12	APP/R2520/W/22/3300580	Mr Steve Finney
Appeal Plot 13	APP/R2520/W/22/3300586	Mr Kevin Clee
Appeal Plot 14	APP/R2520/W/22/3300594	Mr Luke Clee
Appeal Plot 15	APP/R2520/W/22/3300606	Mr Linchum Price
Appeal Plot 16	APP/R2520/W/22/3300612	Mr Douglas Price
Appeal Plot 17	APP/R2520/W/22/3300619	Mr Douglas Price

APPENDIX 2

APPEARANCES

FOR THE APPELLANT:

Scott Stemp	Barrister, instructed through direct access
He called	
Brian Woods BA MRTPI	Managing Director WS Planning & Architecture
Robert Petrow	Managing Director of Petrow Harley Limited
Michelle Price	The Appellant
Beryl Price	Appellant Plot 6
Nicola Price	Appellant Plot 2
Danny Price	Appellant Plot 7
Sean Williams	Occupier Plot 11
Kevin Clee	Appellant Plot 13
Douglas Price	Appellant Plots 16 and 17

FOR THE LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITY:

Jack Smythe	Barrister, instructed by a Solicitor to the Council
He called	
Peter Tufnell DipTP MRTPI	Principal of Tufnell Town & Country Planning
Nick Feltham BA(Hons) M.Plan	Assistant Development Manager
David Broughton MCIEEM CEnv	Associate Ecologist at Aecom Limited
Jennifer Moffatt MSc AssocRTPI	Planning Adviser, The Environment Agency
Peter Rogers BSc MSc MCIEH	Team Leader of Environmental Protection Team

FOR THE RULE 12 PARTY:

Esther Drabkin-Reiter, Mark Westmoreland-Smith, of Counsel	Instructed by the Government Legal Department
They called	
Dean Walters CEnv	Senior Environmental Manager, Defence Infrastructure Organisation
Mathew Darby	Training Safety Officer, Defence Infrastructure Organisation

INTERESTED PARTIES:

Philip Wells, Parish Councillor, Beckingham Parish Council

Mrs Wiltshire	Resident of 'Plot 17'
Mrs Boswell	Resident of Plot 8A

DOCUMENTS submitted at the inquiry

- 1 Opening Note on behalf of the Appellants
- 2 Opening submissions of the Council
- 3 Opening statement on behalf of the Secretary of State for Defence
- 4 Overlay plan
- 5 Official List Entry Church of All Saints
- 6 Beckingham Conservation Area Appraisal
- 7 Application Plans for Plot 1 and Plot 13
- 8 Central Lincolnshire Local Plan Interactive Map
- 9 Email Correspondence between the Council and RRR Consultancy
- 10 Information on Duty to Cooperate
- 11 Bundle on Poplar Meadows
- 12 Revised list of planning conditions (Council)
- 13 Conditions Addendum 1 and Addendum 2 (Council)
- 14 Revised proposed conditions and temporary permission conditions (Appellants)
- 15 High Court Injunction 7 February 2022
- 16 Closing Statement (with supporting judgements) on behalf of the Secretary of State for Defence
- 17 Closing submissions of the Council
- 18 Closing Note on behalf of the Appellants