



Appeal Decisions

Inquiry held on 4 July 2023

Site visit made on 11 July 2023

by Dian Lewis BA(Hons) MCD MA LLM MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 26th September 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/R2520/W/22/3300490

Plot 2 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 Nicole Price¹ against the decision of North Kesteven District Council.
- The application Ref 22/0083/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/22/3300497

Plot 3 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 Alan Knight against the decision of North Kesteven District Council.
- The application Ref 22/0084/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/22/3300505

Plot 4 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 Alan Knight against the decision of North Kesteven District Council.
- The application Ref 22/0085/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.

¹ This is the name on the appeal form. However, I will subsequently refer to the appellant as Nicola Price, which is the name given in the planning application, the decision notice and the personal statements submitted for the appeals.

Summary of Decision: The appeal is dismissed.

Appeal Ref: APP/R2520/W/22/3300520

Plot 6 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 Beryl Price against the decision of North Kesteven District Council.
- The application Ref 22/0083/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. There are a total of seventeen appeals regarding development of land to the north of Beckingham village and the A17 Sleaford Road². A hearing into all these 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.
2. The inquiry opened on 4 July 2023 and closed on 14 July, sitting for 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 party³. Beckingham Parish Council also gave evidence. Certain topics were the subject of round table sessions and the remaining matters were 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. The appellant for Plot 2 occupies Plot 3 and the occupier of Plot 2 is the appellant for Plot 6. The occupier of Plot 4 is a close relative of them. The appellant for Plots 3 and 4 took no part in the inquiry, no personal statement was submitted and no-one was able to provide any information of their circumstances. Because of the close family ties of the occupants of these four plots and the close proximity of the plots within the wider site I will consider the planning merits of each proposal and determine each appeal in this single

² The linked appeals are listed in the table at Appendix 1 at the end of the Decisions.

³ The Town and Country Planning (Determination by Inspectors) (Inquiries Procedure) (England) Rules 2000 SI 2000:1625

decision document. Much of the evidence applies to all 17 appeals and therefore a lot of the reasoning here is the same as in the Decisions on the other linked 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 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. 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' in the description of the proposed development. At the inquiry the appellants agreed amended wording for the description - "A material change of use of the land to residential to accommodate 1 static caravan, 1 touring caravan (parking), a brick and tile built dayroom, parking for two vehicles and associated service road."
7. The appellants confirmed at the inquiry the application plans are those referred to in the Council's decision notice⁵. For each plot the amended site layout plan outlines in red the pitch being applied for and the length of associated service road, all consistent with the description of development and the stated address of the site. Alterations to the main access onto the A17 are included in the proposals, as stated on the planning application forms, but no details were provided. In each case 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.
8. The proposed layout of the wider area 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. The additional slightly larger Plots 16 and 17 are towards the apex of the triangle. A grassed area annotated to the north, grassed areas along the River Witham and small areas immediately to the east of Plots 12 and 15 are not within the red line of any application/appeal site.
9. Plots 2, 3, 4 and 6 are in the row of seven pitches located immediately north of the A17. In each case the site layout plan shows a narrow strip of land and hedgerow between the southern boundary of the proposed pitches and the A17 highway. This is inconsistent with the depth of woodland planting and grassland visible on an aerial photograph and as identified by the habitat plan in the ecology report⁶. The Land Registry plans on an Ordnance Survey base⁷ confirm the extent of the land ownership of Lincolnshire County Council, in all probability coinciding with the extent of highway land. The Land Registry plans indicate a greater depth between the A17 and the land ownership boundary⁸. The site ownership certificates submitted with the applications and the appeals,

⁴ This term refers to all the appellants for the 17 sites.

⁵ MW DP-02 Plot 2 proposed elevations and floor plans received 14 January 2022; MW DP-01 Plot 2 proposed site plan received 3 March 2022. The same format was used for Plots 3, 4 and 6.

⁶ Core Document 55 and Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Report paragraph 4.9 and Figure 3

⁷ Core Documents 53a, 53b and 53c

⁸ Core Document 53b and Core Document 53c

plus the description of the former use of the land in the development details, suggest the proposals are not intended to encroach onto highway land. These observations suggest that the site layout plan for each appeal may not accurately reflect the appellant's development intentions and the land available for the proposed pitch. However, I must determine the appeal on the submitted plans. This has implications for the layout on each pitch, the retention of existing landscape features and the ability to impose planning conditions.

10. Works to facilitate a material change of use of the lands, including the laying of hardcore, began on 21 December 2021. At that time touring caravans were also brought onto the Land. As a result of an injunction granted by the High Court⁹, currently no more than 14 tourer caravans should be present on the Land at any one time. The laying of additional hardcore/hardstanding was allowed to provide a base for the caravans, the provision of dayrooms and connections to basic utility services.
11. 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.
12. The appeal site visit confirmed that the triangle of land is divided into a number of pitches accessed by hardsurfaced tracks, similar to but not the same as the layout indicated on the submitted site plan. Not all the pitches were occupied. On Plot 2 a touring caravan was sited on the front part of the plot, with vegetation nearer the A17. On Plot 3 was a touring caravan and two dayrooms, also in front of an area of vegetation along the A17 boundary. A touring caravan was sited on Plot 4, whilst on Plot 6 was a shed but no caravans. All plots were hard surfaced and defined by fencing.
13. In October 2022 the appellants 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 high earth bund 'between the site and the A17 road'¹⁰. 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.
14. The appellants' evidence on landscape and visual effects considered a site of approximately 1.9 ha. The proposed site layout and landscape strategy applies this triangular shaped area. At the Inquiry the appellants confirmed that the

⁹ Inquiry Document 15

¹⁰ The location of the bund and fence is shown on a plan within Appendix C to the report.

landscape strategy is illustrative only. The Council showed that the row of frontage plots 1 to 7 on the landscape strategy plan is set back a greater distance from the A17 than shown on the submitted layout plan¹¹. This assessment was not challenged.

15. A Highways Technical Note¹² 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.
16. In conclusion, little information was submitted with the planning applications or when the appeals were made. The later supporting technical evidence is directed towards the development of the wider area of land as a single site by 'the appellant group' to provide 17 pitches and associated dayrooms, services and infrastructure. However, that is not the proposal for determination. Seventeen separate planning applications were made, resulting in seventeen appeals, requiring 17 decisions. No explanation was forthcoming as to why this approach was followed. I will determine each appeal on its individual planning merits, having regard to potential cumulative effects. This approach was not challenged by the main parties. The proposal and site area in these four appeals are those shown on the submitted plans considered by the Council when refusing permission, not the development on the ground now. The appellants/occupiers are hoping for a permanent non-personal permission but acknowledge the options of a personal permission or a temporary permission.

Planning Policy

17. 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 years¹³. 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.
18. The National Planning Policy Framework issued in July 2021 was updated and replaced on 5 September 2023 by a revised Framework. The only substantive 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.
19. The proposed caravan sites are 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.
20. The Framework requires consideration of whether otherwise unacceptable development could be made acceptable through 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).

¹¹ Inquiry Document 4

¹² Appendix 1 WSP Appendices

¹³ Central Lincolnshire refers to the combined area covered by the City of Lincoln, North Kesteven and West Lindsey

Main Issue

21. 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 traveller 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 introducing a residential use on the operations at the DTE,
- potential cumulative effects,
- whether any identified harm may be suitably mitigated through compliance with planning conditions.

22. 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 and the current occupier.
- Other personal circumstances.

23. With reference to reason for refusal No 5, the Council now accepts the proposals, 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.

24. Integral to my decision-making will be exercising duties under the Human Rights Act 1998. Article 8, a Convention Right¹⁴, affords a person the right to 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.

25. 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). There is no doubt that the PSED is engaged. The decisions must be proportionate to achieving the legitimate planning aims.

¹⁴ Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights, which was enshrined into UK law by the Human Rights Act 1998.

Reasons

Highway Safety

26. 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.
27. 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 industries¹⁵. 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 so the speed of traffic is high¹⁶. 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.
28. Before development took place there was an established gated access into the field, taken directly from the A17 on its northern side. The evidence available¹⁷ indicates this access was distinct from the access serving the water recycling centre. The field access 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 to and from the A17, even to one residential plot. The highway authority requested details of visibility splays and 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.
29. The additional details submitted by the appellants 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 visibility is good for users of the access and for the drivers on the A17, helped by the curvature of the carriageway.
30. The highway authority has stated that improvements to the site access should be in accordance with Lincolnshire County Council's section 184 specification¹⁸ and indicated requirements for the geometry of the access geometry 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 matter 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 site. 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 site entrance.

¹⁵ CLLP paragraph 8.2.3

¹⁶ 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.

¹⁷ Core Document 9

¹⁸ Core Document 1

31. 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.
32. 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 likely from the development of a single plot, 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.
33. 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 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.

Conclusions

34. 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 ownership of the appellants and include highway land. To date there is no indication works would encroach onto the adjacent access serving the water recycling centre.
35. The appellant group's 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 because this is a matter for submission of part of the details. There are not the grounds to conclude there are no prospects at all of

the action being performed within the time limits imposed. The test for reasonableness is met.

36. Subject to compliance with a planning condition, the proposed caravan 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

37. Criterion (f) in Part Three of Policy S83 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.
38. GP primary health care facilities are found in Balderton, Newark (8.5km away) and in Caythorpe (17.8 km) and Ancaster (14.1km), all outside the CLLP area. The Parish Council noted the nearest hospital is in Lincoln.
39. A primary school and a pre-school are located in Brant Boughton, 5.4km 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.
40. 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. There is 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.
41. A 'reasonable travelling distance' is not explained in the supporting text to the policy. However, the context for the CLLP is helpful¹⁹. 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.
42. 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 A17 is the only highway accessible directly from the site. 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 junction²⁰. 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.
43. Therefore it is not possible to walk safely from the site(s) to the nearest bus stop in Beckingham, from where there is a limited service to Newark and

¹⁹ CLLP paragraphs 1.2.4 to 1.2.6

²⁰ 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

Lincoln. The Call Connect service requires pre-booking and no confirmation was provided that 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 services relies on the availability and use of a private motor vehicle. Residents may well get lifts from family members or friends and some residents explained that because of their health they are unable to walk beyond the site. Nevertheless, the dependency on a vehicle to go anywhere could result in isolation and would hinder promotion of social interaction and encouragement of informal recreation.

44. 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 located in rural areas, which in turn indicates acceptance of reduced opportunities for sustainable travel.
45. 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 balance²¹. Consequently, whilst informative to a degree, they do not justify or direct a conclusion in this appeal one way or the other.

Conclusions

46. The site is 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 by walking, cycling or public transport with the existing highway infrastructure. The sites are not in full accord with Part Three criterion (f) of Policy S83.
47. The broader view on accessibility in PPTS provides some support for the proposed traveller caravan sites. Nevertheless, the inability to walk safely 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.
48. 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.

²¹ 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.

Landscape character, visual impact and design

49. 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, drawing attention to adequate landscaping and play areas and appropriate boundary treatment.

Context

50. 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.
51. 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.
52. 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 defines the northern edge of the settlement.
53. 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 A17²² 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 but this vantage point would be limited to military personnel. For most people awareness of the development would be when travelling along the A17.
54. Before any development took place the appeal sites were part of 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 hedgerow and woodland on the eastern and southern boundaries were strong landscape features, together with the corridor of the River Witham to the west.

²² Core Document 40

Proposals

55. The submitted proposals for each plot are similar, indicating boundary treatments and surface finishes to the service road, the hardstanding within the pitch and the main site access 15m back from the highway. Within the pitches the caravans and dayroom are shown positioned near the southern boundary. The appellants consider the layout details and landscaping can be resolved through planning conditions.

Assessment

56. Landscape character. When compared against the 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 with its open greenfield surroundings. In respect of Plots 2 and 3 the long 8m wide service road and widened, engineered access onto the A17 to serve an isolated site would be inappropriate and out of keeping with the greenfield setting and rural character. Plot 4 and more especially Plot 6 would be closer to the proposed access onto the A17 but even so an unwelcome element of urbanisation again would be introduced. The retention of the woodland belt north of the A17 as a characteristic landscape feature would strengthen enclosure, help to assimilate the development into the local landscape and reflect wider landscape characteristics. This potentially positive element is not demonstrated in the proposed siting of the pitches.
57. Visual impact. The heavy vegetation along the frontage provides good natural screening, remembering its effectiveness would have seasonal variation. Its retention as part of the proposals has not been demonstrated. The improved main access onto the A17 would necessitate the loss of some vegetation and draw attention to the presence of the development(s). The additional residential features near the entrance would further change the perception of the developments and emphasise the encroachment of residential developments into the countryside. The visual impact of acoustic mitigation could be visually intrusive whether to the residents or the wider public. Road users are less sensitive receptors and views would be fleeting. 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.
58. Design. The submitted layout plans for the sites do not convey well-planned, soft landscaped pitches incorporating space for children's play. Little thought appears to have given to the siting of the residential accommodation whether in relation to the A17 boundary or the separation distances between structures. Arrangements for drainage or acoustic mitigation in the form of a bund and fencing, which could also have a strong influence of the internal layout, have not been addressed. The containment and boundary treatment of the service road serving each single pitch is unspecified.
59. A specific constraint affecting Plot 6 is that the mains sewer to the WRC crosses the south east corner of the plot. An easement of 3m from the central line of the sewer is required but has not been reflected in the proposed pitch layout. Anglian Water's preference is for the asset to be accommodated within either adoptable highways or public open space. There is no confirmation that agreement has been reached with Anglian Water over accommodating the mains sewer by a build-over agreement or other measures.

60. Cumulative effect. There are proposals to develop 17 pitches within the former field, as shown on the site layout plan. The appellant group accept that development of the wider site would have an adverse localised effect upon the landscape character. Attention is drawn to the good level of screening so that views into the site would be fleeting by drivers moving at speed. The objective of the proposed landscaping is to soften the layout and contain adverse effects.
61. The cumulative effect would be a very regular, quite dense linear layout pattern, with a dominance of hard surfaced areas. The land use change to residential would unacceptably increase the urbanising effect. A caravan site with a total of 17 pitches would not reflect the character or settlement pattern of the village or the character area. The openness of the agricultural landscape to the north of the village would be eroded. The very close proximity of the site to the River Witham corridor would detract from its peaceful, natural character.
62. The level of visual change would be affected by the considerations identified above with the single pitches, particularly the retention of boundary features and the siting of the proposed acoustic bund and fencing. Most views would be fleeting but the probability is of a moderate adverse change.
63. The proposals 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 character 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. No attention has been given to the siting, implications and visual effects of the proposed acoustic bund and fencing but the structure could be very intrusive. 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. Moreover, the strategy plan is inconsistent with the submitted site layout plan, particularly in relation to plots 1-7 and the southern boundary of the sites.
64. Planning conditions. The number and type of caravan on each of the proposed pitches could be reasonably limited to the single static and touring caravan with a view to ensuring adequate amenity, parking and circulation space on the pitch and to avoid over-development in future. Details of a site layout, hard and soft landscaping, boundary treatments and external lighting could also be required. On these sites the achievement of a good scheme is constrained by the position and siting of the plot. The matter is also closely related to requirements on biodiversity mitigation and enhancement. As it stands the proposals are not clear over what is possible to deliver, how constraints would be addressed and hence whether policy requirements can be met.
65. Conclusions. In each case the proposal fails to demonstrate good design or that the development would be satisfactorily assimilated into the surrounding area and make a positive contribution to local character. This leads to conflict with Policy S53, national policy in PPTS and the Framework and therefore with Policy S83 Part Three criterion (a). Compliance with Policy S66 (Trees Woodland and Hedgerows) has not been demonstrated. The harm to landscape character and visual amenity from the development of a single pitch would be localised but the level of harm would be very dependent on whether the boundary woodland

belt would be retained. The larger scale associated with development of a number of plots would result in a greater level of harm and emphasise the failings of the design approach.

Designated heritage assets²³

66. 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 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.
67. The Church of All Saints in Beckingham is a grade 1 listed building. The history of the church dates to the 12th century and it was probably 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 appeal sites and related lands are within the setting of the listed building.
68. In conclusion, no conflict arises with Policy S57 or national policy to conserve the historic environment. The effect on designated heritage assets is neutral in the planning balance.

Biodiversity

69. 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.

²³ 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.

70. The appeal sites together with the wider site are within an opportunity area for management of the green and blue infrastructure network identified under Policy 59²⁴. 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 considers the land provides a habitat linkage between the two Local Wildlife Sites.
71. The River Witham Auborn 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.
72. The ecological survey identified a priority hedgerow along part of the eastern boundary to the Land, 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 Land 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. 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.
73. With reference to the habitat plan from the ecological survey²⁵ the development of the proposed pitches appears to conflict with existing important habitat and lead to the loss of broadleaved woodland, part of the southern woodland belt. Plots 2, 3 and 4 may also encroach onto the identified area of tall ruderal vegetation. The probability is a loss of grassland would result from the formation of the internal access road. The use of an existing field access at the eastern end of land would help minimise loss of vegetation on this part of the frontage. However, looked at overall, on this initial assessment the creation of the pitches in the position and of the size shown on plan would conflict with the incorporation of natural features and would not minimise the impact on biodiversity.
74. 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. The ecological 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.

²⁴ Inquiry Document 8

²⁵ Ecological Appraisal Report Figure 3

75. This approach set out in the ecological report is consistent with that outlined in the Council's guidance²⁶. However, the 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. Had that been done a different proposal may have been developed. To retain the broadleaved woodland probably would reduce the functional site area of each pitch, although possibly less so with Plot 6. To accommodate the proposed caravans, dayroom and parking and other site requirements on a reduced area may result in a cramped layout.
76. The net gain calculation and required measures probably would differ for each individual site as opposed to a landscape ecological management plan covering up to 17 proposed pitches. Recommended biodiversity enhancement options may be unduly constrained by the size and siting of the four plots in relation to the woodland belt. On the current evidence the siting of the Plots would not assist in achieving policy requirements.

Conclusions

77. Insufficient attention has been given to biodiversity in the proposals for each single plot. On the available evidence the proposed developments are not compatible with minimising the effects on biodiversity and should be avoided. The proposals fail to comply with Policies S59, S60 and S61 and criterion (a) of Policy S83 Part Three.

Drainage

78. Policy S83 Part Three (e) requires the proposals should be adequately serviced, or capable of being adequately serviced, preferably by mains connections. Furthermore, the proposals 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.
79. A water recycling centre/sewage treatment works (WRC) is adjacent to the Land. A mains sewer crosses Plots 6 and 7. Connection to the public sewer would enable the most preferable solution in policy terms to be achieved. However, in March 2022 Anglian Water advised that Beckingham WRC is small and will struggle with any additional flow²⁷. Significant investment would be required and currently funding is not available. Given this position, connection to the public sewer 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

²⁶ Delivering Biodiversity Net Gain in Central Lincolnshire April 2023, referred to in the Proof of Evidence of Aecom Limited

²⁷ Core Document 32

issuing 17 permits suggested the use of one septic tank to serve the 17 pitches.

80. 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.
81. 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 pitch 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 17 plots is not a satisfactory solution and a coordinated approach should be adopted.

Conclusion

82. The evidence indicates that for each proposal the provision of a cesspit on the pitch is an available option for disposal of foul drainage. Whilst not a preferred solution, it is not contrary to Policy S83 Part Three (e) or Policy S21. The details of the proposed means of foul drainage would have to be approved as part of a site development scheme in order to relate the siting of the infrastructure to the siting of the static caravan and dayroom.

Noise

83. Policy S83 Part Three (d) requires the proposals 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.
84. 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.
85. 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.

86. 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 appellants²⁸.
87. 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

88. 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.
89. The Nova report places Plots 2, 3, 4 and 6 (together with Plots 1 and 7) within the red acoustic zone, where the highest levels of noise were surveyed and were predicted to occur within a mobile home. This is unsurprising given the proximity of the proposed pitches to the A17, a key traffic route within Central Lincolnshire.
90. In the red zone the day time measurement (LAeqt (dB)) was 66.0 and the night measurement 61.0. On night 1 maximum sound levels (LAFMax, 15min)) exceeded 75.0 four times and on night 2 two times²⁹. The internal noise levels for a mobile home³⁰ were predicted to exceed the BS8233:2014 criteria by +3 dB during both the day and night time periods. As to the external noise level, the Nova report predicted a garden noise level of 62.0, above the BS8233 criteria by +7.0 dB.
91. 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 specified³¹ internal noise levels are predicted to be within the BS8233:2014 criteria and external noise levels are predicted to be approximately 1.0 dB above the criteria for the red zone.
92. 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

²⁸ Appendices to 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.

²⁹ Nova report page 6

³⁰ The Nova report sets out the assumptions underlying the calculation on pages 13 and 14

³¹ The fencing must have a minimum surface mass of 10 kg/m² and should contain no holes or gaps

windows and the provision of a bund/fence to the stated specification. 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 site specific facts³². A touring caravan would not be of a similar standard, suggesting that this type of caravan should not be used for sleeping accommodation when parked on site. No assessment has been carried out for the proposed dayroom or allowing for windows to be open to assist ventilation and cooling. The Council considers the occupants of a static caravan could experience dB levels in excess of the BS8233 criteria even with the bund as mitigation.

93. The proposal for the fencing and bund was in relation to providing protection to the wider site and no proposals were put forward specific to individual plots. Furthermore, the location of the bund identified in the Nova report appears to be on land owned by the highway authority and not on land owned either by the appellants or the people certified as landowners on the appeal forms. There was no information on the sensitivity of the siting of the bund/fence to achieve the predicted attenuation. The evidence fails to demonstrate a satisfactory standard of amenity for the occupiers of the proposed caravan sites in the event the recommended mitigation to address road traffic noise is not achieved.

Beckingham DTE

94. Policy 84 is specific to Military 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.
95. 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.
96. All parties agreed that the CIEH Clay Target Shooting Guidance on the Control of Noise (the CIEH guidance)³³ 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

³² WSP Appendices 2 to 5

³³ Core Document 59 Clay Target Shooting: Guidance on the Control of Noise, Chartered Institute of Environmental Health, published January 2003

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.

97. 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.
98. 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.
99. The calculated SNL presented by the appellants is significantly different to the MOD figure. 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 involved³⁴. The expert evidence from the MOD 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.
100. 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."³⁵
101. 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

³⁴ 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 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."

³⁵ CIEH Clay Target Shooting: Guidance paragraph 6.1

detailed evidence was presented on its use from which to draw any conclusions.

102. 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 communities³⁶. There is no doubt however that the separation distances between the appeal sites and the firing ranges are well below the recommended minimum of 1km³⁷.
103. 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 future. No mitigation was proposed in the Nova report in relation to shooting noise and the activities on the MOD ranges and dry training area. Internal and external areas of the caravan sites would be affected to varying degrees.
104. 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 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. The predicted effects of the proposed mitigation relate only to road traffic noise.

Effect on neighbouring military use

105. 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.
106. 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 when an 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

³⁶ 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."

³⁷ CIEH Clay Target Shooting: Guidance paragraph 4.2

happened in the past. The likelihood of this occurring is less with a single plot than with a number of pitches and therefore this factor has more weight when considering the proposed developments on a cumulative basis.

Other considerations

107. A person's tolerance of noise, and whether disturbance is likely, are affected by a range of factors, including the nature of the noise, the time, duration and frequency and the character of the area. The residents of Plots 2 and 3 in their evidence said they were not bothered at night by noise and they were relieved to be in a safe place. 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

108. A residential caravan site is a noise sensitive use. The data demonstrates that the acoustic environment of Plots 2, 3, 4 and 6 and the land to the north is adversely affected by two sources of noise, each source having quite different characteristics. With a view to ensuring a good quality of life and promotion of good health the proposed residential use is not compatible with a location adjacent to the A17 and near the DTE and should be avoided.
109. Mitigation could reduce the adverse effects of the road traffic noise to an acceptable level within a static caravan and outside in the external areas. However, there are no firm proposals in relation to the provision and future maintenance/ retention of a bund and fencing, an essential component of the proposed mitigation. No mitigation is proposed in relation to shooting noise and it is unclear how it would affect the noise level within the caravans. It may be that shooting noise would be less intrusive on these plots given their location furthest away from the noise source but there is no evidence to support such a conclusion.
110. The proposals, on the submitted information, have not demonstrated an acceptable standard of amenity for the sites' occupants and so fail to comply with criterion (d) of Part Three of Policy S83, Policy S53 (7)(b) and Policy S54. The proposals 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 the single plots is very low and would be more likely from cumulative development. Even so, Policy S84 is not supportive of the changes of use.

Intentional Unauthorised Development

111. 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 that may be caused 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.

112. 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.
113. 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.
114. The appellants are named in the Court Order defendants. There is no evidence about the involvement of the appellant for Plots 3 and 4 in establishing the site. The current residents are unlikely to have had an active involvement due to ill health but have taken up the opportunity presented by the unauthorised development to move onto the land off the roadside to a safe place, close to family. The accommodation and domestic paraphernalia have been kept to a minimum on these plots whilst the planning process runs its course.
115. Intentional unauthorised development occurred, which involved pre-planning the initial land clearance, preparation and engineering works. No prior engagement took place with the local planning authority to explore planning constraints, suitability of a residential use and requirements. 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. Use of a sub-standard access and basic infrastructure has been ongoing and the unregulated land use continues. Environmental harm has occurred. In view of the circumstances of the existing occupiers this consideration has a small amount of weight in each appeal.

Other matters

Scale

116. 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 GTAA³⁸ for small family sites.

³⁸ Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment Final Report February 2020

117. 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). Nevertheless, some traveller sites in Central Lincolnshire have a similar number of pitches and Policy S83 encourages expansion of existing sites to accommodate multi-generational households. These considerations indicate that scale should be assessed along with the effects of a development and whether it would fit harmoniously with its surroundings.

Energy efficiency

118. 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.
119. 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

120. The proposals do not conflict with other local or national policies relating to flood risk, contamination, or agricultural land quality. The site plans shows sufficient space for vehicle manoeuvring and parking within the pitches, 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 existing residents through overlooking, overshadowing, loss of light or increase in artificial light or glare.

Location of Traveller sites

121. The appellant considers 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 past experience 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 CLLP process

122. Meeting the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople in Central Lincolnshire is addressed through Policy S83³⁹. 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).

³⁹ Policy S83 also covers the needs of Travelling Showpeople but my focus is on Gypsies and Travellers

123. 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* judgement⁴⁰. 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.
124. 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.
125. The CLLP was adopted in April 2023, having undergone the required consultation and examination. 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 sound⁴¹. An Inspector's role is not confined to considering representations. 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".⁴² 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 needs of Gypsies and Travellers will be met over the plan period⁴³.
126. To suggest, as the appellants do, that regard was only given to the *Lisa Smith* judgement and scrutiny was absent, misrepresents the examination process. 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

127. 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.

⁴⁰ *Smith v Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities & Others* [2022] EWCA Civ 1391

⁴¹ The four tests of soundness are set out in paragraph 35 of the Framework.

⁴² 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.

⁴³ Core Document 7 paragraphs 238 and 239

128. 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 elsewhere⁴⁴. 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.
129. 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 area⁴⁵. 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.
130. The GTAA presents data on unauthorised encampments from two sources over the whole study area. The MHCLG data, considered of limited accuracy by the GTAA, showed a very slight upward trend in the number of caravans (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.
131. 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 the lack of transit provision is one of the main reasons unauthorised encampments take places. It follows that the GTAA addresses the unauthorised encampments under the heading transit provision and not as part of the need for additional permanent pitches. The GTAA recommended the three Central Lincolnshire authorities adopt a negotiated stopping policy. There is no

⁴⁴ See Inquiry Document 10

⁴⁵ GTAA paragraph 5.51

evidence in the appellants' reasoning that causes me to question the GTAA analysis.

132. 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 that post-dated its completion, such as the caravan count figures for July 2022, also referred to by the appellants.
133. Turning to the supply side of the equation, the current residential supply includes 18 available 'unused residential pitches', of which 4 are 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.
134. 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, although they may not fall within the 'deliverable' category.
135. 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 is not that they should be available to the appellants now.
136. 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 permissions⁴⁶. This information was available to the CLLP examination process⁴⁷.
137. 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

⁴⁶ Core Document 4 Central Lincolnshire: meeting the Accommodation Needs of gypsies and Travellers April 2021

⁴⁷ Appendix 13 to the Hearing statement; Core Document 6 Central Lincolnshire Examination Note on Gypsy and Traveller Provision 12 December 2022

evidence⁴⁸ 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

138. 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 so 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.
139. The current need of the appellants and the appellant group for a permanent site was not identified in 2020 within Central Lincolnshire and hence their needs were not included in the locally set target. In accordance with the CLLP strategy meeting their need within the District would be through identification of a windfall site that satisfies the Policy S83 criteria.
140. In addition to the generally recognised national need for traveller sites 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 appellants' planning witness.

Personal need, alternative sites and family circumstances

141. The appellant for Plots 3 and 4 has provided no personal statement. Most residents in their oral evidence did not know of him, although two residents said he lived on the site until the Injunction Order. They had no knowledge where the appellant went. Therefore I am unable to take account of any need the appellant may have for a pitch or personal circumstances. The probability is that he has no interest in the pitch now.
142. Beryl Price (the owner⁴⁹ and current occupier of Plot 2 and appellant for Plot 6) moved to her pitch in March 2023. She referred to a history of travelling in Lincolnshire for years, having a pitch in Swaffham (Norfolk) a few years ago and staying with her daughter in Kent immediately before moving to Beckingham. She explained she is in poor health and no longer travels. She relies on family members on the site to help with everyday needs, provide care and to drive her to hospital appointments.

⁴⁸ Proof of N Feltham at paragraph 4.15

⁴⁹ Based on her oral evidence

143. Nicola Price (appellant for Plot 2 and owner/occupier of Plot 3) is the daughter of Beryl Price, sister of William Price (occupier of Plot 4) and sister in law of Michelle Price (Plot 1). Her nephew occupies Plot 7. Nicola Price stated her daughter and family (including three children) also use the pitch as a base. Previously she was on Tolney Lane, on the verge by the river bank. This is the first pitch she has had and for health reasons she now relies on her family being close by.
144. William Price (occupier of Plot 4) moved to the site from the roadside to be close to his family and to improve access to health services. He is also identified as the occupier of Plot 6⁵⁰ but there is nothing to explain why he would be the occupier of two pitches.
145. They relied on these plots to meet their accommodation needs and did not know how they would manage if they had to return to roadside living. Beryl Price did not wish to live on a Council pitch and had made no enquiries to do so. Nicola Price had put her name down for several sites in the past but had never heard anything.
146. The Council's general position is there are pitches available in the District and that there is considerable doubt about the appellants' claim they inevitably would be made homeless if the appeal are 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 on high level details obtained through a welfare assessment carried out by officers. More specifically, the Council disputed that Nicola Price's daughter and her three children have occupied Plot 3⁵¹.
147. The evidence at the inquiry suggested that the occupiers of Plots 1, 2 and 3 are very close and rely heavily on one another for care and support. Beryl Price and Nicola Price need a permanent pitch next to their family for their health and welfare and roadside living is no longer an option. There is not the same convincing evidence for William Price, although he was said to be in the core family group. There was very little evidence about Nicola Price's daughter and her family and the indication was that they continue to travel extensively.
148. No constructive dialogue appears to have taken place between the parties or the appellants' agent or representative on options that may be available or may come forward. As it stands no suitable, affordable, available and acceptable alternative site has been identified for the two appellants or Mr W Price. Even though they have family elsewhere they did not suggest that would offer a solution. The appellants do not have to prove no other sites are available or that their particular needs could not be met from another site. Nevertheless, Article 8 does not give a right to be provided with a home. It comes across from the evidence of both parties that all efforts have been focussed on the appeals, with the appellants hopeful of securing a permission.
149. In the event the appeals are unsuccessful there is the prospect of losing their homes in a very short space of time because of the terms of the injunction. The interference with home and family life, with no alternative to go to, would be very serious and would have consequences of such gravity as to

⁵⁰ Inquiry Document 13

⁵¹ Inquiry Document 13, where the Council state the family have not been seen on site in 20 visits.

engage the operation of Article 8. PSED considerations also have strong significance given the circumstances.

150. All matters considered, the need for a site and the family circumstances have substantial weight in respect of Beryl Price and Nicola Price and significant weight in respect of William Price.

Mitigation and planning conditions

Statutory provisions and policy

151. The general power to impose planning conditions when granting planning permission is in section 70(1) of the 1990 Act. The 1990 Act section 72(1) 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.
152. 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.
153. 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

154. 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.
155. 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 maintenance of the required highway visibility splay free of obstruction. Such conditions would be imposed to protect visual amenity and general amenity and in the interests of highway safety. Restricting occupation to Gypsies and Travellers would ensure the pitch contributes to the stock and supply of sites for this group.
156. As regards outstanding or to be amended proposals, the appellants rely on a planning condition as the mechanism for the provision and approval of a site development scheme. The scheme 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 compensation⁵². The Council's site development scheme condition covered the same matters but also included an energy statement, which I understand is acceptable to the appellants.

157. Such matters are capable of being dealt with by condition, as illustrated in various appeal decisions submitted by the appellant. However, the 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 changes of use, in each case 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. Uncertainty on whether a condition can be discharged, raised in the closing submissions on behalf of the appellant group, is a different matter.
158. 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 one another 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.
159. As noted earlier each application site is 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 pitch. 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 acoustic mitigation, including a bund with fencing, could only reasonably be required to relate to noise mitigation for a specific plot. The appellant has not satisfactorily explained how an acoustic barrier, as indicated in the Nova report, would be delivered and maintained in a way that could be enforced if necessary. No explanation has been given on the form of surface water drainage, which on the appellants' wording should be based on sustainable drainage principles and include management and maintenance arrangements. There is no indication how a scheme based on the required principles would be accommodated within each site and I am not satisfied it would be reasonable and enforceable.
160. The main parties accepted development has begun and a permission would be granted retrospectively. 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

⁵² The wording of the proposed condition was the same was all appeals/Plots.

required details (the appellants are 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. This position goes back to the poor quality of the application(s) and the subsequent failure to adequately address the reasons for refusal.

Sunset Park Homes example

161. The appellant considered the Sunset Park Homes case⁵³ as the most comparable example to the appeal proposals and was referred to by their planning witness on numerous occasions in oral evidence. The case also was used to illustrate the approach to the application of conditions in a situation where there are multiple application/appeal pitches forming a wider cohort of development.
162. The Inspector explained the 21 appeals each related to a different Plot on the wider site comprising all 21 Plots. The planning history 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.
163. 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.
164. 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, reliance could be placed on the submitted landscape strategy. The planning balance was firmly based on compliance with 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.

⁵³ WSP Appendix 19

Planning balance and conclusions

165. **Plot 2.** Drawing together my conclusions, the CLLP, adopted in April 2023, 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. When considered on its merits the proposal is not supported by Policy S83 Part Three and Policy S47, and there is conflict with Policies S53 and S54, Policies S59, S60, S61, S66 and Policy S7. Policy S84 on military establishments does not support the development. Considerations in relation to Policy S21 re drainage and Policy S57 on conserving the historic environment are neutral.
166. The proposal for Plot 2 has not demonstrated that the traveller site would be a well planned, sustainable form of development in an appropriate location or that planning conditions would adequately mitigate the identified harms. The proposed material change of use is contrary to the development plan when read as a whole. Intentional unauthorised development provides a small amount of additional weight against the proposal.
167. In favour of the proposal, national need and sub-regional need for additional pitches have moderate weight. The proposal would facilitate the Gypsy way of life and promote equality of opportunity. Within the context of national policy, the site meets social and economic objectives by contributing to the supply of Gypsy and Traveller sites in Central Lincolnshire, thereby promoting health, social and cultural well-being. The proposal performs much less well in meeting environmental and design objectives and in providing a good standard of amenity for the occupiers. Policy conflict occurs when the proposal is assessed against the locally specific criteria. The use of planning conditions could provide mitigation but the evidence fails to demonstrate the prospect of a good standard of development being delivered and that the identified harm to the local environment would be successfully addressed.
168. More specifically the proposal responds to the occupier's need for a site, providing a secure and safe place to live next to family. The appellant has a similar accommodation need, although she currently occupies Plot 3.
169. The appeal site is not in an appropriate location for a residential use. Even taking full account of the personal circumstances, my initial conclusion is that the development is contrary to the development plan, fails to comply with the Framework and PPTS and is unacceptable.
170. **Plot 3.** The same reasoning and conclusion apply as with Plot 2, recognising the appellant appears to have no interest in the site and that the personal circumstances relate to the occupier and her family.
171. **Plot 4.** The same reasoning and conclusion apply as with Plot 2, recognising the personal circumstances relate to the occupier William Price and that on the balance of probability the appellant no longer has an interest in the site.
172. **Plot 6.** Similar reasoning and conclusion apply as with Plot 2, although the position towards the eastern side of the wider site somewhat reduces the harm in respect of local character and biodiversity. The personal circumstances of the appellant are very relevant. There was no justification for a permission personal to William Price.

173. Consideration of each plot's contribution to harmful cumulative effects reinforces these conclusions on the unacceptability of the proposed development(s). To grant a planning permission for an unacceptable site(s) in an inappropriate location would be unlikely to foster good relations between the occupiers and the settled community and would not promote good health and a good quality of life for the occupiers.

Human rights and proportionality

174. The Article 8 rights of the appellant for Plots 3 and 4 are not engaged. My focus is on the rights of the current occupiers of the four plots. As an initial observation, these site residents wish to stay together and there is a high degree of dependency between them, particularly in respect of care and support. Very close ties also exist with the occupiers of Plot 1 and Plot 7. To allow a single plot would be unlikely to work in the circumstances.
175. To recap, Article 8 is a qualified right and in appropriate circumstances an interference may be justified in the public interest. The aim is to strike a fair balance between the rights of the individual and the needs of the wider community.
176. In these appeals the interference would result from exercising a statutory function and be in accordance with the law. The action would be necessary to protect the environment through the regulation of land use but must be no greater than to address the community interest. The high level of seriousness of the interference with the individual's and family's rights stems from the lack of available suitable alternative accommodation, vulnerability (including health and well-being), safety and mutual support. The oral evidence emphasised the importance and strength of family life.
177. The public and community interest centres on the regulation of land use 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. The proposals are not in accordance with the development plan and would not be a sustainable form of development in an appropriate location. Development and occupation commenced without the necessary permission, which the appellants acknowledged.
178. Balancing the considerations and best interests of the families against the identified community interests, I conclude the interference with the rights of residents is necessary and proportionate to safeguard the wider public interest. A grant of permanent planning permission(s), or a personal permission(s) (without a specific time limitation) are not acceptable outcome(s).

Temporary permission

179. In the event permanent permission was not forthcoming I was requested to consider granting a temporary permission for a period of three years, having regard to the lack of alternatives for the occupiers and the consequences of dismissing the appeals outright. The appellants/occupiers could remain on site without being in breach of planning control, allowing sufficient time for securing

an alternative base. It was submitted that remedial works and gains achieved through a restoration scheme would leave the site in a better condition than it was pre-development, including an opportunity to enhance pre-existing diversity.

180. A permission for a time-limited period could only reasonably have the basic conditions on occupation, number and type and caravans and parking. With reference to the list of proposed conditions, foul and surface drainage is the one matter for control through a site development scheme. Consequently, the probability is over that period the current below standard access would continue in use, layout inadequacies would not be resolved, habitat and landscape features would not be protected, no biodiversity gain would be achieved and harm to countryside character would remain. No noise mitigation would be secured. Residents would have access to services and facilities only if they had access to a car. Considerable harm and the associated policy conflicts would continue, although for a time-limited period. In that sense the totality of the harm would be reduced. No restoration scheme has been submitted and no reliance can be placed on achieving environmental gains at the end of the permitted period.
181. Moreover, permission for one or more sites but not for all 17 sites would have implications for the immediate living environment during and after site clearance. I also have to keep in mind that temporary permission for this and other pitches would increase the level of harm over the time limited period (the cumulative effect). Based on my assessment of family circumstances, the residential use of some 8 pitches may be involved.
182. The main consideration supporting temporary permissions centres on the health and wellbeing of the residents. Permission would have to be granted for a minimum of three plots to accommodate their needs, whether Plots 2, 3 and 4 to reflect current occupation or alternatively Plots 3, 4 and 6 where the total environmental harm would be slightly less. I also have had in mind the close family links with Plot 1 and Plot 7. A time limited permission would minimise disruption to home and family life, provide stability and some certainty over their home base over the next few years and greater time to explore alternative options going forward. On-site conditions would be likely to improve in small ways.
183. The very serious and vulnerable position of the families is emphasised by the terms of the Order of the High Court and the Penal Notice whereby if their appeal(s) are unsuccessful the residential use must cease within 28 days, with clearance of the land within 56 days. There is no necessity for the local planning authority to pursue enforcement action under section 172 of the 1990 Act, whereby an enforcement notice would have to allow a reasonable compliance period. However, the Court Order was the outcome of due process and the requirements should an appeal to the Secretary of State fail were set out in February 2022.
184. On balance, the harm to public safety and harm to the local environment is not outweighed by the personal needs for a pitch. A failure to secure planning permission would be likely to severely disrupt private and family life but the proposals and the inappropriate site location are not acceptable. Authorising a material change of use for a 3 year time-limited period is not the way forward, taking account of the basic nature of the proposals. All matters considered my

conclusion is that temporary planning permission for three years should not be granted for the proposed four plots. This is a necessary and proportionate outcome in the public interest.

Conclusions

185. For the reasons given above, the changes of use are not in accordance with the development plan. Other considerations are not of sufficient weight to indicate decisions should not follow the direction of the CLLP. The appeals will be dismissed. This outcome is necessary and proportionate in each appeal and will not violate the human rights of the appellants or the existing and proposed occupiers. Having had due regard to the PSED, the decisions are proportionate to achieving the legitimate planning aims.

DECISIONS

Appeal Ref APP/R2520/W/22/3300490

186. The appeal is dismissed.

Appeal Ref APP/R2520/W/22/3300497

187. The appeal is dismissed.

Appeal Ref APP/R2520/W/22/3300505

188. The appeal is dismissed.

Appeal Ref APP/R2520/W/22/3300520

189. 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 (plus related authorities) on behalf of the Secretary of State for Defence
- 17 Closing submissions of the Council
- 18 Closing Note on behalf of the Appellants