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## Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 16 December 2025

by **Matthew Jones BA(Hons) MA MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 09 March 2026

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**Appeal Ref: APP/Y3940/W/25/3372073**

**Land at Lopcombe Corner, Salisbury, Wiltshire SP5 1BX**

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
  - The appeal is made by Mr A Jones against the decision of Wiltshire Council.
  - The application Ref is PL/2023/02704.
  - The development proposed is Change of use of land to a travellers caravan site.
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### Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the change of use of land to a Travellers caravan site at Land at Lopcombe Corner, Salisbury, SP5 1BX in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref PL/2023/02704, subject to the conditions in the attached schedule.

### Main Issues

2. The main issues are:
  - whether the site would be suitable for the proposed development, with particular reference to national and local policy for the provision of Gypsy and Traveller sites, highway safety and the accessibility of services and facilities; and
  - whether the site would be suitable for the proposed development, with reference to its access to necessary utilities.

### Reasons

*Suitability of the site, highway safety and access to services and facilities*

3. The appeal site comprises part of a field of grass and shrubbery. It fronts and has vehicular access from the A30 to the south. The wider field, which is within the control of the appellant, extends northwards where it provides access to a Public Right of Way (the PRoW). The settlement of Lopcombe Corner is close by to the west, and there are houses and a small number of commercial sites within the immediate vicinity, including a waste company directly opposite the appeal site.
4. Core Policy 47 represents the Wiltshire Core Strategy's (the WCS) (adopted 2015) principal policy expression for the provision of Gypsy and Traveller development. Criterion iii) of Core Policy 47 requires such sites to have safe and convenient vehicular and pedestrian access. The proposal should not result in significant hazard to other road users. Separately, criterion v) requires that sites are in or near to settlements, and within a reasonable distance of a range of services and community facilities, in particular schools and essential healthcare services.

5. The A30 is straight as it passes the site and vehicles travel at around the 50mph speed limit at this point, and evidence suggests above that at times. The proposed access would not be new, but rather a replacement located more centrally along the site frontage with improved sight lines. Its new position would also avoid the reliance over third-party land to ensure visibility in the westward direction. It would be significantly safer than the current arrangement. Moreover, the highway offers excellent forward visibility and so approaching vehicles would have ample time to view vehicles entering and exiting the site and temper their speed if necessary.
6. As for pedestrian safety, in the absence of street lighting and dedicated pedestrian space, the A30 is not a safe environment to walk along. However, I see little reason for future site occupants to do so. There is a bus stop right at the point of the proposed pedestrian access. So much so, it would actually be possible to wait for an eastbound bus service without leaving the site itself. Whilst the carriageway is busy and fast moving, I found it is possible to safely cross the highway by taking due care and attention and waiting for a gap in the traffic. Although somewhat overgrown, I was able to stand on the verge on the opposite side of the carriageway. It would be a suitable, albeit basic, refuge for those waiting for a bus.
7. I understand there is a single service from the bus stops on the A30 in front of the site, the timings of which are very limited, and it largely provides access to local schools. However, the latter means that the site would perform well against the requirement in Paragraph 13 of the Planning Policy for Travelers Sites (the PPTS) (2024) for sites to be provided where children can attend school on a regular basis.
8. The PRoW leads to a bus stop on the A343 to the northwest, which provides more regular services to the extensive facilities within Salisbury. While the bus stop is at a reasonable distance, I found the route to it along the PRoW firm underfoot and easily passable, despite walking it in the Winter and during wet conditions.
9. In instances where site occupants may not feel able to cross the A30 or walk the PRoW, it is notable that Gypsy and Traveller culture is grounded in care for elderly, sick or disabled members in the family. Members of the community tend to rely on private transport in such circumstances in any event, and likely would do so here.
10. It also needs to be emphasised that the overarching aim of the PPTS is to facilitate the traditional, nomadic way of life of Gypsies and Travellers while respecting the interests of the settled community. For reasons such as land prices, competing development, and local opposition, sites tend to be more rural and thus particularly dependent on private travel. The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) makes the point that opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas. In this context, on its own terms, the scheme would offer adequately safe and convenient pedestrian access.
11. Due to the immediate proximity of Lopcombe Corner, the proposal would not be within the open countryside away from existing settlements. The village of Winterslow is also nearby, across several fields to the south of the A30. For a village of its size, it has an impressive collection of facilities. They include a public house, a café, a reasonably sized and stocked shop with an integral post office, a primary school, community hall, doctor's surgery, a mobile library service, an extensive playground and playing field, and places of worship. There is no substantive evidence that the school or surgery are operating significantly over

- capacity. Given the number of community groups/clubs advertised on the village notice board, it is also clearly a vibrant place with an active, friendly population.
12. Whilst access to the village would be dependent on the private vehicle, I drove from the appeal site to the shop within the village in just shy of six minutes. Given this short period of travel, and the village's compelling offer, I find the appeal site to be within a reasonable distance of an adequate range of day-to-day facilities. Rather than causing isolation, the site would provide a suitable settled base from which future occupants' needs would be met, and from where they would be able to fully participate in the local community. Core Policy 47 v) would be met.
  13. Amongst other things, Core Policies 60 and 61 seek decisions to reduce the need to travel by private car and encourage the use of sustainable alternatives. The Council has accepted that there is an immediate unmet need for Gypsy and Traveller sites in Wiltshire. On this basis, it is logical that providing new sites in locations such as this, close to places like Winterslow, will reduce the frequency of long distance travelling by private vehicles associated with unauthorised encampments and a roadside existence. Given such, considered within the ambit of Gypsy and Traveller development, I find the proposal to meet these policies too.
  14. Lopcombe Corne has a nucleated core in the angle of the junction which gives it its name, with more sporadic housing and commercial sites along the highway network. The addition of four pitches would be modest within this context and would not dominate the settlement with respect to its character or in any other way.
  15. This part of the A30 is punctuated by residential and obvious industrial uses, and so the proposal, which would be well screened, would not harm the character or appearance of the area viewed from the public highway. The development would be visible through breaks in the tree line along the PRoW but would be set against a backdrop of built form. The experience along the PRoW is already heavily influenced by the caravan site that abuts its west end.
  16. The scheme that went to appeal at Rowde was a major development for bricks and mortar housing aimed at the settled community. It was therefore materially different to this smaller scale Gypsy and Traveller scheme. It was, understandably, not assessed with reference to the overarching aim of the PPTS. The National Design Guide and the Guidelines for Providing for Journeys on Foot (2000) are guidance documents, and do not specifically mention Gypsy and Traveller development nor the requirement to facilitate their nomadic way of life. Nor does the Manual for Streets. They are therefore of limited assistance to my assessment in this case.
  17. As for the other appeal decisions, the sites at Littleton Drew, Keysoe, Ospringe and Baulking do not appear to benefit from a settlement as individually well equipped with facilities and at a reasonable distance as Winterslow. What these decisions do highlight, is that what constitutes a site near to a settlement and within reasonable distance of a range of services and facilities is likely to be an individual planning judgment. The issue will invariably turn on the relevant policies in force in that time and place and will turn on the facts of the case and on site-specific circumstances.
  18. Accordingly, it is my conclusion that the site would be suitable for the development, with particular reference to national and local policy for the supply of Gypsy and Traveller sites, highway safety, and the accessibility of services and facilities. In these respects, the scheme would accord with the relevant aims within Core Policies 47, 60 and 61 of the CS, the PPTS and the Framework.

### *Access to utilities*

19. Core Policy 47 requires that new sites can be properly serviced and supplied with essential services, such as water, power, sewerage, drainage, and waste disposal.
20. I saw for myself that the site has access to a water supply located within the wider field. The site also has direct access to an electricity supply and so can be serviced with power. Whilst I recognise concerns locally about the reliability/fragility of this network, the evidence is clear that the site *can* be supplied with these services. The subsequent responsibility for the reliability of these services rests not with the appellant but with the relevant statutory provider.
21. Percolation testing shows that any increased surface water runoff arising from the scheme could be managed onsite. In any case, the remainder of the field within the appellant's control is much bigger and slopes away to the north. It would logically provide ample space for drainage or attenuation fields for surface water and/or cleaned water generated by the proposed sewage treatment plant. I am satisfied therefore that these issues can be adequately addressed through conditions.
22. Consequently, I conclude this issue that the site would be suitable for the proposed development with reference to its access to necessary utilities. It would therefore accord with the relevant aims of Core Policy 47 and the PPTS.

### **Appropriate Assessments**

23. During the appeal counterpart legal agreements (the Agreements) were provided by the appellant and the Council. Read together they seek to secure mitigation in relation to the effect of the proposed development on the integrity of the New Forest Special Protection Area and the New Forest Special Area of Conservation (hereafter the New Forest Sites) and the integrity of the Solent and Southampton Water Special Protection Area, the Solent Maritime Special Area of Conservation, the Portsmouth Harbour Special Area of Conservation and the Chichester and Langstone Harbours Special Protection Area and Special Area of Conservation (hereafter the Solent Sites).

### *Recreational effects*

24. The appeal site is within the zone of influence of the New Forest Sites. The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) (the Regulations) require that permission may only be granted having ascertained that the development would not affect the integrity of such sites. As the competent authority I must carry out Appropriate Assessments to consider the implications of the proposal for the New Forest Sites, alone and in-combination with other projects.
25. The New Forest Sites are designated for their woodlands, bogs, fens and heaths which support important species such as the Dartford Warbler, Honey Buzzard, Nightjar, Hen Harrier and the Woodlark, the Great crested newt, Southern damselfly and the Stag beetle.
26. The proximity of the appeal site means that likely significant effects on the integrity of the New Forest sites cannot be ruled out, as a result of increased recreational use. It is therefore accepted by the main parties, and confirmed by Natural England that, when considered alone or cumulatively with other schemes, the proposal would have likely significant effects on the features of interest of these sites in respect to this issue. I agree.

27. To address this, the Council currently adheres to the Revised New Forest Mitigation Strategy (2024). The strategy sets out financial contributions, defined by a formula, to be secured to contribute towards the delivery of Strategic Access Management and Monitoring activities. The appellant intends to make the requisite financial payments, which are secured by the Agreements. I am therefore satisfied, on the basis of the evidence before me, that the Agreements provide a sufficient mechanism to secure and enable the delivery of proportionate and relevant mitigation pursuant to the Council's strategy for development which could affect the New Forest Sites through recreation.

### *Nitrogen*

28. The site is within the hydrological catchment of the River Test, which in turn flows into the Solent, so I must carry out further Appropriate Assessments to consider the implications of the proposal for the Solent Sites.
29. The Solent Sites are designated for their estuarine habitats which support qualifying species of waterbirds, including teal, gull, tern, godwit, plover and goose. Enriched nutrient levels in the Solent are accelerating the growth of certain plants through eutrophication, leading to the loss of its habitat. Water discharge from residential development contributes to this. Given that the proposal would contribute to increased discharge to the catchment of the Solent Sites, likely significant effects on their integrity cannot be ruled out in the first instance.
30. The Agreements require the scheme to offset the nitrogen it would generate with a corresponding reduction at land elsewhere. In practical terms, a payment would be made to the Council to support an agreement it has with a third party to remove the agricultural (dairy) use at Roundbarrow Farm. Effectively, land taken out of farming would be allocated to the proposal for the lifetime of its use, subject to monitoring.
31. This arrangement would achieve nutrient neutrality subject to a condition that the Government's National Calculation Methodology for assessing water efficiency in new residential development is utilised to demonstrate that no more than 110 litres of water per person per day shall be consumed within the development. Together these measures would secure the delivery of proportionate and relevant mitigation pursuant to the Council's strategy for development which could affect the Solent Sites through additional deposits of nitrogen.

### *Conclusion of Appropriate Assessments*

32. I therefore find within my Appropriate Assessments that, with the provided mitigation measures, the proposal would not have adverse effects on the integrity of the New Forest Sites nor the integrity of the Solent Sites. The proposal would accord with Policy CP50 of the WCS, the Habitats Regulations and the Framework insofar as they seek to secure the long-term protection of such sites.

### **Other Matters**

33. Given the emerging Gypsies and Travellers Development Plan Document's stage of preparation, having not yet been submitted for examination, and its potential to change, it has carried little weight in my assessment. Whilst concern has been raised about this scheme setting a precedent for adjacent sites coming forward, each case must be assessed on its own merits. There is little evidence that the site offers any significant contribution as farmland, rather, I understand that it has been



used as informal amenity land for several years. There is no compelling evidence that the site is in any way contaminated. The expert ecological evidence indicates that there are no protected species on the site, and that priority habitat, and biodiversity more generally, could be enhanced.

### **Planning Balance**

34. For the aforementioned reasons, the proposal accords with the development plan when read as a whole. On that basis, it has not been necessary for me to consider in detail matters such as the Public Sector Equalities Duty, the Human Rights Act, nor the personal circumstances of the appellant. Overall, the other considerations before me do not indicate that I should make my decision other than in accordance with the development plan and planning permission should be granted.

### **Conditions and Conclusion**

35. In addition to the standard time condition, a condition is required to set out the approved plans in the interest of certainty. To ensure that the scheme adheres to good standards of design, a condition is needed regarding the materials and finishes of the day rooms. Similarly in the interests of the appearance and tranquillity the area, conditions shall restrict the number of caravans onsite at any given time and preclude heavy vehicles and commercial activity. As the acceptability of the scheme turns on it being a Gypsy and Traveller development, it is essential that future occupants adhere to the definition of such in the PPTS.
36. To protect ecology during construction, a management plan for that phase of the works must be agreed. To protect ecology thereafter, conditions are needed to ensure adherence to the recommendations within the appellant's ecological evidence, and to control the installation of external lighting in line with the prevailing standards. With reference to biodiversity more generally, a plan must be agreed before development commences to ensure that there is no net loss in accordance with Policy 50 of the WCS. In the interests of flood prevention and public health, a condition will ensure that the sewage treatment package plant is provided and maintained. For the same reason, a condition will ensure that adequate drainage is provided with regard to both cleaned foul water and surface water.
37. In the interest of highway safety, conditions are required to provide that the new access and its visibility splays are delivered and maintained. For the same reason, and mindful of the concerns raised about the propensity for water to pool on parts of the carriageway, a condition is needed to ensure that the access does not discharge water onto the highway. To prevent vehicles routinely waiting in the carriageway, a condition shall ensure that the access gates are set back within the site. Conditions are also necessary to ensure that the parking and turning areas and the pedestrian access arrangements are delivered. In the interest of the character and appearance of the area, a detailed landscaping plan must also be agreed.
38. For the reasons given above, and taking all other matters raised into account, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

*Matthew Jones*

INSPECTOR

## Schedule of Conditions

- 1) The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.
- 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: LB284\_D05, LB284\_R01A, LB284\_D01 Rev E, LB284\_D01 Rev E, LB284\_D01 Rev E, 2201315-TW-TCP-NB, LB284\_D04.
- 3) Prior to the commencement of the construction of the day rooms, details of the materials to be used in their construction shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.
- 4) The site shall not be occupied by any persons other than Gypsies and Travellers, defined as persons of nomadic habit of life whatever their race or origin, including such persons who on grounds only of their own or their family's or dependants' educational or health needs or old age have ceased to travel temporarily or permanently, and all other persons with a cultural tradition of nomadism or of living in a caravan, but excluding members of an organised group of travelling showpeople or circus people travelling together as such, in accordance with Planning Policy for Traveller Sites or replacement planning policy or guidance.
- 5) No more than 8 caravans, as defined in the Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960 and the Caravan Sites Act 1968 as amended, of which no more than 4 shall be static caravans, shall be stationed on the site at any time in accordance with the approved plan ref LB284\_R01A.
- 6) No commercial activities shall take place on the land including the storage of materials nor shall there be any bonfires.
- 7) No vehicle over 3.5 tonnes shall be stationed, parked or stored on the land.
- 8) Prior to the commencement of development or works, including ground works/excavation, site clearance, and boundary treatment works, a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The CEMP shall provide details of the avoidance, mitigation and protective measures to be implemented before and during the construction phase, including but not limited to:
  - a. Identification of ecological protection areas/buffer zones and tree root protection areas and details of physical means of protection;
  - b. Working method statements for protected/priority species, such as nesting birds;
  - c. Mitigation strategies related to ecological receptors;
  - d. Work schedules for activities with specific timing requirements in order to avoid/reduce potential harm to ecological receptors, including details of when a licensed ecologist shall be present on site.
  - e. Key personnel, responsibilities and contact details (including Site Manager and ecologist).

The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved CEMP.

- 9) The proposed sewage package treatment plant shall be installed, maintained and operated in accordance with the submitted specification and details within the Technical Note by Flume Consulting Engineers dated October 2025. Any subsequent replacements shall have an equivalent or improved performance specification. The package treatment plant shall be installed, connected and available for use before the development is occupied and shall be maintained thereafter for the lifetime of the development.
- 10) No development shall commence until a scheme for the discharge of surface water and cleaned foul water has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall not be occupied until the drainage scheme has been fully implemented in accordance with the approved details.
- 11) The development hereby approved shall be designed to ensure each residential unit does not exceed 110 litres per person per day water consumption levels (which includes external water usage) and shall not be first occupied until a water efficiency assessment has been undertaken to confirm compliance with the Building Regulations Optional requirement of a maximum water use.
- 12) Any new external light fixture or fitting to be installed within the application site shall be in accordance with the appropriate Environmental Zone standards set out by the Institution of Lighting Professionals (ILP) Guidance Notes on the Avoidance of Obtrusive Light (GN 01/2021) and Guidance Note GN08/23 "Bats and artificial lighting at night", issued by the Bat Conservation Trust and Institution of Lighting Professionals.
- 13) No development or removal of trees or shrubs shall take place until full details of a Wildlife Protection and Enhancement Scheme have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. These details shall include:
  - a. Details of proposed measures that will be taken to manage the site for biodiversity, including retention of grassland and woodland features,
  - b. Management proposals to enhance calcareous grassland features
  - c. Quantification of biodiversity net gain provision including a plan showing the location(s) and type(s) of feature(s) to enhance the site for reptiles, nesting birds, invertebrates and hedgehog.
- 14) No other development shall commence until visibility splays have been provided between the edge of the carriageway and a line extending from a point 2.4 metres back from the edge of the carriageway, measured along the centre line of the access, to points on the edge of the carriageway 160 metres to the east and 160 metres to the west, 1m into the carriageway from the centre of the access. The splays shall thereafter be permanently maintained free from obstruction above a height of 900mm above the level of the adjacent carriageway.
- 15) The development shall not be occupied until the first 5m of the access, measured from the edge of the carriageway, has been consolidated and



surfaced (not loose stone or gravel). The access shall be maintained as such thereafter.

- 16) Notwithstanding the submitted details, the proposed development shall not be occupied until means/works have been implemented to prevent water from entering the highway. Any gates shall be set back at least 18m from the edge of the carriageway, such gates to open inwards only.
- 17) No later than one month after the first occupation of the development, the pedestrian access from the A30 shall be constructed as shown on approved plan ref LB284\_D01 Rev E. It shall thereafter be maintained to provide pedestrian access in perpetuity.
- 18) No part of the development hereby permitted shall be occupied until the turning area and parking spaces have been completed in accordance with the details shown on the approved plan ref LB284\_D01 Rev E. The areas shall always be maintained for those purposes thereafter and maintained free from the storage of materials.
- 19) Notwithstanding approved plan LB284\_D01 Rev E, no development shall commence until a scheme of hard and soft landscaping to include compensatory hedgerow planting has been submitted and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, the details of which shall include:
  - a. location and current canopy spread of all existing trees and hedgerows on the land;
  - b. full details of any to be retained, together with measures for their protection in the course of development;
  - c. a detailed planting specification showing all plant species, supply and planting sizes and planting densities;
  - d. means of enclosure to include details of fencing and gates;
  - e. all hard and soft surfacing materials;

All soft landscaping comprised in the approved details of landscaping shall be carried out in the first planting and seeding season following the first occupation of the site or the completion of the development whichever is the sooner. Any trees, hedgerow or plants which, within a period of five years, die, are removed, or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of a similar size and species. All hard landscaping shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details prior to the occupation of any part of the development or in accordance with a programme to be agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.