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Rutland County Council

Catmose,
Oakham,
Rutland
LE15 6HP

Application:	2017/0993/FUL		ITEM 2
Proposal:	Change of use of part of an agricultural field to allow a seasonal campsite and associated facilities		
Address:	Land At Cuckoo Farm, Stamford Road, South Luffenham, Rutland		
Applicant:	Mr Roland Taylor, Cuckoo Farm Partners	Parish	South Luffenham & Ketton
Agent:	Mrs Jodie Purvis, Kingsmead Centre Consulting Ltd	Ward	Normanton & Ketton
Reason for presenting to Committee:	Referred back by Council		
Date of Committee:	5 June 2018		

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The application has been referred back to this Committee for further consideration by Full Council. The proposal for up to 50 tents on a north facing slope and in an unsustainable location will lead to additional car journeys to reach attractions and facilities. The proposal is therefore contrary to the Development Plan.

RECOMMENDATION

REFUSAL, for the following reason:

The site is located in a remote location, over 3 kilometres from a Local Service Centre which would lead to additional car journeys to reach services, facilities and local attractions. The proposal is thereby contrary to Policy CS4 of the Core Strategy (2011) and polices SP1, SP7 and SP24 of the Site Allocations and Polices DPD (2014).

Site & Surroundings

1. The site is located in the open countryside between South Luffenham and Ketton to the east of Luffenham Heath Golf Course. The farm currently raises organic turkeys, Deer and sheep. There is a holiday let in part of the outbuildings.
2. The site for the tents is on a north facing sloping field. This is located some 400-480 metres south of the A6121 which runs in a westerly direction out of Ketton towards South Luffenham. The Oakham to Peterborough railway line runs in the valley between the road and the site.
3. There is a large agricultural barn to the southern edge of the site which was erected under permitted development rules in 2013.
4. The northern edge of the site is covered by flood zones 2 and 3 as indicated on the Environment Agency web site which are the zones most at risk of flooding.

Proposal

5. The now revised proposal is to use 1.9 hectares of a 4.5 hectare field for up to 20 campervan pitches and 30 tent pitches. Some would have electric hooks ups, to be used between March and September each year. The site area has been reduced from 3.4 hectares.

6. The original submission involved the shared use of the Luffenham Heath Golf Course access road (owned by the applicant), but this involved a highway requirement to widen a verge which is part of the Luffenham Heath SSSI and Natural England objected.
7. A revised access plan has been submitted showing an alternative access onto Barrowden Road, an unmade section of road that was 'improved' around 2007 by spreading road planings. However a recent site inspection showed that it is again heavily pot holed and muddy. There is no obvious track from the farm to the lane although there is a metal field gate in the approximate position shown.
8. The track from the main body of the site to Barrowden Lane would run alongside an existing hedgerow.
9. A revised track around the site itself would be created for all weather access. This is revised from the plan shown at Council. The revised layout plan is at Appendix 1.
10. The scheme involves the 're-development' of an existing largely timber structure to form an amenities block and shop for site users and 'local residents'. The extent of re-development is not defined. The current building is dilapidated. It has been confirmed that the shop will be in a brick building at 90° to the amenities building.
11. A revised landscaping scheme was submitted in February stating that the planting would help the development blend into the landscape. The scheme comprised shrubs, wildflowers and four species of tree, including Ash, Pedunculate Oak, Silver Birch and Wild Cherry. This is also now revised as part of the new layout.
12. A traffic management plan has been submitted which explains how visitors will be directed to the revised access, avoiding the golf course access. The foul drainage for the site would be to a new package treatment plant.
13. A landscape visual analysis has been carried out in the past month and resulted in a revised site layout and planting strategy.
14. Further information has been supplied with regard to the operation of the shop which is attached at Appendix 2.

Relevant Planning History

Application	Description	Decision
95/0781	Conversion of barn to holiday let	Approved March 1996
2017/0706/PAD	Conversion of agricultural building to dwelling (Class Q Prior Notification)	Refused September 2017

Planning Guidance and Policy

National Planning Policy Framework

The NPPF supports sustainable development.

Para 7 states that there are 3 elements to sustainable development, economic, social and environmental that should not be taken in isolation because they are mutually dependent. The Economic role: contributing to a strong economy by ensuring that sufficient land is available in the right place at the right time

The Social role: supporting strong healthy vibrant communities by providing the supply of housing to meet needs of present and future generations and by creating a high quality environment with accessible local services

The Environmental role: contributing to protecting our natural built and historic environment and as part of this to help biodiversity, use natural resources prudently minimise waste and pollution and mitigate and adapt to climate change including a low carbon economy.

Para 28 – supports sustainable rural tourism and leisure that benefits businesses in rural areas, communities and visitors, and which respect the character of the countryside, including supporting the provision of tourist and visitor facilities in appropriate locations.

Draft NPPF (March 2018)

Supporting a prosperous rural economy

Decisions should enable sustainable growth and expansion of all types of rural businesses, diversification of agricultural land, sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments which respect the character of the countryside.

Decisions should recognise sites may have to be found outside settlements, and in areas not well served by public transport, important to ensure that development is sensitive to its surroundings, does not impact local roads and makes efforts to make sure it is sustainable. The use of ...sites that are well related to existing settlements should be encouraged.

Rutland Core Strategy (2011)

CS1 – Sustainable Development Principles

New development in Rutland will be expected to:

- a) minimise the impact on climate change and include measures to take account of future changes in the climate; (see Policy CS19 and 20)
- b) maintain and wherever possible enhance the county's environmental, cultural and heritage assets;(see Policies CS21 and 22)
- c) be located where it minimises the need to travel and wherever possible where services and facilities can be accessed safely on foot, by bicycle or public transport; (see Policy CS4 and CS18)
- d) make use of previously developed land or conversion or redevelopment of vacant and under-used land and buildings within settlements before development of new green field land;(see Policy CS4)
- e) respect and wherever possible enhance the character of the towns, villages and landscape; (see Policies CS19, 20, 21, 22)
- f) minimise the use of resources and meet high environmental standards in terms of design and construction with particular regard to energy and water efficiency, use of sustainable materials and minimisation of waste; (see Policies CS19 and 20)
- g) avoid development of land at risk of flooding or where it would exacerbate the risk of flooding elsewhere (see Policy CS19);
- h) contribute towards creating a strong, stable and more diverse economy (see Policies CS13, 14, 15, 16, and 17)
- i) include provision, or contribute towards any services and infrastructure needed to support the development (see Policy CS8)

CS3 – Ketton is a Local Service Centre and the Luffenhams are Smaller Service Centres.

CS4 – Location of Development – Countryside

Development in the countryside will be strictly limited to that which has an essential need to be located in the countryside, to support the rural economy.

CS15 – Tourism

- Allow provision for visitors which is appropriate in use and character to Rutland's countryside.
- Allow new tourism provision in, ...the villages where these would benefit local communities and support the rural economy and development of an appropriate scale in the countryside'

CS16 – The Rural Economy

The strategy is to encourage farm diversification schemes that are consistent with maintaining and enhancing the environment and support the conversion of rural buildings, closely related to centres, for employment uses that have little adverse environmental impact.

Site Allocations and Policies DPD (2014)

SP1 – Presumption in favour of sustainable development in accordance with the NPPF.

SP7 – Non-residential Development in the Countryside

Sustainable development in the countryside will be supported where it is:

- Essential for visitor facilities, provided that:
 - Amount of new build is kept to a minimum, the development would not by itself be detrimental to the character and appearance of the landscape, visual amenity or the character of open land
 - Would be in an accessible location and not generate an unacceptable increase in traffic movements including car travel.

The preamble to SP7 states, in relation outdoor recreation that a critical requirement of this type of development is that it should avoid being visually intrusive to the form and character of the wider landscape setting.

SP15 – Design & Amenity

c) Amenity – light pollution

SP23 – Landscape Character

Development will only be acceptable where it sensitive to its landscape setting.

SP24 – Caravan and Camping Sites

This is particularly relevant here. It states that schemes such as this are acceptable provided they meet 4 criteria:

Outside of the Rutland Water and Eyebrook Reservoir Areas, caravan and camping sites will only be acceptable where:

- a) provision is made to minimise disruption and prevent pollution;
- b) they are located with convenient access to supporting facilities;
- c) they are not detrimental to environmental, amenity and highway considerations; and
- d) they are not detrimental to visual amenity and the appearance of the landscape;

The preamble to SP24 states:

There continues to be considerable demand for camping and caravanning facilities in Rutland, as evidenced by enquiries to Rutland Tourism, particularly in locations well related to Rutland Water. Whilst such development can provide a welcome form of accommodation for tourists and other visitors to the area, it can have a major impact on the local environment, visual amenity and on levels of car usage in the local area.

The purpose of Policy SP24 is to set out the more detailed planning policy criteria to be applied when considering planning applications for caravan and camping sites elsewhere across Rutland.

The Rutland Landscape Character Assessment (2003) was used as the evidence base for the preparation of the Development Plan. This identifies that the site is in area A(ii),v) Chater Valley sub area of High Rutland.

The recommended Landscape Objectives for High Rutland – Chater Valley are:

To sustain and reinforce the small-scale, enclosed, intimate, rural, quiet, calm, well-wooded and pastoral valley with its semi-natural habitats, notable lack of villages and very few buildings. To protect its historic features and carefully control any road, railway, water services or other infrastructure improvements in the valley, including any further modifications to the river and its riparian features and habitats.

Consultations

15. **RCC Highways**
No objection to revised scheme provided it is operated in accordance with the traffic management plan.
16. **Ketton Parish Council**
No objections to either scheme.
17. **South Luffenham Parish Council**
No objection to camp site but concerned about (original) access point via golf course.
18. **RCC Waste Management**
No objection.
19. **LCC Ecology (on original scheme)**
The ecological survey submitted (Andrew Chick, September 2017) is satisfactory. It identifies that the majority of the site comprises recently sown grassland. The grassland adjacent to the watercourse is more established but was not recorded as being species rich. No objection to the use of this field as a campsite, provided that the buffer along the River Chater is retained. Prefer this to comprise a 10m buffer of semi-natural vegetation, rather than the 6m shown
20. **LCC Archaeology**
No comment.
21. **National Farmers Union**
Supports the application.

Neighbour Representations

22. Luffenham Heath Golf Club objected to the original scheme due to the increase in traffic on its driveway and the impact on the SSSI if roadside verge widening was to take place.
23. The club remains concerned with the revised scheme in terms of its visual impact in the countryside and objects unless all traffic associated with the use, vehicular, cyclists and pedestrians are prevented from using the golf club drive, by signage and a locked gate.
24. There is also concern about the farming/cooking experience to be offered and the extent of use of a farm shop and whether it will operate for the general public out of season.
25. The Golf Club has been notified of the revised layout etc. and has until 4 June to comment.

Planning Assessment

26. The main issues are policy/sustainability, visual impact and highway safety.

Policy/Sustainability

27. This site, including its revised access is 8.5km from Normanton Car Park on the south shore of Rutland Water. This is the nearest point to the reservoir.
28. The distance to the pub on Church Street and the shop on High Street in Ketton using the access is around 2.9km and 3.5km respectively. Neither are journeys that are likely to be undertaken on foot. Cycling would be more of a possibility but the 500m section of unmade road from the entrance to the site to the tarmac section of Barrowden Road is rough and not conducive to cycling.
29. The nearest public footpath to the site runs from Kilthorpe Grange (to the east of Barrowden Road) to Tixover. There is a public footpath which provides a shortcut on the route from Barrowden Lane to Church Street opposite the pub (i.e. missing out the level crossing and Aldgate). The bulk of the site itself is approximately 300 metres from Barrowden Road. From there it is 2.3km to the pub and 2.9km to the shop.
30. Other camp sites (especially 'glamping' in recent times) have been located where they have access to local facilities whether it be a larger village/pub or Rutland Water. The exception was at Lambley Lodge Lane, Belton, the first Glamping site approved. That site was not visible from a public viewpoint. The refusal at Uppingham Road Preston, on sustainability grounds, is awaiting an appeal decision. That site is closer to Uppingham, a sustainable town (see below), and if that appeal is allowed it will not necessarily mean that this scheme would be if appealed. Approval of this application would be a consideration for the Inspector on that appeal. The following table shows the glamping sites that have been approved in recent years:

Site	Decision Date	Distance to shop/Pub	Distance to Rutland Water	Visible from road
Belton – Lambley Lodge Lane	Aug 2013	-/890m	11.4km	No
Exton Park – Kitchen Garden	March 2015	-/1.5km	3.5km	No
Greetham –	Aug 2016	1km/700m	8.8km	No

Brook Lane				
Preston – A6003	Jan 2017 and July 2017	1.9km to Uppingham Market Place	3.8km	No
Ketton	-	2.9km/2.3km	8.5km	Yes

The Greetham Caravan and camping site is long established and is effectively in the village close to pubs and a shop and also has a shop and pool on site.

31. The policies set out in the development plan are supportive of schemes such as this provided they are close to a village or attraction (hence RW used as an example) and that they do not detract from the visual appearance of the landscape. These are the main judgements to be made.
32. On this occasion the site does not benefit from easy access to a sustainable settlement or a local attraction. The proposal is thereby contrary to policies CS4, SP1, SP7, and SP24.
33. In terms of the sustainability of the site, at the meeting of the Committee on 13 March, members were unclear as to why decisions on other sites were relevant to this proposal. This is in the interests of consistency and because decisions that the Committee has made elsewhere in the County, together with Appeal decisions, are relevant material considerations and an approval on this site will have implications for future proposals elsewhere and the current Preston appeal.
34. It was stated at the meeting of the Committee on 13 March that the glamping site on the A6003 south of Preston, which was refused by the Committee only on the grounds of unsustainability, was further from Uppingham, than the current site is from Ketton. For clarity, that site is 1km from the roundabout on the A47 at Uppingham, and 1.9km from Uppingham market place.
35. The preamble to SP24 states that there continues to be a considerable demand for caravan and camping sites as evidenced by enquiries to Rutland Tourism, particularly in locations well related to Rutland Water. Whilst such development can be a welcome form of accommodation for tourists and other visitors, it can have a major impact on the local environment, visual amenity and on levels of car usage.
36. The Draft Replacement Rutland Local Plan has combined SP24 and SP25 such that the criteria relating to proximity to a visitor attraction, e.g. Rutland Water, would also apply to camping and caravan sites. This Plan carries limited weight at present.
37. There is no set distance from settlements for this type of use. For comparison, regarding the re-use of rural buildings, the preamble to Policy SP6 (Housing in the Countryside) states that they 'would be expected to be within 2000 metres of a town centre, 1000 metres of a Larger Service Centre or 500 metres of a smaller service centre'.
38. The Inspector in the recent Bisbrooke appeal found that the site was not in a sustainable location, being closer to Uppingham than the current site is to Ketton.
39. Reference was also made to the Cottesmore Neighbourhood Plan which has set a sustainability limit of 800m from the village centre shops to new development. This has been upheld in an appeal for infill housing plots in an otherwise built up area where the Inspector found that most journeys to the village shops would be in a car. That site was 1200 metres from the shop in the village centre. This is not an adopted policy elsewhere in the County but shows that sustainability can be measured over relatively short distances. It is noted that different Inspectors have been known to interpret sustainable

locations differently but there has to be some consistency in decision making at the local level.

40. Members lent some weight to the proposed shop on site. The Preston proposal also contained the following information in its submission:

To encourage tourists to arrive to site by non-car means, the site business will provide a discounted nightly rate incentive for such non car arrivals. There will also be a pre-arranged collection / departure service for foot visitors to Oakham train station. To further reduce the environmental impact and minimise private car use, we will establish on site, within the reception unit, a small but well stocked grocery food and provision store. Locally produced Items such as milk, cheese, bakery items (Hambleton bakery for example), toiletries and day to day items, this will prevent the ad hoc rush to the local store for a pint of milk.

This was provided in the Addendum report for the meeting when that application was refused.

41. The 3 elements of sustainability are part of the overall definition of sustainability which comprises the entire NPPF read as a whole. Sustainable development does however need to consider the need to travel and appeal decisions, including locally, have been based on this consideration alone. Para 28 of the NPPF (see policy section above) gives as close a detailed guidance to this proposal as is available in the NPPF.

Visual Impact

42. Pre-app advice was given that the proposal was unacceptable due to the impact which it has visually and on sustainability grounds. The site is on a north facing slope which is prominent when driving westwards along Luffenham Road from Ketton towards South Luffenham. The application as previously discussed indicated revised landscape screening but the species and density suggested is unlikely to provide screening that has any meaningful impact in terms of screening the tents from the main road.
43. Other glamping sites that have recently been approved have been hidden from public view and have relatively easy access to amenities, as set out in the Development Plan, (albeit under SP25 rather than SP24 here).
44. The site slopes south to north and is visible from the Luffenham Road. Even in summer when hedges and trees are in leaf, the tents, motorhomes and particularly the permanent track on the original layout would have been seen prominently sitting on the hillside.
45. Since the Council meeting on 9 April, the applicant has employed the services of a Landscape Architect to provide further input to this issue. This has demonstrated, partly by analysis and partly by a revised site boundary and layout, that the majority of the tents could be effectively screened after year 5 of a planting scheme.
46. On this basis the second part of the originally recommended reason for refusal would not be sustainable and, subject to the revised layout and a landscaping scheme being implemented, that element of the reason is no longer justified.

Highway Safety

47. The revised access is safer than using the road via the golf course. Whilst the surface is not metalled, it is passable by car and visitors will make their choice. The access is acceptable.

Flooding

48. The northern edge of the site is the flattest part but is identified as flood plain. The water course was well over 1.5m below the site when inspected on 18 April, after a recent spell of heavy rain. The applicant confirmed that the site does flood in exceptional circumstances but crucially this is nearer to the existing buildings first and the application site only floods later, so there is adequate warning of potential flooding. The applicant has a responsibility to customers and it is unlikely that placing tents in that area would put lives at risk. Campers are unlikely to be on site in large numbers in periods of heavy rain and forecasts can predict if it is likely to be necessary to keep the land clear.

Notes

Measurements
Do not scale from this drawing.
All measurements should be checked against on site conditions and any discrepancies should be brought to the attention of the Robert Doughty Consultancy.

CDM 2015
This drawing is for illustrative purposes and/or obtaining the relevant planning permission only. It should not be used for construction and accordingly, risk identification under the Construction (Design & Management) Regulations 2015 has not been undertaken.



-  Campervan footprint
-  Family tent footprint
-  Electric/ water hook up

Rev	By	Notes	Date

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Client
Rebecca Bear & Roland Taylor

Project
Cuckoo Farm Lodge, Ketton

Drawing title
Proposed Site Plan

Drawing No 1316-1_PL_SP02	Rev	Drawn WW
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Supplementary Information - Campsite Shop

April 2018

Application No: 17/0993/FUL - Development of a seasonal campsite at Cuckoo Farm

Introduction

Further to committee member comments and discussions, the following outlines the operations of the farm shop proposed.

Shop Operation and Opening Hours

The proposed shop forms a fundamental part of the application and sustainable business model with the aim of providing a genuine educational farm experience; from fork to plate.

The proposed building for the shop would also house reception for the campsite. It is located adjacent to the farm buildings and house making it convenient to operate. Reception and shop opening hours are proposed daily as follows:

Morning – 9am until 11am

Afternoon – 3pm until 7pm

The applicants would be available outside of the above hours, and therefore could attend to customers if required and a telephone system would be in place for customers to contact reception/request access to the shop.

In instances when the owners are out, they would put a sign on the gate to say 'closed'. This would prevent non-residential customers from driving in to the site to use the shop.

The additional number of people visiting the farm specifically to use the shop would be minimal, however as is currently the case, local people can phone to pre-order meat products. This system would be implemented over the winter months when the campsite is closed.

Types of Goods for Sale in the Shop

The shop would be stocked primarily with items of organic farm produce as below:

Eggs, Bacon, Sausages

Various pork, lamb and venison products including

- Chops
- Burgers
- BBQ Packs
- Chicken

Additional items from other (local where possible) sources would also be available in order to provide a reasonable selection of relevant provisions for campers and prevent the need to drive into town:

- Tea, coffee, sugar and milk
- Jams and preserves
- Bread
- Ice cream
- Confectionary

- Biscuits
- Newspapers
- Small children's toys e.g. kites and balls
- Small scale camping equipment .e.g. gas cylinders and related equipment, pegs, torches, mallets, hand tools, waste and water containers, tent repair kits
- Local maps, books and tourist information

Summary

Operating the shop and reception together would ensure the viability of the shop as there would be very low additional running costs involved.

The primary purpose of the shop is to provide an onsite facility to the campsite customers and complement the business model of showcasing organic food and farming in an educational experience. It is not intended to run as a separate enterprise in competition with existing local shops.

Providing the facility of a farm shop for the proposed campsite is considered a sustainable proposition, particularly as no new building is required to accommodate it. The proposal as whole therefore fulfils the relevant sustainability requirements of local planning policies SP7 parts d & e and SP24 part b.