



Catmose, Oakham, Rutland LE15 6HP

Application:	2016/0435/FUL			ITEM 1	
Proposal:	Variation of Conditions 1 and 2 in relation to Planning Application				
	APP/2013/0123 - Additional eight caravans to be sited permanently				
	for extended family to live on the same site.				
Address:	The Paddocks, Oakham Road, Langham, Rutland				
Applicant:	Mrs Lucy Lee	Parish		Langham	
Agent:	Mr Alec Statham	Ward		Langham	
Reason for presenting to Committee:		Local (	Local Objections		
Date of Committee:		30 August 2016			

#### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The proposal to vary the conditions on the description of the occupiers and number of caravans will not have any significant impact on any interests of acknowledged importance and is in compliance with Policy CS12 of the Rutland Core Strategy (2011).

### RECOMMENDATION

### **APPROVAL**, subject to the following conditions:

- 1. The residential use, hereby permitted, shall be for the benefit of Clifford and Lucy Lee, Joe and Lucy Price, Fred and Carolina Price and Saley and Alex Lee, and/or their dependent children and or grandchildren only.
- 2. The use of the site pursuant to this permission shall be limited at any time to occupation by eight family units, within the existing 4 pitches and the proposed 4 pitches hereby approved only, in accordance with the provisions of condition 1 of this permission, and to a maximum of sixteen residential caravans as defined in the Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960 and the Caravan Sites Act 1968. This number of caravans shall not be exceeded other than for a maximum of 10 days in any calendar year.
- 3. Any additional external lighting installed on the site shall be in accordance with details that shall previously have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority.
- 4. No commercial activities shall take place on the land, including the storage of materials.
- 5. The hedge and tree planting around the site shall be maintained at a height of not less than 3m above the level of the adjacent

### **REASONS:**

- 1. For the avoidance of doubt and to enable the Local Planning Authority to assess the likely impact of any future potential additional occupiers of the site.
- To minimise the visual impact of the site on the edge of the village and to allow visitors for family and community events on up to 10 days in any year.
- 3-5 In the interests of visual and environmental amenity.

# Site & Surroundings

1. The site is situated within the Vale of Catmose, approximately 180m beyond the Planned Limit to Development (PLD) of the village of Langham, in an area designated as

- countryside within the Development Plan. It is on the western side of the main approach to Langham, when travelling north on the A606 from Oakham.
- 2. Langham contains a Conservation Area, the southern edge of which coincides with the PLD to the north of the site. Langham primary school is approximately 250 metres distant and the nearest residential property 180 metres.
- 3. The application site is surrounded by native hedging and trees, well over 3m high. Since the original permissions were granted, extensive additional planting has taken place around the inside boundary of the site, together with a 2m screen fence inside the additional planting along the roadside and part of the south eastern boundary of the site. This is continuing to mature and provides an increasingly dense screen.
- 4. The Paddocks is occupied by the applicant and her family who have sited up to 8 caravans within four individual pitches, together with associated ablution blocks along the south western end of the site which were provided as a requirement of the original permission granted on appeal. There are 4 main couples on site, the applicant and her husband and 3 of their children with their respective spouses, who have 2, 5, 6 and 3 children respectively, of which 2 have a total of 5 children of their own.
- 5. Each caravan within a pitch is sited on a hard standing; the remainder of the ground is covered in gravel and each enclosed by fencing. 3 pitches now have a park home as the main residence.
- 6. Vehicular access is obtained direct from the A606 at the north eastern corner of the field. The gates and verge crossing are 5.1m wide and the gates are set back 9.7mm from the carriageway.
- 7. Lighting is provided by small bulkhead lamps near to the top of fence posts on the inside of the site. The whole site is maintained in a neat and tidy condition.

# **Proposal**

- 8. The proposal is to vary the following 2 conditions on the previous permission:
  - The residential use, hereby permitted, shall be for the benefit of Clifford and Lucy Lee, Joe and Lucy Price, Fred and Carolina Price and Saley and Alex Lee, and/or their dependent children only.
  - The use of the site pursuant to this permission shall be limited at any time to occupation by four family units, within the existing 4 pitches only, in accordance with the provisions of condition 1 of this permission, and to a maximum of eight residential caravans as defined in the Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960 and the Caravan Sites Act 1968. This number of caravans shall not be exceeded other than for a maximum of 10 days in any calendar year.
- 9. The reasons for these conditions were:
  - For the avoidance of doubt and to enable the Local Planning Authority to assess the likely impact of any future potential additional occupiers of the site.
  - To minimise the visual impact of the site on the edge of the village and to allow visitors for family and community events on up to 10 days in any year.
- 10. The proposal is to allow the use of the site by up to 8 additional caravans and to construct 4 toilet blocks in the otherwise vacant paddocks on the site. These facilities

would be for the children and grandchildren of the applicant all of whom already reside on site as described above. There will be no additional persons on site as a result of this permission if granted. The conditions would be varied to take account of these circumstances.

11. The proposed site layout is shown at **APPENDIX 1**.

### **Relevant Planning History**

Application 2007/0175	Description Change of use of land to allow siting of 4 caravan pitches	<b>Decision</b> Approved on Appeal Jan 2008
2011/0304	Application to vary conditions 1 and 2 of FUL/2007/0175 to allow permanent occupation of the site - conditions amended to provide a further temporary period.	Approved Aug 2011 – Temp pp until Dec 2014.
2013/0123	Vary Condition 1 & 2 on 2011/0304 to allow permanent occupation of the site	Approved 28 May 2013

### **Planning Guidance and Policy**

### **National Planning Policy Framework**

The NPPF promotes sustainable development as a golden thread running through tis policies. The Framework does not make specific reference to Gypsy and Traveller proposals. Under the section on 'Delivering a wide choice of high quality homes', it does state at Para 50 to deliver a wide choice of homes and create inclusive and sustainable communities. Local planning authorities should plan for a mix of housing and the needs of different groups in the community.

Para 55 states that to promote sustainable development in rural areas housing should be located where it will enhance the vitality of rural communities

### The Rutland Core Strategy (2011)

Policy CS12 relates to Gypsies and Travellers:

Sites for gypsies and travellers and show people will be identified through the Site Allocations and Development Control Policies DPD and/or the planning application process. The future need for sites for gypsies and travellers and show people beyond 2012 will be assessed in a review of the Leicestershire and Rutland Gypsy and Traveller Needs Assessment to be carried out in 2012. In determining suitable sites the following considerations will be taken into account:

- a) in the case of permanent sites, there should be reasonable and convenient access to schools, medical services, shops and other community facilities;
- b) the site should be well located and provide safe and convenient vehicular, pedestrian and cycle access and adequate parking, and not result in a level of traffic generation which is inappropriate for roads in the area;
- c) the impact on landscape character and/or sites/areas of nature conservation value including the internationally designated nature conservation site of Rutland Water;
- d) the site must provide adequate on-site facilities for parking, storage, play and residential amenity (including basic essential services);

e) the site should not be visually intrusive nor detrimental to amenities of adjacent occupiers; f) adequate levels of privacy and residential amenity for occupiers should be provided.

### Site Allocations and Polices DPD (2014)

There is no specific policy in the SAPDPD relating to travellers sites. Para's 6.3 to 6.9 of the SAPDPD however state as follows (Officer underlining of relevant sentence):

#### Sites for travellers

- 6.3 Core Strategy Policy CS12 (Gypsies and travellers) anticipated that a review of future need for accommodation for gypsies, travellers and travelling show people would be required in order to assess if additional sites would need to be identified through the Site Allocations & Policies DPD and/or the planning process. At the time the Core Strategy was drawn up the key evidence base regarding future accommodation needs was the 2007 Leicestershire Leicester, and Rutland Gypsies' and Travellers' Accommodation Needs Assessment 2006-2016 (GTAA).
- 6.4 A review of needs has been undertaken as supporting evidence to this document by Opinion Research Services (ORS). The review takes account of the national planning policy guidance published in March 2012 "Planning for Traveller Sites".
- 6.5 The ORS study finds that the extra provision that is required for gypsies and travellers in Rutland to meet a five year supply is two private sites capable of accommodation for four and one families respectively. This requirement is met through a site granted permanent planning permission for four families and a site granted temporary planning permission for one family, which expires in 2014. In the latter case the family is likely to wish to remain at their current site. For one of these sites it is also likely that adult children will be seeking their own accommodation in the near future and the most likely preferred location would be to increase the capacity of the existing site. The ORS study found that there is no evidence of a requirement for transit pitches in Rutland and, while unauthorised encampments do arise in Rutland, there is no clear evidence of sufficient travelling through the area to justify the development of a permanent transit site.
- 6.6 The ORS study also found no evidence of extra provision being necessary for showmen or Circus Performers in the future although it is likely that the residents of an existing facility will seek to expand its boundaries in the near future to reduce overcrowding.
- 6.7 With respect to planning policy provision, the conclusion reached by ORS is that it is important for the Council to continue to utilise the planning policies and criteria set out in Policy CS12 of the Core Strategy to facilitate the potential development of new Gypsy and Traveller sites in the areas. The policy guidance at Policy SP8 is not an additional requirement in consideration of sites for gypsies and travellers as adequate guidance is provided by Core Strategy Policy CS12.
- 6.8 From this the Council concludes that a sufficient potential supply of sites currently exists to meet a 5 year requirement and this can be maintained by an annual review of needs evidence and through the criteria based policy approach already set out at Core Strategy Policy CS12 (Gypsies and travellers). No specific (new) sites for gypsies and travellers are therefore allocated in the plan.
- 6.9 The Council is also mindful that, recognising duty to co-operate obligations, there is a commitment across the sub-region to refresh the GTAA published in 2007. Once completed, findings from this work can be incorporated into the Council's annual review referred to above.

### Other Considerations

The Government published Planning Policy for Traveller Sites on 31 August 2015.

One of its key changes sees the planning definition of 'Gypsies & Travellers' tightened to exclude those who no longer travel (other than temporarily).

Policy H in that document (Determining Planning Applications for Traveller sites) states that:

- Applications should be assessed and determined in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development and the application of specific policies in the National Planning Policy Framework and this planning policy for traveller sites.
- Local planning authorities should consider the following issues amongst other relevant matters when considering planning applications for traveller sites:
  - o the existing level of local provision and need for sites
  - o the availability (or lack) of alternative accommodation for the applicants
  - o other personal circumstances of the applicant
  - that the locally specific criteria used to guide the allocation of sites in plans or which form the policy where there is no identified need for pitches/plots should be used to assess applications that may come forward on unallocated sites
  - that they should determine applications for sites from any travellers and not just those with local connections
- Local planning authorities should very strictly limit new traveller site development in open countryside that is away from existing settlements or outside areas allocated in the development plan. Local planning authorities should ensure that sites in rural areas respect the scale of, and do not dominate, the nearest settled community, and avoid placing an undue pressure on the local infrastructure.
- When considering applications, local planning authorities should attach weight to the following matters:
- effective use of previously developed (brownfield), untidy or derelict land
- sites being well planned or soft landscaped in such a way as to positively enhance the environment and increase its openness
- promoting opportunities for healthy lifestyles, such as ensuring adequate landscaping and play areas for children
- not enclosing a site with so much hard landscaping, high walls or fences, that the impression may be given that the site and its occupants are deliberately isolated from the rest of the community
- If a local planning authority cannot demonstrate an up-to-date 5 year supply of deliverable sites, this should be a significant material consideration in any subsequent planning decision when considering applications for the grant of temporary planning permission. The exception is where the proposal is on land designated as Green Belt; sites protected under the Birds and Habitats Directives and / or sites designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest; Local Green Space, an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, or within a National Park (or the Broads).
- Local planning authorities should consider how they could overcome planning objections to particular proposals using planning conditions or planning obligations including:
- limiting which parts of a site may be used for any business operations, in order to minimise the visual impact and limit the effect of noise
- specifying the number of days the site can be occupied by more than the allowed number of caravans (which permits visitors and allows attendance at family or community events)

In a further change, *The Housing & Planning Act*, has, since 12 July 2016, abolished the requirement for separate Gypsy & Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessments.

Other Material Considerations

Langham Neighbourhood Plan (Submission Version)

Policy HR1c: Demographics & Housing – Gypsy/Traveller Sites

The Plan supports the RCC Gypsy & Traveller Accommodation Study of 2013, which states there is no requirement for further sites in Langham – private, public or transit. Neither is there any requirement to extend the existing sites beyond their current size.

The Plan is currently in a 6 week consultation period for comments but is then still to go through an Examination and subsequent referendum so is some way from being made at present. On that basis it carries only limited weight in the determination of planning applications.

South Kesteven and Rutland Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation Assessment 2016

This was published in early August 2016 and supercedes the 2013 Assessment and concludes that there is an overall need in Rutland over the next 20 years of some 13 residential pitches, with 8 required by 2021.

### **Consultations**

- 12. Langham Neighbourhood Plan Group.
  - The community of Langham very clearly, in their comments in the Neighbourhood Plan Survey, said they wanted no more traveller homes in Langham (100% of the responses said 'too many' or 'enough'...see attached). As a small village we have more than our share already and a site of the size suggested is completely inconsistent with the character and appearance of Langham.
  - This is not a view that in any way reflects on the present occupants it is a planning-driven observation.
  - In the Langham Neighbourhood Plan, page 18, Policy HR1c clearly states The Plan supports the RCC Gypsy & Traveller Accommodation Study of 2013, which states there is no requirement for further sites in Langham – private, public or transit. Neither is there any requirement to extend the existing sites beyond their current size.
  - We, acting for the Langham Neighbourhood Plan Group, strongly oppose this application and recommend refusal.
- 13. Langham Parish Council

Recommends refusal – see APPENDIX 2.

### 14. LCC Ecology

The proposed development is to be cited close to a number of ponds. Great Crested Newts (GCN) have been recorded close to the site and, in the absence of mitigation may be adversely impacted by the development. I am unsure of the current ground conditions on site but aerial photographs suggest that the new pitches will be placed on existing short-grazed horse pasture and existing hardstanding. These are considered suboptimal habitats for GCN as they provide no shelter or foraging opportunities. Provided that this is a true reflection of the current site, we consider that the development could be

mitigated for by ensuring that a number of Reasonable Avoidance Measures are followed. These would ensure that all ground works are completed in such a way as to minimise the potential risk to any GCN. These should include the following and should be forwarded as a condition of the development:

- All materials to be stored off the ground (for example on pallets) to minimise the likelihood of GCN accessing them for refugia.
- All spoil/waste materials to be removed from site at the end of each working day (or stored in a skip).
- The site should be maintained as sub-optimal prior to the commencement of works.
  However, should the site not comprise very short grazed grassland (or existing
  hardstanding) further GCN surveys and mitigation may be required. Additionally,
  further surveys may be required if hedgerows will be impacted.

## **Neighbour Representations**

15. There have been 27 objections and 5 letters of support from local residents.

The objections can be summarised as follows:

- Applicants have no respect for the law it's a fait accompli
- Future intentions of adjoining land?
- Contrary to CS2, CS10, CS19 and CS22
- Contrary to SP8
- Contrary to Langham Neighbourhood Plan
- Visual intrusion
- · Over intensive use of site
- Flooding problems on main road
- 'extended family' is open to abuse from these people
- Will create min 20 extra people impact on access/highway safety
- · Limited visibility onto the road due to high hedge
- Prominent on approach to Conservation Area
- Impact on house prices
- Significant noise disturbance
- Spaces available at Ranksborough
- Impact on local services
- Creates another village between Barleythorpe and Langham
- Original use was unauthorised
- Extra sewage
- Lack of previous enforcement

#### The supporters' state:

- The families are kind and helpful
- Site unobtrusive not easily seen from the road
- Residents have integrated into the community
- No justification for refusal

# **Planning Assessment**

### **Background**

16. The original permission on this site was granted on appeal and was for a temporary 5 year period, primarily to allow further work to be done on the Core Strategy which was being prepared at the time and a Gypsy and Traveller Assessment was awaited.

- 17. By 2011, the applicants were anxious to extend the temporary period to give some certainty as the Site Allocations Plan was still some way off and was expected to allocate site for Gypsies and Travellers. The temporary permission was extended until December 2014.
- 18. An application was made in 2013 to make the occupation of the site permanent which was granted in accordance with planning polices as they stood at that time. The use of the land was limited by that permission to be for the immediate families of the present occupiers, including their dependent children. The permission limited the use to the 4 plots shown on the land and for a maximum of 8 caravans (which are defined in law and can include a mobile or 'Park' type home).
- 19. It is important to note that this is not an extension of the site but a variation of the conditions that control the activities within the site itself. The application site is subject to the existing planning permission for use as a permanent Gypsy and Traveller site, it is only the impact of the additional occupation within the site that can be considered.
- 20. The main issues are planning policy, visual impact, highway safety and ecology.

### Planning Policy

- 21. With regard to planning polices, some objectors refer to Site Allocations and Polices Policy SP8. For clarity, this is not a relevant policy for Gypsy and Traveller sites and is only intended for mobile home parks for general occupation. The policy itself specifically states (at Para 6.2) that it is not a requirement for dealing with Gypsy and Traveller sites.
- 22. Some residents have also cited polices CS2 (Spatial Strategy), CS10 (Housing Density and Mix), CS19 (Design) and CS22 (The historic Environment). None of these are specifically relevant to this site.
- 23. The text in the SAPDPD set out above notes that it is important that the Council continues to utilise Policy CS12. The text also acknowledges that this proposal to expand the use of the existing site was likely to come forward at some stage.
- 24. The Council's recently published Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation Assessment 2016 concludes that there is an overall requirement in Rutland over the next 20 years of some 13 residential pitches.
- 25. Paragraph 9.31 of this Study notes that there are families within the study area who would like to increase the number of pitches and plot and/or number of caravans allowed per pitch or plot on existing site/yards and considers that the expansion of sites with adequate space would contribute towards meeting existing need.
- 26. Given there is evidence which concludes over the next 20 years there is an overall shortfall of 13 pitches in Rutland, the Council needs to be satisfied that the proposal for 4 additional pitches can:
  - Be accommodated within the site and;
  - Meet the proviso's set out in Policy CS12,
- 27. The main Development Plan policy is therefore Core Strategy Policy CS12.
- 28. The site remains in close proximity to school and local services, is well located to give easy access to services in Langham and Oakham, has no impact on the wider landscape character or Rutland Water, has adequate off street parking, turning, play and amenity facilities, is not visually intrusive (see below) and provides a good level of amenity for the occupiers.. The proposal therefore fulfils all of the criteria (a) to (f) in

Core Strategy Policy CS12.

29. The policies in the Langham Neighbourhood Plan do not carry full weight at this stage and make reference to a now superceded Gypsy Assessment. Given that there is a clear need to these additional plots and that the scheme complies with CS12, it is not considered that the LNP polices outweigh the Core Strategy and the other material considerations in this case. Policy HR1c at present is not in general conformity with the Council's Local Plan Policy, as the Study referred to and in the Council's Site Allocations & Policies DPD do refer to the expansion within an existing site.

### Visual Impact

- 30. In granting temporary planning permission on appeal in January 2008, the Inspector made it clear that he considered that the development harmed the rural character and appearance of the local area to a significant degree and that in view of this a permanent permission would not be appropriate. This decision was reached by concluding that, notwithstanding the harm identified, there were other overriding material considerations. Whilst the impact was acknowledged in subsequent applications, the fact that the current site now benefits from a permanent permission means that it is accepted that there is some visual impact from the development on the site. This is however limited to winter months when some of the mobile homes are partly visible through the hedge, although they are partly screened by a permanent fence inside the hedge.
- 31. The use of this land within the existing site would be more visible through the gateway at the access although only fleetingly at an angle as the land directly inside the gate would remain open space for play areas. The applicants have undertaken to plant an additional hedge along the boundary of the plot nearest to the access gate to increase screening.
- 32. As in the previous application, it is not considered that complete screening is necessary as applications for agricultural dwellings and other large buildings such as barns/grain stores and indeed mobile home parks in similar locations do not carry such an absolute requirement that they cannot be seen at all. The proposal therefore complies with CS12(e) and SP15 of the SAPDPD. It is not considered that design polices per se are particularly relevant in this instance.
- 33. The Conservation Area boundary is some 100m to the north of the access to this site. The large paddock between the site and dwellings within the village is not within the Conservation Area although land on the opposite side including the primary school is. Most development within the Conservation Area at this southern end of the village is modern and of no specific historic merit.
- 34. Whilst there is a statutory duty to ensure that development does not harm any heritage asset, given the relationship between the two, it is not considered that the proposal would have any impact, positive or negative, on the character and appearance of the Langham Conservation Area.

### Highway Safety

35. The highway authority has no objection to the proposal provided the verge crossing is wide enough. The gates are set back 9.7m from the carriageway and the tarmac crossing is 5.1m wide. This is beyond the requirements of the highway authority so is acceptable. Visibility from the access is only impeded by the long grass on the verge but the applicants now understand that they can maintain adequate visibility splays by trimming and have undertaken to do so when they are resident on site. The scheme complies with Policy SP15(m).

### Ecology

36. The 2007 Inspector considered that a condition was adequate to deal with the issue of Great Crested Newts in nearby ponds. He required a survey to be carried out by a suitably qualified person. Ecology has queried whether a GCN survey should be carried out now. The ground did have long grass on a site visit in early August but only because the applicants had been off site for a while. This is normally kept trimmed. There are also areas of loose gravel and hardstanding for the 4 existing plots between this part of the site and the nearest pond so it is unlikely that GCN will be present. Leicestershire CC Ecology has confirmed this is acceptable.

#### Other Issues

- 37. The younger children resident on the site will attend the local school at the appropriate ages, as have existing children. There is a package treatment plant for sewage on site which will cater for the additional WC blocks. There are no extra people coming to the site so there will be little additional impact on any other service, facility or material planning interest.
- 38. Other matters raised by objectors, including house prices, disapproval of conduct or lifestyle, behavioural stereotyping, and 'retrospectivity' etc. are not material to determination of the application.

### **Human Rights Act 1998**

39. Individual rights are protected under the Human Rights Act 1998 and consideration as to any infringement of these rights must be taken into account when the Council makes any decisions, in the given circumstances Article 8 – Right to respect for private and family life and Article 1 of the First Protocol – Protection of Property must be considered.

#### 40. Article 8 states:

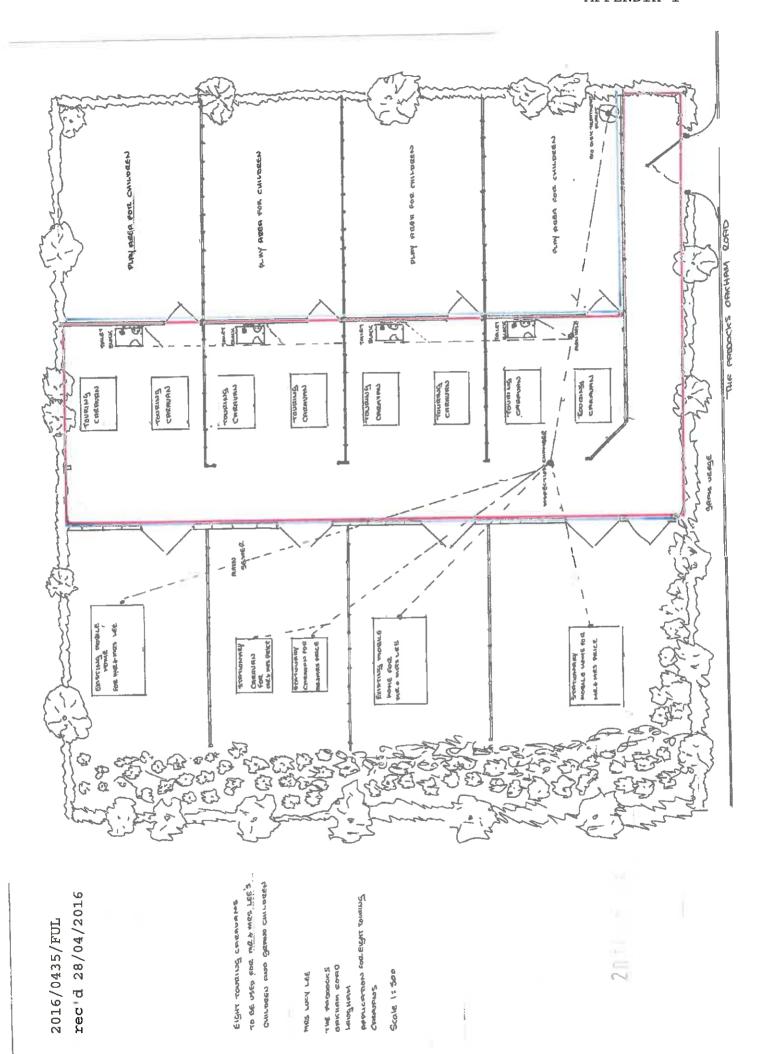
- Everyone has the right to respect for his private and family life, his home and his correspondence.
- There shall be no interference by a public authority with the exercise of this right except such as is in accordance with the law and is necessary in a democratic society in the interests of national security, public safety or the economic wellbeing of the country, for the prevention of disorder or crime, for the protection of health or morals, or for the protection of the rights and freedoms of others.

#### 41. Article 1 of the First Protocol states:

- Every natural or legal person is entitled to the peaceful enjoyment of his
  possessions. No one shall be deprived of his possessions except in the public
  interest and subject to the conditions provided for by law and by the general
  principles of international law...
- Whilst any committee decision must be proportionate taking into account the
  above rights and balancing with those with the public interest and planning
  policies, it should be noted that a number of Gypsies and Travellers have relied
  upon the above articles and it has been successfully argued that moving on
  Gypsy or Travellers from a camp site where they live might be a breach of Article
  8, unless they have somewhere else to go. Balanced against that, the statutory
  framework for determining planning applications and otherwise controlling

development afforded by the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 has been held to be compliant with Human Rights provided decision makers properly consider and weigh material considerations.

 If permission is granted the Human Rights Act is not engaged, if the permission is refused the applicant would have an opportunity to challenge any decision by way of an appeal to the Planning Inspectorate which provides a safeguard to Human Rights



2016/0435/FUL The Paddocks, Oakham Road. Variation of conditions 1 and 2 in relation to Planning Application APP/2013/0123. Additional eight caravans to be sited permanently for extended family to live on same site.

It is noted that no pre-application advice has been sought. Application APP/2012/0123 was approved for residential use for the benefit of Clifford and Lucy Lee, Joe and Lucy Price, Fred and Carolina Price and Saley and Alex Lee, and/or their dependent children only. The use was to be limited to occupation by four family units within the existing four pitches only, to a maximum of eight residential caravans. The number of caravans was not to be exceeded by a maximum of 10 days in any calendar year. Since the travellers occupied the site, Rutland County Council has shown no control over what happens there, and has often shown no desire to control it. In the past, residents of the site have consistently ignored the rules of their Planning Permission in terms of how many caravans can be on the site, and for how long, in any given 12 month period. Despite continual letters from Langham Parish Council advising that conditions have been broken. Rutland County Council have responded saying that the breaches are effectively acceptable as, a) the additional caravans will have left before the relevant paperwork can be completed, although they were not, or. b) that they are aware that the occupants wish to add more caravans to the site so the situation will be left as it is.

The original caravans have since been replaced by mobile homes with a more permanent appearance. This is no longer a Traveller Site, but a Park Home Site occupied by people who have a Romany heritage. It appears that some family members ceased living at the site on a regular basis some time ago except for times such as Christmas and New Year when a considerable number of caravans regularly exceeded the permitted time limits as outlined above.

The **Planning Policy for Traveller Sites, Aug 2015**, clearly states that local planning authorities should ensure that sites in rural areas respect the scale of, and do not dominate, the nearest settled community. The proposed variations of conditions 1 and 2 will ensure that the existing site will expand considerably, particularly as it cannot be long before grandchildren of the original inhabitants will want to move on to the site with their children.

If expanded by numbers of pitches and caravans, the above site, situated in open countryside, will dominate the landscape on the approach to Langham and will have little regard for the protection of the local environment, and indeed the planned limits of the settlement of Langham.

Many residents of the village, the elderly included, would love to have their families living closer but this is not possible as they are bound by planning law. Some residents have been refused permission to build, or convert buildings, within their gardens to accommodate older relatives, even recently. Any increase in the population of this site may increase tension within the settled community who often feel that their concerns are not addressed. Ideally, there should be peaceful and integrated co-existence between the site and the local community but gypsies do not often integrate with an established population.

As some family members have been living away from the above site it is difficult to see why it is now necessary to re-locate to Langham, particularly as no reasons have been given for wanting to vary the conditions apart from being family members. It is not known if the proposed additional family members intend to lead a nomadic lifestyle or if they intend to settle, perhaps siting a possible eight additional mobile homes to replace touring caravans.

Whilst this application, in itself, seems straightforward – its potential ramifications are not – especially if past history is taken as a guide to likely future actions. The occupants of this site look after it very well and are very pleasant people, but it is vitally important to a community that every member is treated equally. Furthermore, it is understood that the applicants own an adjacent field. If this application is granted will this then lead to further extended family being moved there and an a massive Park Home site being created?

As there is not a compelling case for expansion of this site and mindful of the Langham residents who have had to accept the 'status quo' the above proposal is not acceptable. The community very clearly, in their comments in the Neighbourhood Plan Survey, said they wanted no more traveller homes in Langham (100% of the responses said 'too many' or enough, see attached). As a small village, we have more than our share already, and a site of the size suggested is completely inconsistent with the character and appearance of Langham. The Langham Neighbourhood Plan Policy HR1c clearly states 'The Plan supports the Rutland County Council Gypsy & Traveller Accommodation Study 2013, which states there is no requirement for further sites in Langham – private, public or transit. Neither is there any requirement to extend the existing sites beyond their current size.'

Recommend refusal.

10<sup>th</sup> July 2016

