

Planning Committee: 06 October 2020

Item Number: 6

Application No: [W 19 / 0816](#)

Town/Parish Council: Sherbourne
Case Officer: Lucy Hammond
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Registration Date: 15/01/20
Expiry Date: 11/03/20

Coplow Wood, Sherbourne Hill, Sherbourne

Change of use of land and siting of 8no. glamping pods, with associated works and car parking FOR Mr Salisbury

This application is being presented to Committee due to the number of objections received.

RECOMMENDATION

That planning permission is granted subject to the conditions listed at the end of this report.

DETAILS OF THE DEVELOPMENT

Planning permission is sought for a change of use of land within a wooded area to facilitate the siting of 8no. glamping pods together with the necessary associated works and car parking. Each of the pods would measure 4.2m x 2.5m with a maximum height of 2.6m; the pods are tent-like in shape, but constructed from timber and would sit on a timber base attached to the ground using timber stakes, removing the need for any concrete or other permanent fixings.

Each cabin pod providing sleeping/living accommodation is provided with its own composting toilet and shower unit which each cover a floor area of 1.1 sq.m. and have a height of 2.2m. These would be fixed to the ground in the same way as the main sleeping cabin pod.

The proposals also include the provision of a parking area which is to be created in the open area of land to the north east of the main wood, accessed via an existing farm track which connects to an existing junction with the A46 and Watery Lane to the south, which leads to Sherbourne. It is not proposed to surface the parking area and access from the parking area to the pods themselves will be on foot along the existing track, with luggage transported via quadbike. It is not proposed to remove any significant trees as part of the proposal, with only minimal clearing works proposed to facilitate the creation of a glade in front of each pod.

THE SITE AND ITS LOCATION

The proposed site of the pods is located in open countryside, approximately 1km (as the crow flies) from Sherbourne which lies to the east, though in driving distance terms, the centre of Sherbourne village is further than this, at approximately 3km. The site is not within the West Midlands Green Belt and there

are no other particular landscape designations or other relevant site constraints applicable to this proposal, other than the fact it is an open countryside location.

The site proposed for the glamping pods sits within a densely wooded area, heavily landscaped with trees and other vegetation, on the south eastern side of the A46 Stratford Road, which at this point, is a dual carriageway. The nearest edges of the application site are approximately 85 metres back from the edge of the dual carriageway, with the rest of the site being further still from the main road. The proposed car park lies approximately 250m north east of the site of the pods and this is approximately 50m set back from the A46. There is a significant tree belt separating the site from the A46 along the entire perimeter boundary with substantial planting and soft landscaping between.

There are two residential properties adjacent to the north western edge of the application site and one residential property approximately 250m as measured from the north east site boundary, all of which front the A46. The site is otherwise surrounded by open fields. A public right of way lies close to the site along the south west side and travels south/south-east in the direction of Sherbourne, connecting to Fulbrook Lane, which leads into the village.

PLANNING HISTORY

None

RELEVANT POLICIES

- National Planning Policy Framework
- Warwick District Local Plan 2011-2029
- DS5 - Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
- PC0 - Prosperous Communities
- CT5 - Camping and Caravan Sites
- SC0 - Sustainable Communities
- BE1 - Layout and Design
- BE3 - Amenity
- TR1 - Access and Choice
- TR3 - Parking
- FW1 - Development in Areas at Risk of Flooding
- FW4 - Water Supply
- NE2 - Protecting Designated Biodiversity and Geodiversity Assets
- NE3 - Biodiversity
- NE4 - Landscape
- NE5 - Protection of Natural Resources
- Guidance Documents
- Parking Standards (Supplementary Planning Document)
- Air Quality & Planning Supplementary Planning Document (January 2019)
- Warwickshire Landscape Guidelines SPG

SUMMARY OF REPRESENTATIONS

Barford, Sherbourne & Wasperton Joint Parish Council: No objection

WCC Highways: No objection (previously recommended conditions and advisory notes no longer necessary due to revised scheme)

Highways England: No objections

Environmental Health: No objections

WCC Ecology: No objections subject to condition

Tree Officer: No objection subject to condition requiring further details of access and construction in relation to the creation of a glade in front of each pod

WCC LLFA: No objection subject to condition

Public Response: 5 letters of objection received raising the following material planning considerations:

- the access is not safe or suitable in the proposed location
- there is concern about the impact of the development on ecological features and wildlife
- there is concern about the privacy of neighbouring properties and overlooking
- there is concern about noise from both the use of the development and the nearby road

Other non-material planning considerations were also raised.

Officer note - during the course of the application, the proposals have been amended fundamentally such that the access to the site is no longer in the position originally proposed (Fulbrook Lane). The access is now in a completely different location which takes it away from the village and places it adjacent to a dedicated junction onto the A46, where it would utilise an existing track which runs parallel to the A46 and accesses the application site proposed for the glamping pods. To that end, the neighbour objections regarding access and highway safety concerns have been overcome though despite re-consultation on the amended red line site area and the amended plans, those objections have not been withdrawn which is why this application is still being presented to the Planning Committee (total of 5 neighbour objections).

ASSESSMENT

The main issues relevant to the consideration of this application are considered to be:

- Principle of development
- Visual impact / impact on landscape
- Impact on neighbouring / residential amenity
- Access and parking / highway safety
- Ecological impact and biodiversity

Principle of development

Policy CT5 of the Warwick District Local Plan states that camping sites for holiday and recreational use will be permitted where they can be satisfactorily integrated

into the landscape without detriment to its character, are in a location accessible to local facilities and would not generate significant volumes of traffic. The policy goes on to explain the requirements insofar as buildings (new or converted) will be deemed acceptable.

This application proposes a change of use of an area of land within an established woodland to facilitate the siting of 8no. glamping pods and associated works (composting toilet and shower units, car parking area) which is considered could be satisfactorily integrated into the landscape without detriment to its character, though this is covered under the relevant visual impact and landscape section below.

The location of the site is immediately adjacent the A46 dual carriageway, and sits close to the village of Sherbourne, noted as one of the District's Limited Infill Villages and therefore deemed appropriate to accommodate a proportion of new housing based on the range of services and facilities it offers. The site is also near to the town of Warwick which lies approximately 4km to the north east along the A46/Stratford Road. It is therefore considered that the development is in a location accessible to local facilities and based on the small scale proposal of only 8no. pods, would not generate significant volumes of traffic (this is covered in more detail in the relevant highways and parking section of the report).

Accordingly, the principle of development is considered acceptable in accordance with Policy CT5 of the Local Plan, subject to an assessment being made of the other relevant planning considerations set out below.

Visual impact / impact on landscape

Policy BE1 requires new development to positively contribute to the character and quality of its environment through good layout and design. Such ways through which this can be achieved may include (but will not be limited to) development proposals demonstrating that they (*bullet points correspond with the policy*):

- b) relate well to local topography and landscape features;
- e) enhance and incorporate important existing features into the development;
- f) respect surrounding buildings in terms of scale, height, form and massing;
- g) adopt appropriate materials and details;
- h) integrate with existing paths, streets, circulation networks and patterns of activity;

Policy NE4 broadly supports the above, stating that new development should positively contribute to landscape character and requires development proposals to demonstrate that they (*bullet points correspond with the policy*):

- b) consider its landscape context, including the local distinctiveness of the different natural and historic landscapes and character, including tranquillity;
- c) relate well to local topography and built form and enhance key landscape features, ensuring their long term management and maintenance;
- d) identify likely visual impacts on the local landscape and its immediate setting and undertakes appropriate landscaping to reduce these impacts;
- e) aim to either conserve, enhance or restore important landscape features in accordance with the latest local and national guidance;

- f) avoid detrimental effects on features which make a significant contribution to the character, history and setting of an asset, settlement, or area;
- g) address the importance of habitat biodiversity features, including aged and veteran trees, woodland and hedges and their contribution to landscape character, where possible enhancing these features through means such as buffering and reconnecting fragmented areas;

The proposal involves the siting of 8no. timber pods and their respective shower/toilet units (1.05 x 1.05m) within an area of woodland but in such a way that would not result in the loss of any trees. Behind the significant tree belt that separates the A46 from the site of the proposed pods (measuring between 50m and 100m in depth), some of the tree planting thins and there are natural clearings. It is within these natural clearings that the pods are proposed to be sited.

The method of construction involves siting each pod on a timber base attached to the ground using timber stakes. This removes the need for any concrete or other permanent fixings and further minimises any potential risk to the root protection areas of trees in closest proximity to the pods.

A schedule of trees, undertaken by an Arboriculturalist, was submitted with the application which has been considered by the Council's Tree Officer who has also carried out their own independent site visit of the site and surroundings. It is noted that the Schedule contains guidance and recommendations with regard to carrying out the development and minimising any disturbance to the trees within the site.

The Tree Officer confirms there is no objection in principle to the development subject to a condition being imposed on any forthcoming permission requiring further details in respect of the access and construction details and any felling that might be associated with the creation of a glade in front of each pod. To that end, it is considered the most appropriate way to encapsulate all the necessary information would be in a construction method statement, which would be required prior to the commencement of development. While such a statement would normally be reserved for highway safety/environmental health related reasons, it is considered entirely reasonable and appropriate, in this instance, to impose such a condition related specifically to the protection of trees and further safeguarding of this woodland and surrounding landscape.

Subject to the imposition of the aforementioned condition officers consider the development is acceptable in terms of its impact on the local topography, area of woodland and the wider landscape and accordingly complies with Policy NE4.

In more general design and visual impact terms, the pods would be constructed entirely from timber and are designed not to leave a permanent scar on the landscape given they do not necessitate a concrete or other more permanent base. Their overall visual impact in scale, mass and bulk terms would, in officers' opinion, be limited due to their diminutive size. Moreover, the limited number of eight pods across the site would result in substantial gaps between them creating a sense of spaciousness and retaining the original character and sense of woodland that the site presently has. For this reason, it is considered appropriate to place a condition on any forthcoming permission limiting the number of pods to eight, as illustrated on the proposed drawings; the reason for this relating to the continued

protection of the visual amenities of the area and the safeguarding of the woodland and associated trees within it.

Accordingly, officers are satisfied that the development is acceptable in general design and layout terms as such accords with Policy BE1.

Impact on neighbouring / residential amenity

Policy BE3 states that development will not be permitted that has an unacceptable adverse impact on the amenity of nearby uses and residents. At the same time, the policy also requires development to provide acceptable standards of amenity for all future users and occupiers of the development.

The site is set back some distance from the A46 with a substantial tree belt ranging in depth between 50m and 100m. The Senior Environmental Health Officer has considered the proposed development from a noise perspective and raised no objection. Officers are therefore satisfied there would be no harmful impacts on users of the glamping site resulting from road noise from the A46.

The nature of the proposed site is unlikely to result in any harmful impacts on the amenity of residential properties in the vicinity in a physical sense (overlooking, overbearing, loss of light) given the minimal scale of the pods and the distances involved between the proposed site of the pods and the nearest neighbours. The EHO has confirmed there are no objections with regard to noise.

Officers are therefore satisfied that the development is acceptable in this regard and as such accords with Policy BE3.

Access and parking / Highway safety

Policy TR1 requires development to provide safe, suitable and attractive access routes for all road users while policy TR3 requires development to make provision for parking which complies with the parking standards set out in the most recent Parking SPD.

The access arrangements have been subject to a number of amendments through the course of this application. They are no longer proposed to come through the village of Sherbourne, which is the reason a number of local objections were generated in response to the application. In liaison with both the County Highways Authority and Highways England, responsible for trunk roads (A46 dual carriageway), the applicant has amended the proposed access to the site in such a way that is now deemed acceptable to all relevant parties and statutory consultees.

The access is proposed north east of the site, approximately 1.1km away, at a point where the A46 turns off onto Watery Lane which leads into Sherbourne village but also provides access along an existing track that runs parallel with the dual carriageway, behind the existing roadside boundary vegetation, into the site. This is already surfaced, informally, and it is not proposed to alter this in any way. A new section of track is proposed connecting the existing track to the proposed car park which would follow the same specifications as the existing track in terms of width, surfacing etc and would also include passing bays. The track leads to the proposed car park area, approximately 850m west of the access. This is also not

proposed to be surfaced and would provide parking for at least 10no. vehicles on the existing grassed surface. From here, a footpath link only provides a connection to the pods for users of the site.

The Parking SPD does not have a specific standard for camping sites and to that end it is appropriate to assess such a proposal on a case by case basis. In this instance, 8no. pods (or individual pitches) are proposed and a minimum of 10no. parking spaces can be accommodated within the proposed parking area, which, given the pods only accommodate one double bed, is considered, in officers' opinion, to be reasonable, proportionate to the proposed scale of development and acceptable such that it would not cause detriment to highway safety. Moreover, the premise on which this glamping site is based, is around a car free development; i.e. patrons arrive at the site, leave their car at the car park and walk the rest of the way to their pod where they will stay for the duration of their trip, much like other woodland based holiday parks such as Center Parcs (albeit that is on a much larger scale). Another benefit of this arrangement is to minimise the physical impact on the woodland itself, by keeping vehicles away from the trees where the pods are located and negating the need to have vehicular tracks through this part of the site.

Both the Highways Authority and Highways England have confirmed there are no longer any outstanding objections to this latest proposal and these revisions to the access arrangements no longer necessitate the need for any recommended conditions, or advisory notes with respect to highway safety.

Officers are therefore satisfied that the development will in no way be detrimental to highway safety and the parking provisions are equally acceptable. As such the development accords with Policies TR1 and TR3.

Ecological impact and biodiversity

Policy NE2 requires designated areas and species of national and local importance to be protected for biodiversity and geodiversity. The application site is identified as a potential Local Wildlife Site, potentially of County importance. In this regard, the policy states that development will not be permitted that will destroy or adversely affect such a site unless it can be demonstrated that the benefits of development clearly outweigh the nature conservation value or scientific interest of the site and its contribution to wider biodiversity objectives and connectivity. Policy NE3 requires development not to lead in any losses to biodiversity and to avoid any negative impacts on existing biodiversity.

The County Council Ecologist has considered the proposals and provided a series of comments and recommendations including the need for further survey work to be undertaken, all of which has subsequently been carried out. Additionally, a Local Wildlife Site (LWS) survey has been carried out by the LWS Project Officers as per the recommendations of the County Ecologist.

Based on the information provided by the LWS team and the ecological reports submitted with the application, the County Ecologist has confirmed that if the site is managed responsibly and the woodland outside the camping area is enhanced by favourable management, the proposed change of use will not have a negative

effect on the site overall and will result in a net biodiversity gain as demonstrated in the Biodiversity Impact Assessment (BIA) submitted.

The County Ecologist has confirmed the application can now be recommended for approval, subject to a condition requiring a Landscape and Ecological Management Plan. Officers are therefore satisfied the development is now acceptable in this regard and accords with Policies NE2 and NE3.

Other matters

With respect to drainage matters, the Lead Local Flood Authority has reviewed the submitted Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) and confirmed there are no objections in this regard subject to a condition requiring the development to be carried out in accordance with the approved FRA (dated July 2019). Officers are satisfied the development accords with Policies FW1 and FW4.

With respect to contaminated land the EHO has considered the application and confirmed there are no objections and recommended no conditions in this regard. Officers are satisfied the development accords with Policy NE5.

Having regard to the aforementioned landscape and ecology matters, and the fact the current proposals are deemed acceptable, officers consider it appropriate to place a restrictive condition on any forthcoming permission, limiting the number of pitches to 8no. as illustrated on the submitted drawings. It is not unusual for campsites to have such a condition on the permission limiting the number of pitches in any case, and this would ensure that should the applicant wish to increase the number of pitches in the future, this would be subject to a future planning application.

SUMMARY / CONCLUSION

The principle of development is considered acceptable in accordance with Policy CT5 of the Warwick District Local Plan 2011-2029. There would be no visual harm resulting from the development and more importantly, no harm caused to the area of woodland in which the site is located or wider landscape setting. The proposed timber pods themselves are considered to be appropriate to the site and context and their construction method is deemed appropriate in order to minimise any physical harm to the trees and woodland setting, subject to a condition requiring further details in respect of construction and access. Officers are satisfied there would be no harm to neighbouring amenity nor would there be any harmful impacts on future users of the site as a result of noise. There would be no detriment to highway safety; the access is considered safe and suitable in the proposed location and the appropriate amount of parking is proposed. Subject to a condition, there are no concerns in respect of biodiversity and drainage and flood risk matters are considered acceptable. For the above reasons, it is recommended that planning permission be approved, subject to the conditions listed below.

CONDITIONS

- 1 The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this permission. **REASON:** To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).
- 2 The development hereby permitted shall be carried out strictly in accordance with the details shown on the site location plan and approved drawing 002 and specification contained therein, submitted on 16 May 2019 and approved drawing 001C, 006, 007 and BDS-08-18 Rev.C and specification contained therein, submitted on 15 January 2020. **REASON:** For the avoidance of doubt and to secure a satisfactory form of development in accordance with Policies BE1 and BE3 of the Warwick District Local Plan 2011-2029.
- 3 No part of the development hereby permitted shall commence until a detailed Landscape and Ecological Management Plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The plan should include description of features to be managed, aims and objectives of management, prescriptions of management actions and a work schedule capable of being rolled forward over a repeating five-year period. Such approved measures shall thereafter be implemented in full. **REASON:** To ensure a net biodiversity gain in accordance with Policies NE2 and NE3 of the Warwick District Local Plan 2011-2029 and the NPPF.
- 4 Notwithstanding the details submitted as part of the application, no part of the development hereby permitted shall commence until a Construction Method Statement (CMS) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The CMS shall provide for the access and construction details for the pods, including (but not necessarily limited to) method of delivery, method of construction and details of any felling that may be associated with the creation of a glade to the front of each pod. The development hereby permitted shall only proceed in strict accordance with the approved CMS. **REASON:** In order to protect and preserve existing trees within the site which are of amenity value in accordance with Policies BE1 and NE4 of the Warwick District Local Plan 2011-2029.
- 5 No development or other operations (including demolition, site clearance or other preparatory works) shall commence unless and until a scheme for the protection of all existing trees has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and thereafter, the development shall be carried out in strict accordance with such approved measures which shall remain in place for the full duration of any such construction work. In addition no excavations, site works, trenches or channels shall be cut or pipes or services laid, no fires shall be lit within 10 metres of the nearest point of the canopy of any protected tree(s); no equipment, machinery or structure shall be attached to or supported by a protected tree(s); no mixing of cement or use of other contaminating materials or substances shall take place within, or close enough to, a root protection area that seepage or

displacement could cause them to enter a root protection area or any other works carried out in such a way as to cause damage or injury to the tree(s) by interference with their root structure and that no soil or waste shall be deposited on the land in such a position as to be likely to cause damage or injury to the tree(s). **REASON:** In order to protect and preserve existing trees within the site which are of amenity value in accordance with Policies BE1 and NE4 of the Warwick District Local Plan 2011-2029.

- 6 The existing tree(s) and shrub(s) indicated on the approved plans to be retained shall not be cut down, grubbed out, topped, lopped or uprooted . Any tree(s) or shrub(s) removed, dying, or being severely damaged or diseased or becoming, in the opinion of the local planning authority, seriously damaged or defective, within five years from the substantial completion of development shall be replaced, [as soon as practicable/ within the next planting season] with tree(s) and shrub(s) of the same size and species as that originally planted . All tree(s) and shrub(s) shall be planted in accordance with British Standard BS4043 - Transplanting Root-balled Trees and BS4428 - Code of Practice for General Landscape Operations (excluding hard surfaces). **REASON:** To protect those landscape features which are of significant amenity value and which ensure a satisfactory standard of appearance of the development in the interests of the visual amenities of the area in accordance with Policies BE1 and NE4 of the Warwick District Local Plan 2011-2029.
- 7 The development hereby permitted shall be carried out strictly in accordance with the approved Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) prepared by Willis & Co and dated July 2019. **REASON:** To prevent the increased risk of flooding in accordance with Policy FW1 of the Warwick District Local Plan 2011-2029.
- 8 The development hereby permitted shall not be occupied unless and until a scheme for the provision of adequate water supplies and fire hydrants, necessary for fire fighting purposes at the site, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and the approved scheme has been implemented in full in strict accordance with the approved details. **REASON:** In the interest of the fire safety and protection of public safety and to satisfy Policy BE1 of the Warwick District Local Plan 2011-2029.
- 9 The use of the site for glamping purposes hereby permitted shall be limited to up to and including 8 pitches at any one time, in accordance with approved drawing BDS-08-18 Rev.C. **REASON:** In the interests of protecting a site of local importance for biodiversity and protecting the landscape character in accordance with Policies NE2 & NE4 of the Warwick District Local Plan 2011-2029.
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