

PLANNING COMMITTEE	DATE: 25/09/2017
REPORT OF THE SENIOR PLANNING AND PUBLIC PROTECTION SERVICE MANAGER	PWLLHELI

Number: 4

Application Number: C17/0459/04/LL

Date Registered: 21/07/2017

Application Type: Full - Planning

Community: Llandderfel (inc. Llanfor)

Ward: Llandderfel

Proposal: A full application to modify the layout of a caravan site in order to site a total of 92 static caravans, including 30 static caravans (8 relocated within the site) which will replace 35 touring caravans, a reduction in the density of static caravans, and environmental improvements

Location: Llawr y Betws Caravan Park, Glan yr Afon, Corwen, Gwynedd, LL21 0HD

Summary of the Recommendation: TO APPROVE WITH CONDITIONS

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1. Description:

- 1.1 A full application to modify the layout of a caravan site in order to site a total 92 static caravans, including 30 static caravans (8 relocated within the site) which will replace 35 touring caravans, a reduction in the density of static caravans, and environmental improvements. There is extant permission for 70 static caravans, and 35 touring caravans. The static caravans are sited on two different fields within the site; this application will not involve extending the site's boundaries.
- 1.2 The site is located in a natural narrow valley, and trees and mature hedgerows grow along the boundaries. Along the site's northern boundary a small stream (Nant y Gangen) flows, agricultural fields abut the site to the west and a county road runs along its southern boundary. To the east of the site is a traditional farm house and buildings owned by the applicant. As part of the proposal, detailed plans of the site were submitted as it currently exists and also its proposed layout.
- 1.3 The site in its entirety has a surface area of approximately 2.8 hectares, and the site is located in the countryside outside any boundary recognised in the adopted Development Plan. The site is served by a class three county road which leads off the A494 trunk road located to the south east of the site.
- 1.4 The application is a large application as defined by Planning Act (Wales) 2015; the application has also been screened in accordance with the relevant environmental legislation. The application is submitted to Committee as it involves a development of five caravans or more. The following documents were submitted as part of the planning application:
- Soft landscaping and planting scheme
 - Ecological report
 - Pre-application Consultation statement
 - Planning and Access Statement
 - Linguistic and Community Statement

2. Relevant Policies:

- 2.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and paragraph 2.1.2 of Planning Policy Wales emphasise that planning decisions should be made in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Planning considerations include National Planning Policy and the Local Development Plan.
- 2.2 The Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015 places a duty on the Council to take reasonable steps in exercising its functions to meet the 7 well-being goals within the Act. This report has been prepared in consideration of the Council's duty and the 'sustainable development principle', as set out in the 2015 Act. In reaching the recommendation, the Council has sought to ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.
- 2.3 **Gwynedd and Anglesey Joint Local Development Plan 2011-26 adopted 31 July 2017 (LDP)**

Strategic Policy PS 1: The Welsh Language and Welsh Culture
Policy PCYFF2: Development Criteria

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Policy PCYFF3: Design and place shaping
Policy PCYFF4: Design and landscaping
Policy TWR 3: Permanent alternative static caravan and chalet and camping site
Policy TWR 4: Holiday Occupancy
Policy TRA 2: Parking Standards
Policy TRA 4: Managing Transportation Impacts
Strategic Policy SP: The Visitors' Economy
Policy AMG 3: Protecting and improving features and qualities that are unique to the Character of the Local Landscape

2.4 National Policies:

Planning Policy Wales (Edition 9, November 2016)
Technical Advice Note (TAN) 5 - Nature Conservation and Planning (2009)
Technical Advice Note (TAN) 12: Design (2016)
Technical Advice Note (TAN) 13: Tourism (1997)
Technical Advice Notes (TAN) 18: Transport (2007)

3. Relevant Planning History:

PEN.R.374 - Permission to site a caravan - approved with a condition - 31 May 1961

PEN.R.560 - Permission to establish a caravan park - approved with conditions - 31 July 1964

PEN.R.687 - Permission to site 10 touring caravans and 10 static caravans - approved with conditions - 14 January 1969

PEN.R.889 - Permission to site 20 touring caravans and 20 static caravans - approved with a conditions - 14 January 1969

PEN.R.1084- Permission to site 70 static caravans and 15 additional touring caravans - approved with conditions - 21 October 1972

PEN.R.1186 - Static caravans and additional toilet block - no record of decision

PEN.R.1291 - outline permission to change a touring caravan park into a static caravan park - approved with conditions - 18 October 1973

5/63/23 - Outline permission to convert outbuildings into holiday accommodation - Approved with conditions - 27 October 1987

5/63/23A - Permission to site 20 static caravans, and 20 additional touring caravans - refused - 16 September 1986

5/63/23B - Amended application to site 85 static caravans and 35 touring caravans - refused - 13 August 1987

C15/0065/04/LL - Compound to store three LPG gas cylinders - approved with conditions - 14 April 2015

Prior to the submission of the application a consultation was held and pre-application advice was given to the applicant's agent.

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4. Consultations:

Community Council:	Not received
Transportation Unit:	I refer to the above application and wish to state that I do not intend to submit a recommendation as it is assumed that the proposed development will not have a detrimental impact on any road or proposed road. Supportive of the proposal to site static caravans on the site rather than touring caravans.
Natural Resources Wales:	We recommend that the Local Planning Authority only give planning permission for the development if a condition relating to external lighting be included for the site. The condition is recommended in order to protect bats and their habitat.
Welsh Water:	As the developer intends using the existing private sewage treatment works, we have no observations.
Public Protection Unit:	Not received.
Countryside and Access Unit:	It does not appear as though any recorded Rights of Way will be affected by this proposal.
Biodiversity Unit:	The ecological report by Chris Hall has been included with the application. I agree with the recommendations therein. A condition should be included so that the measures listed in part 7 of the report are strictly adhered to.
Economy and Infrastructure Department - Welsh Government:	No recommendations, but offers a note about future developments.
Caravans Officer:	<p>This application is welcomed. A site visit was arranged for 09-08-17 and it can be seen that the application is based on making improvements. It was noted that the site needed to be improved as matters existed which contravene licensing conditions and pose a risk of fire spreading from one caravan to another.</p> <p>There is a lack of space between units, hedgerows and so on with space between caravans which creates a risk of fire spreading from one caravan to another. The applicant confirmed that improvements to the site were ongoing.</p>
Public Consultation:	<p>A notice was posted on the site and nearby residents were notified. The advertising period has ended and correspondence was received offering observations on the application on the following grounds:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proposal would benefit the area;

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5. Assessment of the material planning considerations:

The principle of the development

5.1 The site is not located within any landscape that has an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) or Special Landscape Area (SLA) designation. The principle of extending static caravan holiday sites is therefore being dealt with under Policy TWR 3: permanent static caravan and chalet and alternative camping sites of the LDP. Clause 4 of the policy involves proposals to improve existing static caravan sites and supports proposals to improve sites outside the AONB/SLA through:

- small extensions to the area of a site, and/or
- the relocation of units from prominent locations to less prominent locations, and/or,
- small increase in the number of units on the site

and there will be a need to comply with a series of criteria, namely:

iv. That the proposed development is part of a scheme to improve the range and quality of tourist accommodation and facilities on the site;

v. That the proposed development offers substantial and permanent improvements to the design, layout and appearance of the site and its setting in the surrounding landscape.

vi. In terms of sites located within the Coastal Change Management Area, the proposed development is part of a wider plan to improve the safety of the residents of the caravans or chalets;

vii. That any increase in the number of static caravan holiday units or chalets is minor and is commensurate with the scale of any improvements to the site;

viii. That it is appropriate in the context of other policies in the Plan."

5.2 Paragraph 6.3.74 of policy TWR 3 states *"Outside the Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the Special Landscape Areas, it is possible for permission to be granted for a minor increase in the number of units on site if it is possible to demonstrate that the proposal offers substantial landscape and environmental improvements to the site and reduces its impact on the landscape and environment. 'Minor' in terms of extending the area of the site has not been defined. Usually, improving the setting and location of the units, along with improving internal circulation, parking spaces and landscaping would mean having the same number or fewer units on the site. However, it is recognised that there are cases where improvements to the landscaping could lead to an increase in the number of units, as long as the increase is minor and that the increase in the number of units does not create unacceptable harm to the appearance of the site."*

5.3 This proposal will not involve extending the boundary of the site as the proposal will lead to the removal of touring caravans from the field at the westernmost part of the site and replacing them with static caravans. One criterion states that the development is part of a plan to improve the range and quality of visitor accommodation and facilities on site. The plan includes relocating eight units, landscaping work within the site and on its boundaries, along with improvements to the existing play area on site. It is considered that these elements of the application will improve the site. In order to relocate and site the new caravans, the plan involves losing an area. This is, therefore, considered to be an improvement to the existing site and, as such, the proposal complies with the requirements of criterion 1.

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- 5.4 In relation to criterion 2, developments are required to offer substantial and permanent improvements to the design, layout and appearance of the site and its setting in the surrounding landscape. As previously stated, the plan involves relocating eight static units, landscaping work to the interior of the site and its boundaries, and improvements to the play area. It must be emphasised that the existing site is not a prominent feature in the existing landscape as it is located within a natural valley; furthermore, there are existing hedges and trees around its boundaries which hide it from public areas. It is considered that these elements of the application will improve the site, especially the landscaping work, and the landscaping aspect will be elaborated upon later on in this report. It is considered that the proposal, therefore, complies with the requirements of criterion 2.
- 5.5 The site is not within a Coastal Change Management Area, therefore, this criterion within policy TWR 3 above is not relevant. Criterion 4 notes that any increase in the number of static units should be minor and commensurate with the scale of any improvements to the site. The explanation of the policy further states that this is a rough increase of 10% above the number of units that existed prior to making the first application to increase the number of units; nevertheless, it states that this is a general guideline and that each application should be considered on its own merit. In this case, the proposal involves siting 30 static caravans on the touring part of the site, namely an increase from the existing 70 to 92 (8 units being relocated from the existing site), an increase of 31%. Despite this, the proposal could be considered in two parts:
- An increase of 10% to the existing static units - 7 static caravans.
 - Replacing the 35 existing touring caravans with 15 additional static units.
- 5.6 It is considered that an increase of 10% (7 additional) as noted above, is acceptable, and that it complies with the requirements of TWR 3 of the LDP in terms of expansion. It is also considered that replacing 35 touring units with 15 additional static units is an improvement to this specific site as it would lead to a decrease in general traffic flow along the narrow back roads leading to the site. It is important to bear in mind that the proposal will not create an additional visual impact, and the standard of provision on offer will be a great improvement. It is considered that this part of the proposal is, therefore, a minor increase to the site in its entirety and that it is commensurate with the scale of the site and improvements. It is considered that the proposal in this case complies with the requirements of TWR 3 of the LDP.

Visual amenities

- 5.7 The nature of the landscape in this area of Meirionnydd is agricultural and hilly. The Landscape Capacity and Sensitivity Assessment prepared on behalf of Snowdonia National Park, Anglesey and Gwynedd by Gillespies LLP, describes the landscape as one of a moderate nature with a medium to high sensitivity to static caravan developments. LANDMAP assesses its character and quality of its views as being of moderate quality.
- 5.8 As previously noted, it is a change within an existing site that is being considered here, and the site is well screened from far and near by hedgerows and trees that surround the site. In addition, the site is located within a natural valley in the landscape which means it is hidden. It is, therefore, considered that the layout, appearance, and scale of the site is acceptable. The site is adjacent to one of the main gateways to the south of the county, namely the A494 trunk road; views of the site from the direction of the A494 are few and far between because of trees and

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vegetation and the impact on views from that direction will, therefore, be very low. Also, it is considered that the standard of tourist provision will be improved, the external setting and atmosphere of the site will be better as a result of the proposal to reduce the density and to landscape the site's surroundings.

- 5.9 TWR 3 explanatory notes state that a number of existing caravan sites need to be upgraded and improved in order to improve standards. Observations by the Council's Caravans Officer notes that the proposed improvements to the layout of the site are to be welcomed for it to comply with health and safety legislation.
- 5.10 A soft landscaping and planting plan was submitted by Tirlun Barr as part of the application. This plan includes a proposal to remove existing conifers along the boundaries of the site and plant deciduous trees and hedgerows in their stead. This plan states that birch, oak and alders will be planted, along with hedgerows with a combination of hawthorn, blackthorn, hazel, elder, holly and rowan. Furthermore, the field adjacent to the site will be sown so that it becomes a wild flower meadow. The proposed work will be an improvement, and the existing boundaries of trees and hedgerows will be reinforced as a result. In order to ensure that the static units placed on site blend in, it is considered reasonable to impose a condition on the permission stating that their finished colour be agreed in writing with the Council. It is, therefore, considered that the proposal complies with the relevant criteria of policies CYFF 3 and 4 of the LDP.

General and residential amenities

- 5.11 As previously noted, the proposal involves making changes within the existing boundaries of the caravan park, and the land upon which the the static caravans are proposed to be sited is already being used as a touring caravan site. The area has a very low density of residential houses; the nearest residential house (not owned by the applicant) is approximately 140 metres away from the site. One letter was received by a nearby resident stating that there was no objection to such a development and that it would benefit the area. It is, therefore, not considered that this development will have any additional harmful impact on the amenities of nearby residents. The proposal is, therefore, considered to be in keeping with the relevant clauses of policy CYFF 2 of the LDP.

Transport and access matters

- 5.12 It is proposed that the existing entrance to the site be used for the development. The Transportation Unit submitted observations on the proposal and there is no objection to the proposal. In their response, they welcomed the fact that static caravans would replace the touring units on the site as this would lead to less traffic on the nearby roads. A parking space has been provided for each caravan as part of the proposal. The Economy and Infrastructure Department, Welsh Government, did not have any recommendations for the proposal. Whilst there is no public transport network close to the site, it must be remembered that the changes in question are to an existing caravan park and not related to the establishment of a new park. Consequently, the proposal is considered to be acceptable in terms of road safety and policies ARA 2 and 4 of the LDP.

Biodiversity matters

- 5.13 As part of an application of this scale, the agent/applicant was required to provide an ecological report. This report was written by Chris Hall Ltd. The report includes clear

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recommendations on measures that will be necessary to protect any badgers, otters, shrews, bats, reptiles, and nesting birds. Natural Resources Wales and the Council's Biodiversity Unit in their response stated that they were happy with the standard of the report. The Biodiversity Unit stated that it would like the development to be carried out in accordance with the measures and recommendations included in the reports. Natural Resources Wales also stated that they wished that details for lighting the site be submitted for the Authority's approval. It is considered that both these conditions are acceptable and reasonable to be included on any permission if granted.

- 5.14 As noted above, a comprehensive soft landscaping and planting plan by Tirlun Barr was submitted as part of the application; this plan includes a proposal to remove the existing coniferous trees along the site's boundaries and plant deciduous trees and hedgerows in their stead. Furthermore, the field adjacent to the site will be sown so that it becomes a wild flower meadow. The proposed work will be an improvement in that it will provide a better habitat for species and would, therefore, be a substantial improvement in terms of biodiversity that could be attracted to inhabit the site. In order to ensure that this plan is implemented within a reasonable time scale, it is considered reasonable to impose a condition on any permission noting that the plan should be carried out within the first planting season before the caravans are occupied.
- 5.15 Paragraph 6.3.7 of Technical Advice Note 5: Planning and Nature Conservation states that Local Planning Authorities should not give planning permission unless satisfied that the proposed development will not have a detrimental impact on any bats on the site or that each of the three criteria for approving the feasibility licence are likely to be met. No other option is considered to exist in this case. Furthermore, it is considered that the measures proposed by Natural Resources Wales and the Council's Biodiversity Officers ensure that no protected species or their habitats will be harmed as a result of the proposal. Furthermore, it is not intended to extend the site's boundaries, and all improvements will be located on land which is already being used as a caravan site. Should these conditions be included, it is considered that the proposal complies with policy AMG 3 of the UDP and TAN 5 which involves the safeguarding of protected species and their habitats.

The Welsh Language and Welsh Culture

- 5.16 As part of the application, a Linguistic and Community Assessment was submitted in accordance with the requirements of strategic policy PS1 of the LDP which notes that Councils will promote and support use of the Welsh language. The conclusions in this report state that redeveloping the site would strengthen the community and consequently the Welsh language through supporting local businesses and services. It also notes that the company employs Welsh speakers and that their jobs would be safeguarded if permission were granted. In response to a consultation, the Joint Planning Policy Unit stated that the situation of the Welsh language in the Llandderfel ward was relatively healthy, noting that, on the whole, the scale of the proposed development was unlikely to have a detrimental impact on the Welsh language, dependent on a planning condition restricting occupancy of the units to holiday use only. It is therefore considered that the proposal satisfies the requirements of policy PS 1 of the LDP above.

The economy

- 5.17 Planning Policy Wales is also highly supportive of tourism developments; paragraph 11.1.1 of this document states that:

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“Tourism is vital to economic prosperity and job creation in many parts of Wales. It is a significant and growing source of employment and investment, based on the country’s cultural and environmental diversity. Tourism can be a catalyst for environmental protection, regeneration and improvement in both rural and urban areas.”

In addition, paragraph 11.1.7 states that tourism developments *“are an essential element in providing for a healthy, diverse, local and national economy”*. Paragraph 4 of TAN 13 (Tourism) reiterates this, stating that tourism makes a great contribution to the economy in Wales, providing vital jobs especially in rural areas. The proposal in question relates to increasing the number of caravans on an existing site for an existing development, and it is considered that such a development would contribute positively to the area’s economy.

6. Conclusions:

- 6.1 The application involves replacing a touring caravan site with a static caravan site, also relocating some from their current sites. It is considered that the proposal, if permitted, would improve the appearance of the site by making it more tidy and attractive, rather than its current form which is more restricted and dense. It is also considered that the landscaping and planting work proposed would substantially improve the existing situation. Based on the above assessment, and having considered the relevant matters, it is considered that the proposal is neither contrary to local and national policies and guidelines noted in the assessment, nor are there any material planning considerations that state otherwise. Based on the above, it is considered that the proposal is acceptable subject to relevant conditions.

7. Recommendation:

7.1.1 To approve – conditions:

- 1 Five years in which to commence the work
- 2 In accordance with the plans permitted
- 3 Holiday use only
- 4 Restricting the number of static caravans on the site to 92 only, no touring caravans
- 5 Plans for lighting the site must be submitted for approval, and the plan must be delivered within a specific timescale
- 6 Landscaping and planting plan to be carried out within the first planting season following completion of the development or before the static caravans that are the subject of this permission are occupied (whichever comes first)
- 7 Submit details for the play area within a month of work commencing, and complete it prior to occupying the static caravans that are the subject of this permission
- 8 The development to be carried out strictly in accordance with the measures and recommendation of the ecological report submitted
- 9 Colours of the static caravans to be agreed in writing before being sited on the site

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