

<b>REFERENCE NO -</b> 20/505320/FULL		
<b>APPLICATION PROPOSAL</b> Removal of the existing timber framed wash-room facilities serving 14 plots and replacement with traditional style construction on existing footprints. Renewal of the mains water and mains electrical for direct billing. Repair of the foul water drainage system (cesspit and pumping station). Replacing 6 lighting columns and adding an additional lighting column.		
<b>ADDRESS</b> Water Lane Caravan Site Water Lane Harrietsham ME17 1DH		
<b>RECOMMENDATION</b> Application Permitted		
<b>SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION</b> The works proposed are necessary upgrades to out of date and/or poor quality facilities and should be supported. The proposals are considered to accord with relevant national and local planning policies.		
<b>REASON FOR REFERRAL TO COMMITTEE</b> Maidstone Borough Council is the applicant.		
<b>WARD</b> Headcorn	<b>PARISH/TOWN COUNCIL</b> Ulcombe	<b>APPLICANT</b> Maidstone Borough Council <b>AGENT</b> Faithorn Farrell Timms
<b>TARGET DECISION DATE</b> 27/01/21		<b>PUBLICITY EXPIRY DATE</b> 07/01/21

### **Relevant Planning History**

79/0344

Proposed Gypsy Camp and other Travellers Caravan Site as amended by Housing Officer's memorandum dated 21st March 1979.

Approved Decision Date: 10.05.1979

91/1215

Refurbishment of existing caravan site including re-building of 7 no. existing washroom blocks and new service mains and sewage disposal. .

Approved Decision Date: 11.10.1991

### **MAIN REPORT**

#### **1. DESCRIPTION OF SITE**

- 1.01 The application site has a site area of 0.75 ha and is set in a countryside location to the east of Kingswood and north of Ulcombe. It is surrounded by Ancient Woodland on which there is a TPO and which also forms the King's Wood and Abbey Wood Local Wildlife site.
- 1.02 It is set along a single width road, 280 m north from the junction with Chegworth Road with a wood yard to the immediate north.
- 1.03 The existing site is a Council run Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Park accommodating 14 active pitches.
- 1.04 There are 7 "semi-detached" wash-room facilities, each occupies a footprint of approximately 16 sqm. The existing amenity buildings are of a timber-framed construction which has been encased with a brickwork outer skin. Each Amenity Building serves two pitches: each pitch has its own entrance door thus maintaining a private entrance per pitch.

## **2. PROPOSAL**

- 2.01 The existing amenity blocks are considered to be in a poor condition. There is insufficient heating in colder weather and the lack of insulation and poor ventilation of the units has resulted in the blocks suffering from condensation issues that make them unpleasant, damp and extremely cold.
- 2.02 The proposal is that they be demolished, new foundations created and rebuilt as traditional brick-built structures using traditional red fair faced brickwork with upvc windows with painted half glazed timber doors and a gable ended pitched roof with artificial slates. They will measure 4.3m by 4.4m and be 3.6m to the ridge. They will include a worktop area and separate shower room or bathroom. The doorways will have a level access.
- 2.03 The intended works include a new mains electricity and water supply to each pitch with meters to allow direct billing with the suppliers.
- 2.04 The application form incorrectly states there is a septic tank, which is a structure which drains naturally to ground. It has been since been clarified that current foul drainage system is a cesspit with a pumping station. The existing pumping station has failed and has to be regularly emptied using tankers. The existing rising main is believed to be the cause of the failure. The current strategy would be to repair the system including the pump. If it transpires that an upgrade is needed (eg a package treatment plant or larger cesspits) this will need a future separate application.
- 2.05 There are 6 existing light columns on the site and it is intended to replace them with new galvanised lighting columns with LED luminaries, integrated photocells and time clocks. The replacement ones will be in similar locations along the access roadway with a 7th column being added at the end of the access road to the left fork. Lighting units will be residentially suited Kirium Eco Mini: they will have a yellow tone colour temperature of 2,200K. The height originally proposed was 6m but confirmation has been given that this will be revised to 5m height (as existing).

## **3. POLICY AND OTHER CONSIDERATIONS**

Maidstone Borough Local Plan 2017: SP17; DM1; DM3; DM30  
Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2016  
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)  
National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

## **4. LOCAL REPRESENTATIONS**

### **Local Residents:**

- 4.01 n/a

## **5. CONSULTATIONS**

(Please note that summaries of consultation responses are set out below with the response discussed in more detail in the main report where considered necessary)

### Ulcombe PC

- 5.01 No objections. However, ensure that minimal/lower lighting is used in this rural location. A recent broken pipe resulted in sewage being removed by tankers. It is hoped that this situation will be rectified with this application.

### SWS

- 5.02 The Environment Agency should be consulted directly by the applicant.

Environmental Protection

5.03 No comments.

Forestry Commission

5.04 No comments but provide details of Government Policy relating to ancient woodland and information on the importance and designation of ancient woodland.

Natural England

5.05 Referred to Standing Advice on impacts on protected species.

KCC ( H&T)

5.06 No comment.

**6. APPRAISAL**

**Main Issues**

6.01 The key issues for consideration relate to:

- Countryside Location
- Design and Appearance
- Groundwater Protection

**Countryside Location**

6.02 The site is subject to policy SP17 which states that development proposals in the countryside will not be permitted unless they accord with other policies in this plan and they will not result in harm to the character and appearance of the area.

6.03 The works proposed in terms of visual structures is the replacement of the amenity buildings and lamp columns, all generally similar to those in situ and within an enclave of an established relatively densely developed caravan site. I therefore consider that in the context of the general like-for-like aspect of the proposals, there is no harm to the character and appearance of the area and no breach of SP17 or national policies that protect the countryside for its own sake.

**Design and Appearance**

6.04 Policies DM1 and DM30 relate to the need for high quality design. The new amenity blocks and lamp columns are appropriate in form, scale and materials. The new lamp columns being 5m tall respects the residential setting.

**Groundwater Protection**

6.05 Non-mains drainage is not ideal. Policy DM3 of the MBLP requires control of pollution to protect ground and surface waters where necessary and mitigate against the deterioration of water bodies and adverse impacts on Groundwater Source Protection Zones.

6.06 The site is not located on a Source Protection Zone and this application only includes the repair of an existing system. Connection to the main is unlikely to be feasible. If it transpires that upgrade works are necessary, this would be the subject of a separate application on which the views of the Environment Agency would need to be sought.

**Other Matters**

6.07 The new lamp columns are to be on photocell timers and the LEDs will be the lowest colour temperature which is least harmful to wildlife. There is no impact on the TPO,

Ancient Woodland or Local Wildlife site surrounding so local Policy DM3 or national policies on these issues are not breached.

- 6.08 The changes to allow for water and electricity metering are not considered to have any impacts in land use terms.
- 6.09 The Minerals Safeguarding is not affected by the replacement of existing structures.
- 6.10 The proposed development is CIL liable. The Council adopted a Community Infrastructure Levy on 25 October 2017 and began charging on all CIL liable applications approved on and from 1 October 2018. The actual amount of CIL can only be confirmed once all the relevant forms have been submitted and relevant details have been assessed and approved. Any relief claimed will be assessed at the time planning permission is granted or shortly after.

#### **PUBLIC SECTOR EQUALITY DUTY**

- 6.11 Due regard has been had to the Public Sector Equality Duty, as set out in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. It is considered that the application proposals would not undermine objectives of the Duty.

#### **7. CONCLUSION**

- 7.01 The works proposed are necessary upgrades to out of date and/or poor quality facilities and should be supported. The proposals are considered to accord with relevant national and local planning policies.

#### **8. RECOMMENDATION**

GRANT planning permission subject to the following conditions:

- 1) The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission;

Reason: In accordance with the provisions of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

- 2) The development shall be carried out in accordance with the following drawings:

T1-5254 dwg 2      Amenity Building Location Plan

T1-5254 dwg 4      Proposed Floor Plan and Elevations

T1-5254 dwg 5      Light Column Positions

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt.

- 3) The materials to be used in the development hereby approved shall be as indicated on the approved plans unless otherwise approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure a satisfactory appearance to the development.

- 4) The external lighting to roadways shall be 7no. Kirium Eco Mini lighting columns of 5m height with colour temperature of 2200K and shall be retained as such thereafter.

Reason: In the interests of rural character and biodiversity.

**INFORMATIVES**

- 1) You are advised that any future changes to the foul drainage strategy should be discussed with the Environment Agency prior to submission of a planning application.
- 2) You are advised that any future changes to the surface water drainage should be discussed with KCC (Flood and Water Management).

Case Officer: Marion Geary