

Concern has been raised regarding the following:

- **Sewage treatment plant:** Stated capacity for 500 persons but a maximum of 900 persons will be on site at peak times.

The applicant advises that including this proposal, the site will have a total of 135 caravans. At an expected occupancy of 5/6 persons per unit this will result in approximately 600 persons being accommodated. Fifty seven of the caravans are served by three septic tanks which are emptied weekly with the remainder using the sewage treatment plant.

- **Capacity of the site to accommodate 900 persons:** The applicant advises there are 216 caravans in total spread across four different sites. The additional workers will be housed off site and brought in when necessary.
- **Increased production:** The applicant acknowledges increased year on year fruit production will result in the need for further caravans. If the anticipated production increases are achieved the applicant will consider his options including providing additional caravans at other sites.
- **Area of caravans excessive:** The applicant advises that this is a productive and efficient farming enterprise requiring a large workforce as a consequence. The accommodation required is proportionate to the needs of the enterprise and excess provision would make no sense in business terms.
- **Traffic and highway considerations:** The applicants advise that workers are moved from farm to farm by minibuses and buses which also take them shopping once a week. The intention is to locate workers on or close to farm/s to reduce vehicle movements. In addition only a small percentage of workers own cars.

In addition letter of objection has been received which is summarised as follows:

- No notice of application received and only came to attention as a consequence of site notice posted in New Road.
- Part retrospective nature of the proposal shows complete disregard for the planning process presenting decision makes with a fait accompli in dealing with this application.
- Proposal appears confused as to occupation levels and periods of occupation requiring clarification.
- Allowing a significant increase in the number of employees living on site will lead to intensification of use far beyond what is reasonable.
- Will result in harm to the free flow of traffic and highway safety if the intention is to store the additional units on site and move them to other locations during harvest time.
- Additional access onto New Road unjustified while local road network cannot cope with additional HGV movements.
- Limits should be placed on traffic movement onto New Road which should not be used as an alternative access for commercial vehicles entering and leaving the site.

- Additional traffic turning onto the main road will further erode highway safety. Does not consider that sufficient measures are taken to employ local labour in favour of foreign workers.

Response of Head of Planning and Development:

Though the above clarification is useful, it must be reiterated that planning permission for the stationing of the caravans and hence consideration by Members **is only required** for their storage when unoccupied. In these circumstances both traffic generation and waste will be nominal and as such capable of being dealt with by the existing highway network and waste disposal facilities.

Notwithstanding the above, should waste disposal provision prove inadequate causing problems, this would be dealt with by the Environment Agency under its pollution prevention powers.

Regarding neighbour consultation, the statutory consultation requirement is to either display a site notice or to send out individual neighbour notification letters. The Councils practice is to do both to ensure to minimise the possibility that persons who may have an interest in a planning application are unaware of it.

Clearly considering applications on a retrospective basis is undesirable. However the Council is required to consider them in the same way as any other planning application.

Turning to the highway and traffic concerns raised by the objector, these have already been addressed. However the suggested restriction on use of the access onto New Road to only serve this development and not to be used for commercial traffic generated by the wider complex is considered a reasonable additional safeguard.

Conditions 2, 3 and 5 to be amended as follows:

(2) No more than 76 caravans shall be on the site at any one time. Occupation of the caravans by seasonal workers as shown on drawing no: DHA/10683/04 shall take place as follows:

Group A 1-24 (inc) -1st December to end of February.

Group B 25-48 (inc) -1st January to 31st October

Group C 48-76 (inc) -31st May to end of February

For the remaining period the site shall only be used for the storage of seasonal workers caravans and for no other purpose whatsoever.

Reason: To maintain control over the use on the interests of amenity and to prevent year round occupation.

(3) Prior to commencement of the development hereby approved details of (a) the additional tree planting to the existing Alder windbreaks to the east of the proposed caravans and

gapping up of the hedgerow on the northern boundary of the farm and (b) details of hedgerow transplantation or a replacement native species hedgerow to mitigate hedgerow loss due to the provision of access and sight lines onto New Road, shall be provided for prior approval in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The planting shall be carried out in the first available planting season following approval. Any trees/shrubs becoming dead, dying or diseased within 5 years of planting shall be replaced with one of the same size and species and retained in accordance with the terms of this condition.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity.

(5) If the caravans are not used for accommodating seasonal or general agricultural workers for two consecutive years they shall be removed from the site by the subsequent 1st of April and the land on which they are sited shall be restored within 3 months to its previous condition unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity.

Additional condition:

The approved access onto New Road shall not be used by HGV's or any other commercial vehicles. Prior to the use of the access, details of signs and any physical measures to be put in place to secure this shall be submitted for prior approval in writing to the Local Planning Authority, and the approved signs and measures shall be put in place and shall be retained as such at all times thereafter.

Reason: In the interests of the free flow of traffic and highway safety.

Recommendation:

My recommendation remains unchanged.