

Application No: 20/4189M

Location: LAND EAST OF WOOD LANE NORTH, ADLINGTON

Proposal: Change of use of land for outdoor recreational purposes (camping) and associated facilities

Applicant: Mr P Kemp

Expiry Date: 24-Dec-2020

**SUMMARY:**

This is a small-scale major application for the change of use of land for outdoor recreational purposes (camping) and associated facilities.

The application was submitted in September 2020 and cannot be recommended for approval as there are technical outstanding matters that remain to be addressed.

Public comments were received from 256 addresses.

Given the length of time the application has been with the Local Planning Authority, the significant public interest and that the scheme has failed to progress in a timely fashion, it is considered appropriate to bring the application before members of northern planning committee for a determination.

This will hopefully update interested members of the public and inform the applicants on the acceptability of the scheme as currently submitted.

Paragraph 148 of the Framework requires decision makers to ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt. Other considerations in favour of the development must clearly outweigh the harm. However, the Framework states at paragraph 148 that very special circumstances will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.

It is considered that the scheme would result in harm to the openness of the Green Belt and would represent encroachment. The scheme would therefore be inappropriate development and, by definition, harm the Green Belt.

As currently submitted, the proposals are not considered to provide the required level of detail to fully evaluate the arboricultural impacts, the long-term sustainability and future management of the site. This is also the case with the now out of date ecological surveys, thereby preventing a fully informed assessment of the ecological impacts of the proposals. The proposal would be contrary to the interests of highway safety by reason of inadequate

visibility at the point of access. Further information is also required relating to the noise impacts of the proposal in terms of the impact upon nearby residential properties.

Any economic and tourism benefits are of limited to moderate weight in favour of the proposal. As such, the harm to the Green Belt together with the harm to highway safety, and the lack of information relating to trees, ecology and noise is not clearly outweighed by the other considerations identified and therefore the very special circumstances necessary to justify the development do not exist. Accordingly, the proposal does not comply with the development plan, and is not a sustainable form of development.

**SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION:**

Refusal Approval.

**REASON FOR REPORT:**

This application is referred to the Northern Planning Committee as a 'Small-Scale Major Development' relating to a site of more than 1ha, in accordance with the Council's Scheme of Delegation.

**PROPOSAL:**

This application seeks full planning permission for the change of use of land for outdoor recreational purposes (camping) and associated facilities.

The scheme proposes to establish two zones of holiday accommodation, providing facilities within safari glamping tents, and timber glamping pods. The development comprises a mixture of facilities and includes:

- Six glamping safari tents;
- Nine pods;
- Communal wash facilities;
- Parking and cycle facilities; and
- Communal campfire areas.

Access to the site is proposed via a private driveway running in an easterly direction from Wood Lane North, a cul-de-sac in private ownership. The pods and tents will not be accessed directly by car. Instead, the site will provide a single vehicle access and parking area.

**DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND CONTEXT:**

The application site sits within an area of unmanaged woodland, covering approximately 9.8 acres (3.97ha) located to the northeast of Adlington.

The site contains a large area of coniferous plantation woodland, broad-leaved woodland, and continuous scrub with a pond and a stream. The plantation trees are mostly pine which have

been planted in a linear fashion. The understorey of the plantation is dominated by bare ground and fallen trees.

To the southern edge of the site is an area of existing hardstanding, adjacent to the site access and will be used for the proposed car parking area. The site sits immediately adjacent to Middlewood Way and a number of footpaths are in the area, being Adlington Footpath 51, Pott Shrigley FP23 and the Macclesfield Canal.

The site is within the Green Belt, an Area of Special County Value, and is on the fringe of the Peak District National Park.

### **RELEVANT HISTORY:**

None

### **POLICIES:**

#### **Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy (CELPS):**

MP1 Presumption in favour of sustainable development  
PG1 Overall Development Strategy  
PG2 Settlement hierarchy  
PG3 Green Belt  
PG6 Open Countryside  
EG2 Rural Economy  
EG4 Tourism  
SC3 Health and Wellbeing  
SD1 Sustainable development in Cheshire East  
SD2 Sustainable development principles  
SE1 Design  
SE3 Biodiversity and geodiversity  
SE4 The Landscape  
SE5 Trees, Hedgerows and Woodland  
SE6 Green Infrastructure  
SE13 Flood risk and water management  
SE15 Peak District National Fringe  
Appendix C – Parking Standards

#### **Saved policies of Macclesfield Borough Local Plan (MBLP):**

RT8 Access to Countryside  
GC1 The Green Belt  
NE1 Area of Special County Value  
NE3 Landscape  
NE11 Nature Conservation  
DC3 Protection of the amenities of nearby residential properties  
DC6 Safe and convenient access for vehicles, special needs groups and pedestrians  
DC8 Landscaping  
DC9 Tree protection  
DC35 Materials and Finishes  
DC36 Road layouts and circulation

## DC38 Space, light and Privacy

### **Other Material Considerations:**

National Planning Policy Framework (The Framework)

National Planning Practice Guidance

Cheshire East Design Guide

### **CONSULTATIONS (External to Planning):**

#### Manchester Airport:

No objections, subject to Conditions.

#### Environmental Health:

No objections, subject to Conditions.

#### Canals and River Trust:

No comments to make.

#### Head of Strategic Transport:

Objections as further information is required.

#### Lead Local Flood Authority:

Objections due to lack of Flood Risk Assessment and drainage strategy for the site.

#### Forestry Commission:

General observations made.

#### The Cheshire Wildlife Trust:

Raised objections on the following grounds: -

- Environmental Impact Assessment;
- Rams Clough;
- Biodiversity Net Gain; and
- Protected & Priority Species
- 

#### Adlington Parish Council:

Adlington Parish Council recommends refusal of this planning application on the grounds: -

- Inappropriate development in the Green Belt with no exceptional circumstances;
- Access to the site entrance is via rural lanes and access to the site itself is via a narrow single-track lane, all of which are unsuited to the increased traffic movements which would be associated with this size of development;
- Of particular concern is that the narrow site access lane is unsuitable for emergency vehicle access, particularly fire engines which, given the proposed use of wood burning stoves and outdoor fire areas must be able to access the site in case of emergency;
- The development will result in reduced amenity to nearby residents particularly in terms of noise from the site itself as well as from the increased vehicle movements along the lanes leading to and from the site, including service vehicles relating, for example, to waste collections. The area has very few residents and the proposal would result in the number of guests far outweighing the number of residents in its vicinity; and

- The Parish Council also raised concerns regarding disturbance to wildlife within the site itself and wildlife and livestock on the land surrounding the site, including horses at the neighbouring stables.

#### Poynton Town Council:

Although this site is in a neighbouring parish, Poynton Town Council wish to object to the application on the following grounds and as we are highly concerned at the increased risk of flooding in Poynton: -

- The proposals for a car park, cabin, gazebo and at least nine “pods” and six semi-permanent “safari tents” would certainly raise water run-off from the site into Rams Clough and then Poynton Brook;
- This would be increased by new paths, with the soil being compacted and hardened by people walking and lighting campfires. All this water would flow into Poynton Brook and so increase the risk of flooding in Poynton, as happened in July 2019, leading to the destruction of the bridge over Moggie Lane and the flooding of numerous houses and commercial premises downstream; and
- No development should be permitted that increases flood risks in this way.

#### Pott Shrigley Parish Council:

Although this site is in a neighbouring parish, Pott Shrigley Parish Council wish to object to the application on the following grounds: -

- Noise pollution;
- Nature disturbance; and
- Unsuitability of country roads.

### **REPRESENTATIONS:**

The application has been duly advertised by means of direct neighbour notification letters, site notice and newspaper advert. Public comments were received from 256 addresses.

Letters of objection were received from 169 addresses and their objections can be summarised as follows: -

#### Traffic/Access:

- Inadequate access;
- Parking is insufficient;
- Up to 70 people could be accommodated;
- Wood Lane North often blocked by bin lorries and delivery vehicles;
- Private track – no consultation with owners and residents;
- Entry to site is on a bend with restricted vision in both directions. Cannot be improved as all trees on the track and Wood Lane North have TPOs;
- Will add undue traffic to rural community;
- Track is unlit;
- Traffic has tripled in past 15 years;
- 17 visitor cars plus staff and deliveries;
- People Wood Lane North to access Middlewood Way, additional traffic would be dangerous;
- Visitor parking would overspill onto Wood Lane North;

- Will cause congestion and disruption to Wood Lane North, only suitable for minimal traffic;
- Wood Lane North is just used as access for residents and by walkers, dog-walkers, families with buggies, and horse riders and cyclists, who will be put at risk;
- Wood Lane North has no footpaths or streetlights. Same for surrounding lanes as well;
- Comings and goings would be concentrated at arrival and departure times, rather than spread throughout the day;
- Residents walking along Wood Lane North already have to duck out of the way of vehicles;
- Wood Lane North is a no through road with no turning facilities at the end;
- Will put considerable strain on local infrastructure;
- Lane wouldn't support additional traffic;
- Increase in traffic along Dickens Road;
- Junction is dangerous;
- Wood Lane North is narrow and will cause access issues for existing users;
- Would put extra pressure on Moggie Lane area and bridge;
- No shops close to site so traffic on Dickens Lane and Moggie Lane would increase;
- Surrounding roads flood regularly requiring diversions;
- The road will be so busy I won't be able to ride my horse here and will be forced to move;
- Doesn't appear to be adequate parking provision;
- Application assumes visitors will only be leaving and arriving once a day, this is vastly underestimating traffic flows;
- Would worsen existing poor road surface conditions;
- Construction phase will generate traffic and require large commercial vehicles;
- No local shops so campers will need to drive;
- These are country lanes which are not suitable for the potential volume of traffic; and
- Will there be disabled parking?

#### Nature Conservation / Ecology:

- These woods hold a considerable amount of wildlife that is currently left kept from all humans;
- Will spoil /disrupt natural habitat – noise and light pollution will be detrimental to animals;
- This area has remained untouched for a number of years;
- Effect on protected wildlife – would be forced out of the woodland;
- Should be a protected wildlife area;
- Proposes the destruction of a wooded area that support our endangered wildlife;
- Barn owls, badgers, birds, newts, bats, buzzards, sparrows, foxes, deer, insects, invertebrates, otters;
- Significant loss of habitat for wildlife;
- Might cause increased sediment load to watercourse and oil and fuel contamination;
- Destruction or disturbance of terrestrial and/or aquatic environments and habitat loss, pollution and disturbance may cause species displacement;
- Habitat survey was undertaken in October, not optimal time of year;
- Survey focusses on specific protected species, with no consideration to other important wildlife species;
- The area around the bridge is a renowned birdwatching spot with quite rare birds;
- There are pristine streams at the far end of the site, are they being protected by fencing;
- More intense use of bridge might disrupt bats roosting underneath;

- Photos of deer and newt submitted; and
- Loss of ecological habitat due to tree and scrub clearance.

#### Trees:

- Estimate that 300 trees would be removed. No plan shows the amount of trees to be removed;
- A significant number of trees would be removed;
- Would result in loss of woodland. There is very little woodland in the area.;
- Destruction of woodland for glamping pods is unethical and antisocial;
- Woodland absorbs and stores carbon dioxide, chopping them down would release it;
- Construction will result in destruction of woodland which is there for everyone to enjoy; and
- The "mitigation measures" are unconvincing.

#### Flood Risk:

- Tree removal will increase flood risk, contributing to existing high flood risk in local area;
- Wastewater from development will add water to soak-away;
- Works may cause soil compaction, effecting water flows;
- Wood Lane North already floods, development would exacerbate this;
- Bridge on Moggie Lane was washed away recently;
- We live on Wood Lane North and having ongoing flooding in our garden, this will make it worse; and
- Poynton's outdated sewerage systems are already overstretched.

#### Other issues:

- Applicant is taking advantage of Covid;
- There are no nearby amenities so won't benefit local economy;
- People will likely bring their own food and drink so won't spend in the local area;
- Commercial property in non-commercial area;
- Increase in use of Middlewood Way, already extremely busy, will make social distancing harder;
- Public footpaths are already very busy;
- Noise and disruption from site will harm tranquillity of Middlewood Way;
- No mains drainage, no sewer in area. Assume that outflow from a treatment facility would discharge into ditches on Middlewood Way;
- Will be for commercial gain of a small number of individuals;
- Concern about impact of toilets sinks and showers on existing sewer system – which was overwhelmed in 2016 and 2019 causing flooding;
- There is existing provision – large caravan park nearby and camping sites. These are never full;
- Development is unnecessary;
- Lack of demand. Who wants to camp in Poynton. No need for additional provision;
- Would harm existing local businesses;
- Local businesses have had significantly smaller businesses refused. Approval would be unfair;
- Will be expensive and not available to all. Woodland should be accessible to all;
- Will not be used by nature lovers but corporate doos, stags and hens;

- Didn't get a letter;
- Site notice not posted;
- Access lane is currently locked at night, proposal will result in security risks for other owners/occupants along the private lane;
- Won't use locally generated electricity;
- Would be an eyesore;
- No adequate waste disposal;
- Infrastructure in close proximity to watercourse may cause bank destruction and instability;
- Will require land take and loss of land;
- Would diminish night sky;
- Site has already been advertised on Facebook; how can this be acceptable;
- Bridge is showing signs of deterioration, unclear whether it can support the increase in traffic. Unclear whether permission has been sought from the owners of the bridge;
- Would create precedent for future expansion on the site, further exacerbating problems;
- Applicant has no experience of developing and managing this type of development;
- What are the opening times, and time of year?
- Glamping better suited to open fields;
- Do we have the resources to police this?
- A similar application on Shrigley Road South was refused;
- There is no mains water supply;
- Application doesn't mention materials for the pods. Specific design details missing;
- Fail to see what benefit it will bring to the area; and
- Supporting comments are from outside the area and should be given less weight.

Letters of support were received from 86 addressed and their comments can be summarised as follows: -

- Strong demand for this type of facility, will bring jobs and income into the area;
- Traffic shouldn't be an issue due to the volume;
- Would like to see commitment to replacement woodland;
- Should be sharing our lovely part of the UK;
- Will create much-needed jobs;
- We need this to bring more visitors in;
- My family love to camp and if we didn't have to travel far to do it that would be perfect for my family;
- Will be an excellent addition to the local community;
- Local facilities would bring finances and tourism to the local area;
- This would be amazing for families from the area and from further afield;
- Will encourage visitors to our lovely area and thus support our precious local businesses;
- Cheshire East needs more outdoor retreats from everyday life;
- Will be an asset to the community; and
- Any investment in Poynton is welcome.

## **OFFICER APPRAISAL:**

### **Green Belt:**



The Framework states that the construction of new buildings within the Green Belt is inappropriate development, but Paragraph 149 lists certain forms of development which are exceptions to this.

One such exception is criterion b) *“the provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of land or a change of use) for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation, cemeteries and burial grounds and allotments; as long as the facilities preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it;”*

CELPs Policy PG3 of the Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy 2010-2030 (July 2017) replicates the Framework approach to development within the Green Belt, listing the same exceptions to inappropriate development.

‘Saved’ Policy GC1 of the Macclesfield Borough Local Plan (2004) (MBLP) criterion 2. Also allows for essential facilities for outdoor sport and outdoor recreation, for cemeteries, and for other uses of land which preserve the openness of the green belt and which do not conflict with the purposes of including land in it.

Camping is considered to be a form of outdoor recreation, and therefore the proposal may be considered under this exception to inappropriate development. Outdoor recreation facilities are not inappropriate development in the Green Belt as long as they preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land in it.

The scheme proposes to establish two zones of holiday accommodation, providing facilities within safari glamping tents, and timber glamping pods. The development comprises a mixture of facilities and includes:

- Six glamping safari tents, with the potential for 4 additional tents;
- Nine camping pods;
- Communal wash facilities;
- Parking and cycle facilities;
- Communal campfire areas;
- A timber decked area on the existing pond, and a timber gazebo
- Informal play area and picnic benches

The majority of the site is currently comprised of unmanaged woodland, all of which was planted sometime after 1945, having previously been a clear site. There are no buildings currently on the site.

No plans and elevations for the camping pods or the tents have been submitted, however they are shown on the proposed site layout. The camping pods would each have a footprint of approximately 14sqm or 22sqm (as the type of unit varies). Images within the planning statement suggest that they would be approximately 2.5-3m in height. They would be timber structures and positioned within the southern part of the woodland. The safari tents would each have a footprint of approximately 52sqm or 62sqm (as type varies) and images in the planning statement suggest that they will be approximately 3.5-4m in height. These units will be located within the more central area of the site. The amenity building has a height of 4m and footprint of 78sqm and will be positioned close to the entrance of the site adjacent to the southern boundary of the site.

The safari tents are described as semi-permanent structures within the planning statement. They appear to be constructed with a timber frame with canvas (or similar) used for the walls and roof. The camping pods will be constructed in timber and insulated to allow for all year-round use, which suggests an even greater degree of permanence.

The proposed change of use for camping purposes would encompass the whole site although the proposed facilities would be positioned within the central and southern sections of the site. However, the permanent / semi-permanent facilities as proposed, would extend into the site (from the access road) by approximately 180m and across the site by approximately 85m. This is within a site that is currently undeveloped. The proposed camping facilities would therefore result in built development where there is presently none, over a large expanse. It would encroach significantly into the undeveloped woodland and countryside.

The existing hardstanding at the site access appears to have blended into the landscape, and therefore the creation of a formal access and parking area, which will be occupied by parked cars, together with the proposed amenity building will reduce the openness of the Green Belt at the site frontage. The level of activity associated with the proposed use will also increase significantly over the existing, which will also serve to reduce the openness of the Green Belt.

It is accepted that, whilst not entirely clear from the information submitted, the woodland if retained to the site boundaries would reduce the visual loss of openness in terms of the structures to the rear of the site, but in spatial terms, for the reasons set out above, openness would not be preserved. It is also noted some of the activity arising from the proposed use, such as traffic generation, would take place outside of the woodland, thereby resulting in some loss of visual openness.

It is therefore considered that the proposal fails to preserve the openness of the Green Belt and conflicts with the purposes of including land within it by reason of encroachment into the countryside. The proposal is therefore inappropriate development in the Green Belt, which is harmful by definition and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. The proposal is also, contrary CELPS Policy PG3 and Saved MBLP GC1, which seek to protect the Green Belt from inappropriate development.

### **Arboricultural Implications:**

CELPS policy SE 5 relates to Trees, Hedgerows and Woodland. It seeks to protect trees, hedgerows and woodlands, that provide a significant contribution to the amenity, biodiversity, landscape character of historic character of the surrounding area. Saved MBLP policy DC9 seeks to protect trees and woodlands, worthy of formal protection, from development unless certain circumstances apply.

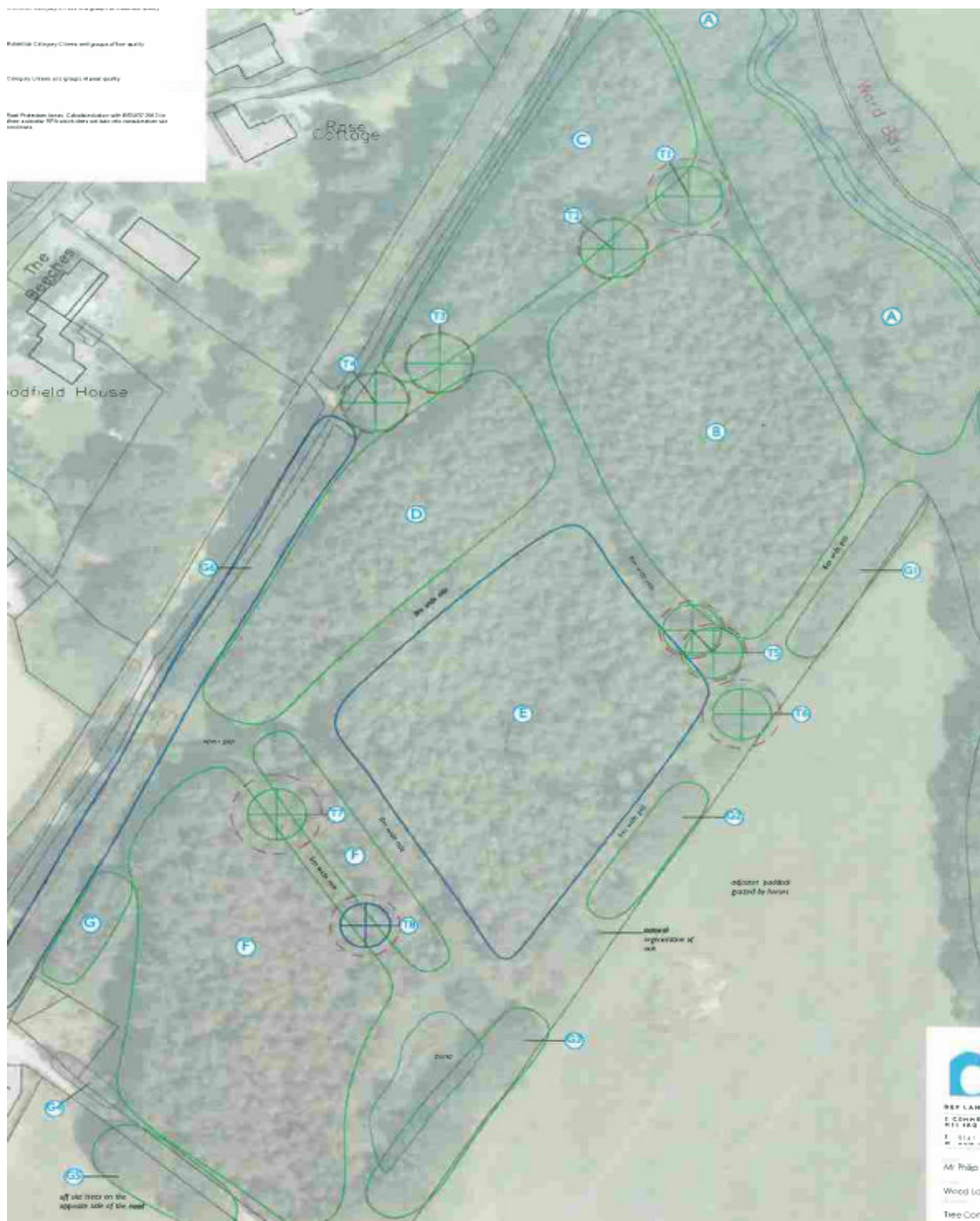
The application site comprises of an early mature Coniferous woodland plantation located to the east side of the Middlewood Way, within an area of open countryside which links to Priority Habitat Woodland to the north.

There are no Tree Preservation Orders on or adjacent to the woodland, and the site is not within a Conservation Area. There are some TPO trees along the access road from Wood Lane, which appear to be unaffected. Areas of the woodland area were noted to be subject to a Felling License Agreement (*Referenced 010/65/07-07*) which expired in 2011/2012.

An Arboricultural Report has been submitted with the application.

Tree Removal:

The site survey has separated the site into eight woodland blocks, eight individual trees and six groups. As shown below:



To accommodate the proposal as submitted, the report has identified that the majority of one of these blocks (Block E) would need to be removed. Selective removal of trees in another block (Block F) and one of the groups (Group 4) are indicated to accommodate the pods.

The expired Felling License Agreement had previously provided consent to undertake:

- Selective felling/thinning within Woodland Blocks B, D, E and F of this report; and
- Clear fell Woodland Block G, and the south west side of Woodland Block F.

It is noted that Block A, which is recorded on the National Forest Inventory and Priority Habitat Inventory as Rams Clough, is not presently subject to any Felling Licenses. Minor selective thinning is proposed within this compartment to encourage mainly broadleaved species.

The report submitted states that 'A Category' trees in Blocks, A, B, C and D will not be impacted although all would benefit from thinning. The report proposes that the majority of the 'B Category' trees in Block E would require removal based on their existing poor condition and this would provide space to accommodate the indicated central open area. More selective thinning is proposed to 'A Category' trees in Block F to accommodate smaller camping pods.

In summary 'A Category' individual trees; T1, T2, T3, T4, T5, T6, T7, and 'A Category' Group trees G1, G2, G3, G5 & G6 should not be impacted by the proposal. 'B Category' individual tree T8 and 'B Category' Group trees G6 should not be impacted by the proposal.

'B Category' trees in Block E are shown for removal with selective thinning for the 'A Category' trees in Block F and a semi-mature group of 'C Category' low-quality trees in Group 4.

It is acknowledged that the principle of selective felling/thinning to blocks B, D, E and F has previously been consented by the Forestry Commission. Irrespective of the fact that the Felling License consents have expired, the thinning of trees remains an arboriculturally justifiable management operation, although not for the purposes of development.

It is unlikely that the proposed location for the pods and most intensive clearance of trees within Block E would have a significant impact on the wider amenity of the area with the most intensive area of clearance contained internal to the surrounding site, assuming the external/fringe areas of the woodland are to be retained and managed.

The development will however create a net loss of woodland for which no proposals have been put forward to replace. Information in terms of re-stocking, as well as information which demonstrates a commitment to improve species diversity would demonstrate a commitment to improve the biodiversity of the site.

#### Other works affecting trees:

The impact of the proposal in terms of removals to accommodate the route of proposed 8 and 4 metres wide tracks/woodland rides and access around the site, as well as the position of the pods and glamping tents in relation to trees to be retained has not been considered in full.

The supporting reports states that paths will be; 'no dig' using wood chip and timber log edgings. It is stated that; the only services brought into the woodland would be drinking water and perhaps some electric for lighting. However, the detail as to the route of such services and manner in which they would be installed has not been provided. It is also suggesting, that

given the extensive nature of the camping accommodation, a requirement for more extensive routing of services, in terms of foul water and drainage through the woodland may be required.

#### Tree protection:

The supporting reports indicate that tree protection is not considered to be necessary. However, it is considered that in the absence of any detail regarding the pod construction and how these would be installed, or how services will be brought into the woodland, or the manner in which excess timber arising from thinning operations will be extracted, this assessment could be considered to be a little premature.

The Councils Arboricultural Section has advised that the position of tree stems immediately around areas where pods and tracks are proposed, or services are to be routed would be required to provide more clarity in terms of tree removals and impacts on the wider woodland.

#### Long-term sustainability and future management:

CELPS Policy SE5 requires that all developments should ensure the sustainable management of trees, woodlands and hedgerows including the provision of new planting within new development to retain and improve canopy cover, enable climate adaptation resilience and support biodiversity.

Reference to mitigation planting is made within the landscape strategy but aside from this statement, little information has been submitted regards planting proposed in mitigation for tree losses. This planning application provides an opportunity to incorporate new planting and demonstrate the viability of the longer-term management of the woodland area in accordance with this policy.

Without specific proposals to mitigate for the loss of the trees to be felled or a Woodland Management Plan, the applicant cannot demonstrate a commitment to the long-term sustainability and future management of the site given the proposed change of use, and conflict with policy SE5 can be identified.

#### **Highway Safety, Access, and Parking Provision:**

CELPS Policy CO1 deals with Sustainable Travel and Transport. It seeks to encourage a shift away from car travel to public transport, cycling and walking.

Saved MBLP Policy DC6 relates to circulation and access. It sets out the circulation and access criteria for new development. This includes amongst other matters, the provision of adequate visibility splays, manoeuvring vehicles, and emergency vehicles.

Access to the site is via a private driveway running in an easterly direction from Wood Lane North, a cul-de-sac in private ownership. The pods and tents will not be accessed directly by car. Instead, the site will provide a single vehicle access and parking area. This will require a walk of up to 180m for some guests with luggage, provisions etc, which may result in pressure for vehicle access routes to be provided in the future.

The Council's Highway Infrastructure Manager has reviewed the information submitted in relation to visibility splays, and whilst it is noted that development traffic generation will be modest, they are concerned by the low level of available visibility to the north of the access.

The visibility to the north of the junction is only 15 metres at 2 metres back from the edge of the main road. Firstly, the Highways Authority would expect a setback distance of distance of 2.4 metres to be used rather than two metres. Secondly the 15-metre visibility is well below the 28 metres suggested by the speed surveys, even allowing for a small reduction in speed as vehicles approach the access due to the alignment of the road.

On this basis, it is the view of the Council's Highway Infrastructure Manager that the junction in its present form is not safe and suitable to serve any development that would result in an intensification of the use of the junction by vehicular traffic.

The Council's Highway Infrastructure Manager has also stated that justification for the level of car parking provision should be undertaken and it is noted that no provision appears to have been made for cars with trailers. Furthermore, it is considered that insufficient information has been provided to demonstrate how the site will be serviced by refuse vehicles. The proposal is therefore considered to conflict with policy DC6 of the MBLP.

### **Ecology:**

CELPs Policy SE3 deals with biodiversity and geodiversity. It seeks to protect areas of high biodiversity and geodiversity. It also requires all development to aim to positively contribute to the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity and geodiversity. The following ecological matters are relevant to the current proposal.

#### *Broadleaf Woodland:*

The submitted Phase 1 Habitat Survey (*Rachel Hacking Ecology, 2019*) identified the area of broadleaf woodland in the north of the site as being among the more ecologically valuable area of the site. It also includes the watercourse and areas of badger activity.

The illustrative site map shows what appears to be a new path through a section of the broadleaf woodland towards to the north of the habitat. The Council's Ecologist has recommended that this proposal is removed. This will leave the broadleaf woodland area of the site untouched and so reducing the anticipated disturbance on the north of the site and its ecological assemblage. If Members were minded to approve the application, a revised plan could be secured prior to determination or equally this could be secured by a suitably worded Condition.

The Council's Ecologist has reviewed the comments submitted by the Wildlife Trust, where they suggest that bat and bird activity surveys should be carried out. If access to the north of the site is restricted as detailed above, then potential disturbance to bird assemblages can be anticipated as significantly reduced and activity surveys will not be required in this instance. The Council's Ecologist contends that, subject to a wildlife friendly lighting scheme, the proposed opening of the coniferous woodland canopy would not result in a likely negative impact on foraging bats.

### *Wildlife Sensitive Lighting:*

Bearing the above in mind and in accordance with the BCT Guidance Note 08/18 (Bats and Artificial Lighting in the UK), if members are minded to approve the application it is requested that prior to the commencement of development details of the proposed lighting scheme should be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. This scheme should include dark areas and avoid light spill upon bat roost features, bat commuting and foraging habitat (boundary hedgerows, trees, watercourses etc.) aiming for a maximum of 1lux light spill on those features

### *Breeding Birds:*

If planning consent is granted, a Condition should be imposed that ensures no removal of any vegetation or the demolition or conversion of buildings shall take place between 1st March and 31st August in any year, unless a detailed survey has been carried out to check for nesting birds.

### *Ecological Enhancement:*

Local Plan Policy SE3(5) requires all developments to aim to positively contribute to the conservation of biodiversity. This planning application provides an opportunity to incorporate features to increase the biodiversity value of the final development in accordance with this policy. It is therefore recommended that if planning permission is granted, a Condition should be attached which requires the submission of an Ecological Enhancement Strategy.

### *Surveys:*

The Phase 1 Extended Habitat Survey submitted to support the application, whilst acceptable at that time of submission, was undertaken in 2019. Given the time that has elapsed, the Council's Ecologist considers that this report is no longer up to date and cannot be relied upon. Planning permission could not be issued without an updated habitat survey report being submitted and assessed.

### **Drainage and Flood Risk:**

Due to the size of the application site a Flood Risk Assessment was required and has been submitted in February 2021.

According to the Environment Agency (EA) Indicative flood maps, the development holds a Flood Zone 1 classification. This means that the land has been assessed as having less than a 1 in 1000 annual probability of fluvial flooding (<0.1%) in any year.

The development has been assessed against the NPPF 'Sequential Test'. Taking into consideration that the application is for a residential camping development in Flood Zone 1, the development is appropriate, and an Exception Test would not be required.

The Flood Risk Assessment has considered all other forms of flooding and overall, has found that generally the site is at low risk of flooding from all other sources. Flood risk from overland



flows is proposed to be mitigated by the construction of a small bund along the eastern boundary and raising the pods above existing ground levels.

The discharge of storm water drainage from the development is proposed to be kept close to source due to the nature of the small buildings and permeable surfacing.

There is no residual flood risk from the development site to the surrounding district due to their being no surface water runoff from the development to the local networks.

Foul water generated by the development is proposed to be discharged via a sewage treatment plant to a local drainage field.

The Lead Local Flood Authority are still assessing the submitted Flood Risk Assessment. Any comments received will be reported verbally to members of the Northern Planning Committee. However, it is envisaged that a detailed pre-commencement Condition could be used to require the submission of a drainage strategy should Members be minded to approve the application.

### **Living Conditions:**

Saved MBLP Policy DC3 requires that new development should not significantly injure the amenities of adjoining or nearby residential property or sensitive land uses due to loss of privacy, overbearing effect, loss of sunlight or daylight, or other forms of disturbance and nuisance

Paragraph 185 of the Framework establishes in summary, that planning decisions should aim to avoid noise from giving rise to significant adverse impacts on health and quality of life as a result of new development and identify and protect areas of tranquillity which have remained relatively undisturbed from noise.

### **Noise and disturbance:**

The Planning Practice Guidance, in line with the explanatory note of the Noise Policy Statement for England, identifies factors which influence whether noise could be a concern such as the source and absolute level of the noise together with the time of day it occurs and for non-continuous sources of noise the number of noise events and the frequency and pattern of occurrence of the noise.

Given the nature of the use, the onus is upon the applicants, to demonstrate, that the introduction of the new sound sources, do not create a negative impact upon residential amenity or quality of life or shall not cause an increase in the ambient background noise level at the boundary of the nearest residential property.

It is noted that some of the neighbouring properties are in close proximity to the proposed development. It is also considered that noise from this type of use could go on well into the night. This could possibly be addressed by way of a 'Noise Management Plan' Condition if Members were minded to approve the application. However, noise management may not be acceptable or adequately effective as there is no apparent on-site presence to control noise.

Further information is therefore required to ensure that the amenity of nearby residents is not adversely affected through noise and disturbance.

#### Lighting:

Prior to its installation, the details of the location, height, design, and luminance of any external lighting could be controlled via a sustainable worded Condition. This Condition could ensure that the lighting is designed to minimise the potential loss of amenity caused by light spillage onto adjoining properties.

#### Air Quality:

Whilst this scheme itself is of a small scale, and as such would not require an Air Quality Impact Assessment, there is a need for the Local Planning Authority to consider the cumulative impact of a large number of developments in a particular area. In particular, the impact of transport related emissions on local air quality would require a Condition regarding Electric Vehicle Infrastructure if Members were minded to approve the scheme.

#### **Aerodrome Safeguarding Matters:**

The Safeguarding Authority for Manchester Airport has assessed this proposal and its potential to conflict aerodrome safeguarding criteria. They have no aerodrome safeguarding objections to the proposal subject to a condition requiring the submission of a Bird Hazard Management Plan.

#### **Other Considerations:**

Cheshire East's visitor economy is worth £963m per year; employing over 11,700 fte's. It is an important economic sector that contributes to jobs, growth and prosperity, both in its own right and in its contribution to Cheshire East's 'Quality of Place'.

Working with Marketing Cheshire, the sub-regional place marketing board, Cheshire East Council is promoting the region as a short breaks' destination as well as a location for business tourism, activity related tourism, food tourism and weddings.

#### Glamping:

Obviously COVID 19 has have an impact on visitors and accommodation bookings in the short term; however, the Council's Visitor Economy Development Manager are seeing that semi-rural locations such as Cheshire East are becoming the staycation favourites due to the space that is available and the high-quality leisure and hospitality provision.

It is remarked that a number of letters have been submitted in support of the application.

It is acknowledged that the woodland is bounded to the east by Middlewood Way, a 16km long recreational footpath proving mostly level access for walking, cycling and horse-riding, opened in 1985. The path runs along the route of the former Macclesfield, Bollington and Marple Railway which was closed in 1970.

It is also accepted that there are a significant number of footpath links with the canal network with Middlewood Way running roughly parallel with the Macclesfield Canal, which sits just east of the application site, with the Lyme Wood Marina being less than 100 metres to the south.

It is accepted that the scheme would boost Tourism and the Rural Economy, benefits which are given due weight. It is evident that the locality would be suitable for a tourism use and the proposal would enable access to the countryside for the purposes of recreation. This is also reflected in paragraph 145 of the Framework which states that Local Planning Authorities should plan positively to enhance the beneficial use of the Green Belt such as looking for opportunities to provide access and recreation.

## **BALANCE OF ISSUES AND CONCLUSION**

Paragraph 148 of the Framework requires decision makers to ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt. Other considerations in favour of the development must clearly outweigh the harm. However, the Framework states at paragraph 148 that very special circumstances will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.

It is considered that the scheme would result in harm to the openness of the Green Belt and would represent encroachment. The scheme would therefore be inappropriate development and, by definition, harm the Green Belt.

As currently submitted, the proposals are not considered to provide the required level of detail to fully evaluate the arboricultural impacts, the long-term sustainability and future management of the site. This is also the case with the now out of date ecological surveys, thereby preventing a fully informed assessment of the ecological impacts of the proposals. The proposal would be contrary to the interests of highway safety by reason of inadequate visibility at the point of access. Further information is also required relating to the noise impacts of the proposal in terms of the impact upon nearby residential properties.

Any economic and tourism benefits are of limited to moderate weight in favour of the proposal. As such, the harm to the Green Belt together with the harm to highway safety, and the lack of information relating to trees, ecology and noise is not clearly outweighed by the other considerations identified and therefore the very special circumstances necessary to justify the development do not exist. Accordingly, the proposal fails to adhere to the Local and National Green Belt policies outlined above.

## **RECOMMENDATION:**

It is therefore recommended that the application for planning permission be refused for the following reasons:

- 1. The proposal is inappropriate development in the Green Belt, which would not preserve openness and would conflict with the purposes of Green Belt by reason of encroachment. No very special circumstances have been demonstrated that would outweigh the identified harm. The proposal is therefore contrary to CELP Policy PG3 and Saved MBLP Policy GC1 and guidance relating to Green Belts contained within Paragraphs 148 and 149 of the NPPF.**
- 2. The proposed development would result in a net loss of woodland arising from inserting the development and no information has been submitted as to how or where this will be offset. The Arboricultural information as submitted is not considered to provide the required level of detail to fully evaluate the impacts of the proposal, in relation to tree protection for the implementation of the development. Insufficient information has been submitted to ensure the long-term sustainability and future management of the woodland given the proposed change of use. The proposal is therefore contrary to CELP Policy SE5 and guidance relating to Conserving and enhancing the natural environment within Paragraph 174 of the NPPF**
- 3. The proposal would be contrary to the interests of highway safety by reason of inadequate visibility at the point of access onto Wood Lane North. Insufficient information with regard to circulation and access within the site has also been submitted. No justification for the level of car parking provision has been undertaken. The proposal is therefore contrary to Saved MBLP Policy DC6, CELPS Policy CO1 and guidance contained within Annex C of CELPS, with regard to parking standards.**
- 4. Insufficient information has been submitted with the application in order to assess adequately the impact of the proposed development on nature conservation interests and the noise impacts of the development on nearby residential properties. In particular, adequate survey(s) of the site are now out of date, and noise management details have not been provided. In the absence of this information, it has not been possible to demonstrate that the proposal would comply with CELPS Policy SE3 and guidance relating to nature conservation within Paragraph 180 of the NPPF, and policy DC3 of the MBLP.**

*In the event of any changes being needed to the wording of the Committee's decision (such as to delete, vary or add conditions / informatives / planning obligations or reasons for approval/refusal) prior to the decision being issued, the Head of Planning has delegated authority to do so in consultation with the Chair of the Northern Planning Committee, provided that the changes do not exceed the substantive nature of the Committee's decision.*

