

Project: Variation of Conditions on Planning Permissions at Bucklegrove Holiday Park, Wells Road, Rodney Stoke, BS27 3UZ to Permit Year-Round Use of the Caravans/Sites

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PLANNING STATEMENT

1.0 APPLICATION SITE, BACKGROUND AND PROPOSAL

Application Site

- 1.1 This application relates to Bucklegrove Holiday Park which is an established caravan and camping site on the north side of Wells Road (A39) between Rodney Stoke and Westbury-sub-Mendip.

Background

- 1.2 A recent review of the planning permissions at the Holiday Park dating back to the 1960s has revealed 4 planning permissions which limit certain caravans and areas for the stationing of caravans to certain months of the year, as set out in the table below.

Reference	Date	Condition	Limitation
54264	08/03/61	1	The use of the land as a site for seventeen holiday caravans shall be limited to the period April to October inclusive in each year.
100881/000	04/10/76	3	No caravan shall be stationed on the site other than during the period 1 st March to the 31 st October in any one year and the duration of stay

			of any caravan stationed on the site shall not exceed 14 consecutive days
100881/002	29/04/86	2	The use of the touring caravan site shall be restricted to the 1 st March and 31 st October in any one year.
100881/010	29/2/04	2	The caravans shall not be occupied other than between the 1 st March in one year and the 2 nd January in the following year.

Proposal

- 1.3 The Applicants would like planning permission to operate the whole Holiday Park throughout the year. 4 applications are therefore being submitted pursuant to Section 73 of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990 for the variation of relevant conditions to enable year-round use/occupation but for holiday accommodation only, as set out in the table below.

Application	Permission	Proposal
1	54264	Variation of condition 1 to enable the occupation of the seventeen holiday caravans throughout the year but for holiday accommodation only.
2	100881/000	Variation of condition 3 to enable the stationing of caravans throughout the year but for holiday accommodation only.
3	100881/002	Variation of condition 2 to enable the use of the touring caravan site throughout the year but for holiday accommodation only.
4	100881/010	Variation of condition 2 to enable the caravans to be occupied throughout the year but for holiday accommodation only.

2.0 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

Development Plan

2.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) require local planning authorities to determine planning applications in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

2.2 The Mendip District Local Plan Part I: Strategy and Policies 2006 – 2029 adopted in December 2014 and The Mendip District Local Plan Part II: Sites and Policies 2006 – 2029 adopted in December 2021 forms the relevant development plan in this location. The following development plan policies are relevant to this application:

- CP1 (Mendip Spatial Strategy);
- CP3 (Business Development and Growth);
- CP4 (Sustaining Rural Communities);
- DP4 (Mendip's Landscapes);
- DP8 (Environmental Protection);
- DP9 (Transport Impact of New Development);

Other Material Planning Considerations

- National Planning Policy Framework (July 2021):
 - Chapter 2 – Achieving Sustainable Development;
 - Chapter 4 – Decision-Making;
 - Chapter 6 – Building a Strong, Competitive Economy;
 - Chapter 9 – Promoting Sustainable Transport;
 - Chapter 14 – Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change, Flooding and Coastal Change;
- Related Planning Practice Guidance.

3.0 ANALYSIS OF PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Main Issues

- 3.1 Planning permission has already been granted for the land at Bucklegrove Holiday Park as a caravan (and camping) site. These consented uses cannot be re-visited as a matter of principle because Section 73 of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) limits the LPA's consideration to the condition/s in question and the stated reasons for them.
- 3.2 The main issue is therefore whether the current conditions limiting use of the caravans/sites to certain times of the year are reasonable and necessary to comply with policies in the development plan and the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework").
- 3.3 It should be noted that planning permissions 100881/000 and 100881/002 limit the period that touring caravans can be stationed on the land whereas planning permissions 54264 and 100881/010 limit the period that permanently stationed caravans can be occupied.

Are the conditions limiting the months of use reasonable and necessary?

- 3.4 The stated reasons for each condition are to prevent caravans from being used for permanent residential occupation as a matter of principle and not to limit or prevent a particular impact (e.g. landscape, residential amenity or highway safety).
- 3.5 Bucklegrove Holiday Park, like most caravan and camping sites, is located in the countryside where national and local planning policies strictly control new development and prevent new dwellings (including caravans) for permanent residential occupation unless there are exceptional circumstances.

- 3.6 It is therefore accepted that a condition limiting the uses of caravans/sites to prevent permanent residential occupation is reasonable and necessary to comply with policies in the development plan and Framework. The question, however, is whether it is reasonable and necessary to limit the use of caravans/sites to certain times of the year.
- 3.7 To understand the current approach taken by the LPA, every planning permission granted for holiday/tourist caravans and caravan sites since 1st January 2020 has been reviewed. This research confirms that conditions are no longer imposed to restrict the uses of caravans and caravan sites to certain months of the year. Instead, contemporary conditions limit the use of caravans/sites for holiday accommodation only to ensure that they are not used for permanent residential occupation in accordance with relevant policies. A list of planning permission references is appended to this Statement.
- 3.8 Significantly more planning permissions would be revealed if the search period went from 1st January 2015 (i.e. the start of the current development plan period) and if the search included permissions to convert buildings for holiday accommodation. This can be evidenced if necessary. The limited number of permissions recorded since 2021 is linked to the current “embargo” on new sites within the hydrological catchment area of the Somerset Levels and Moors Ramsar site where some of the most popular tourist areas are located.
- 3.9 The current “seasonal” restrictions at Bucklegrove Holiday Park therefore reflects the traditional period for holiday makers in the UK. A Statement by the operators of Bucklegrove - who have significant knowledge and experience of providing holiday accommodation in UK – is included with the application. This explains that there is now a significant demand for holidays, breaks and “staycations” in the UK throughout the year and, in-turn, provides greater economic benefits as additional staff are needed to cater for year-round use and more visitor spending throughout the year.

3.10 The most recent planning permission for a holiday park in the countryside (30 lodges at Cannards Grave near Shepton Mallet in April 2020 (reference: 2020/0033/FUL)) had the following condition that would suit the Applicants:

“The development hereby approved is for holiday let use only and shall not be occupied other than for purposes of holiday accommodation and shall not be occupied as a person's sole or main place of residence. An up-to-date register of all occupiers on the site (including their main home address), shall be maintained and this information shall be made available at all reasonable times to the Local Planning Authority.”

4.0 CONCLUSION

4.1 The current restrictions on the use of caravans and land at Bucklegrove Holiday Park to certain months of the year is out-dated because it is not required by planning policies in the development plan and the Framework, and is inconsistent with the LPA's contemporary approach to restricting such development.

4.2 The current conditions are therefore unreasonable and unnecessary, contrary to tests set out in the Framework for the imposition of conditions on planning permissions. The Applicants do, however, understand that the use of caravans and caravan sites for permanent residential occupation in the countryside is contrary to planning policies and therefore respectfully request the variation of existing conditions to enable the use of caravans/land throughout the year but for holiday accommodation only to remain compliant with the development plan while benefiting the local economy, without any adverse impacts.

APPENDIX 1

Reference Numbers for Caravan and Camping Sites Granted Planning Permission Since 1st January 2020

2019/1903/FUL

2019/2921/FUL

2020/0033/FUL

2020/0393/FUL

2020/1091/FUL

2020/1818/FUL

2020/1854/FUL

2020/2433/FUL

2020/2493/FUL

2020/2625/FUL

2021/0741/FUL

2021/1924/FUL

2022/1117/FUL