Oakthorpe, Donisthorpe and Acresford Parish Council

Review of Amended Planning Application 26/00622/FULM

Land Adjacent to Bodkin Row, Measham Road, Oakthorpe

Introduction

This report reviews the amended planning application for the proposed Gypsy and Traveller site at land adjacent to Bodkin Row, Measham Road, Oakthorpe. The amended scheme has reduced the number of pitches from 10 to 8 and includes revised access arrangements and supporting technical information.

Having reviewed the consultee responses and amendment details available, it is acknowledged that certain technical concerns raised during the initial consultation process have been addressed or are in the process of being addressed. However, the Parish Council remains concerned that the proposal would result in significant harm to the character and appearance of the area and that important matters remain unresolved.

1. Landscape Character and Rural Setting

The Parish Council remains concerned that the site forms an important transitional area between the built form of Oakthorpe and the surrounding countryside.

Although the amended proposal reduces the number of pitches from ten to eight, the development would still introduce:

- Eight residential pitches;
- Static caravans;
- Touring caravan spaces;
- Internal access roads;
- Parking areas;
- Hardstanding;
- Utility and amenity buildings;
- Associated domestic activity and paraphernalia.

The proposal would therefore represent a substantial and permanent change from an open rural field to a residential caravan site.

The Council considers that insufficient weight has been given to the role the site currently performs in maintaining the rural setting of Oakthorpe and providing a clear transition between the settlement and the countryside beyond.

The development would introduce a significant urbanising influence into a currently undeveloped location and would erode the openness and character of this part of the village edge.

While landscape planting may provide some mitigation over time, such planting cannot fully offset the fundamental change in character arising from the introduction of a permanent residential development.

2. Visual Impact and Loss of Openness

The revised layout remains extensive in scale and includes a concentration of caravans, vehicles, hardstanding and associated infrastructure.

The Parish Council remains concerned that:

- The development would be visually intrusive when viewed from surrounding land and public vantage points.
- Parked vehicles, touring caravans and domestic storage associated with day-to-day occupation would increase visual clutter.
- The open appearance of the site would be permanently altered.
- Proposed landscaping would require many years to become fully effective.

The reduction from ten pitches to eight pitches lessens the scale of the proposal but does not remove the visual impact arising from the site becoming a permanent residential use.

3. Unresolved Natural England Concerns

Natural England's latest consultation response confirms that information previously requested remains outstanding.

Natural England has advised that information is still required to assess the significance of impacts on designated sites within the River Mease catchment and has stated that, without this information, it may need to object to the proposal.

The Parish Council is concerned that a full assessment of impacts upon protected environmental interests has not yet been completed and considers that the application should not be determined until the necessary information has been submitted and fully assessed.

The Council therefore requests that the Local Planning Authority ensures all outstanding requirements of Natural England are satisfied before any decision is reached.

4. Cumulative Urbanising Effect

The Council remains concerned about the cumulative impact of the development.

Whilst individual elements of the proposal may appear modest in isolation, the combined effect of:

- Residential occupation,
- Static caravans,
- Touring caravans,
- Parking areas,
- Internal roadways,
- Lighting,
- Utility structures,
- Waste storage and domestic activity,

would fundamentally alter the character of the site.

This cumulative urbanising effect should be given significant weight in the assessment of the proposal.

Oakthorpe, Donisthorpe & Acresford
Parish Council

Conclusion

The Parish Council acknowledges that amendments have been made to the application, including a reduction in the number of pitches and revisions to the site access arrangements.

However, the Council considers that the amendments do not overcome its principal concerns regarding:

1. Harm to the rural setting of Oakthorpe.
2. Loss of landscape character and openness.
3. Visual intrusion and urbanisation of the village edge.
4. Outstanding concerns raised by Natural England relating to impacts on protected environmental interests.

For these reasons, the Parish Council maintains its objection to the proposed development and respectfully requests that the Local Planning Authority gives significant weight to the concerns outlined above when determining the application.

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