

DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE 16th MARCH 2026

Case No: 21/01479/FUL

Proposal: RETROSPECTIVE CHANGE OF USE OF LAND TO ONE GYPSY / TRAVELLER PITCH WITH FIVE RESIDENTIAL STATIC CARAVANS, AND FIVE TOURING CARAVANS, ESTABLISHMENT OF ACCESS AND USE OF HARDSTANDING FOR OCCUPATION BY THE APPLICANTS AND THEIR FAMILY (TEMPORARY OR PERMANENT).

Location: MAGPIE FARM, MIDDLE DROVE, RAMSEY HEIGHTS, PE26 2RG

Applicant: MS HOLMES

Grid Ref: 524098 285443

Date of Registration: 27th June 2021

Parish: RAMSEY

RECOMMENDATION - APPROVE

This application is referred to the Development Management Committee (DMC) in accordance with the Scheme of Delegation as the Officer recommendation of approval is contrary to that of the Town Council.

1. DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND APPLICATION

Site and Surroundings

- 1.1 The site lies to the west of the settlement of Ramsey Heights and is accessed via Middle Drove, a predominantly single track, unmade and unadopted road which extends westwards from Ugg Mere Court Road for approximately 1.7Km. This access also serves a group of dwellings at School Drove, immediately behind the ribbon of dwellings fronting Ugg Mere Court Road, School Drive.
- 1.2 Middle Drove is characterised by sporadic and sparse development set in open countryside. Middle Drove itself serves 4 permanent dwellinghouses, and 7 lawful gypsy and traveller pitches on both sides of the Middle Drove. There are a number of unauthorised gypsy and traveller pitches on Middle Drove. Various small scale stables and structures are pepper potted across the Drove. All bar one of the residential uses are found

along the northern side of Middle Drove. The area is considered rural in character, with open countryside and agricultural land extending in all directions and with the aforementioned School Drove and ribbon of development of along Ugg Mere Court Road found to the east.

- 1.3 Harpers Drove runs parallel to Middle Drove with a ditch separating the two Drovers. Harper Drove has a similar character, with a mixture of permanent dwellinghouses and lawful gypsy and traveller pitches. There are also a number of unauthorised gypsy and traveller pitches on Harpers Drove. Various small scale stables and structures are also pepper potted across the Drove.
- 1.4 The application site itself comprises agricultural land and lies along the southern side of Middle Drove and at the far western end of Middle Drove. The application site is part of a group of 5 applications all seeking 1 pitch each on wider site now known as Gypsy Lane. The application site sits behind another application that fronts onto Harpers Drove, and consists of 1 pitch.
- 1.5 The majority of the site lies within Flood Zone 3a as defined by the Environment Agency mapping and within the 1 in 100 year with climate change allowance areas as defined by the Councils Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, 2017. Further to the west is the Woodwalton Site of Special Scientific and Fenland Special Area of Conservation interest.

Proposal

- 1.6 This planning application seeks retrospective permission for the change of use of land to one Gypsy / Traveller pitch with five residential static caravans and five touring caravans, establishment of access and use of hardstanding for occupation by the applicants and their family. It does appear that the site may have been subdivided over time but this is not reflected in this application. Officers have therefore assessed the application as submitted.
- 1.7 This application has been accompanied by the following:
 - Design and Access Statement
 - Supporting information
 - Drawings
 - Site Specific Flood Risk Assessment
- 1.8 Officers have scrutinised the plans and have familiarised themselves with the site and surrounding area.

2. NATIONAL GUIDANCE

- 2.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2024) sets out the three objectives - economic, social and environmental - of the planning system to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. The NPPF 2024 at paragraph 10 provides as follows: 'So that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraph 11).'
- 2.2 The NPPF 2024 sets out the Government's planning policies for (amongst other things):
- delivering a sufficient supply of homes;
 - building a strong, competitive economy;
 - achieving well-designed, beautiful and safe places;
 - conserving and enhancing the natural, built and historic environment
- 2.3 Planning Practice Guidance and the National Design Guide 2021 are also relevant and material considerations.
- 2.4 For full details visit the government website [National Guidance](#)
- 2.5 Article 1 of the First Protocol (Human Rights Act) sets out that a person is entitled to the peaceful enjoyment of his possessions and that no one shall be deprived of his possessions except in the public interest. Article 8 of the Human Rights Act states that everyone has the right to respect for his private and family life and his home. Refusing would represent an interference with the home and family life of the proposed occupiers, such that both Articles would be engaged. There is also a positive obligation imposed by Article 8 to facilitate the gypsy way of life.
- 2.6 Occupants of gypsy and traveller pitches are an ethnic minority, and thus have the protected characteristic of race under s149(7) of the Equality Act 2010. The proposal would meet the needs of those persons with a relevant protected characteristic, by reason of race, and so, as required by section 149(1) of the Equality Act 2010, the public sector equality duty is applicable.

3. PLANNING POLICIES

- 3.1 Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 (Adopted 15th May 2019)
- LP1: Amount of Development
 - LP2: Strategy for Development
 - LP3: Green Infrastructure
 - LP4: Contributing to Infrastructure Delivery
 - LP5: Flood Risk
 - LP6: Waste Water Management
 - LP8: Key Service Centres
 - LP10: The Countryside

- LP11: Design Context
- LP12: Design Implementation
- LP14: Amenity
- LP15: Surface Water
- LP16: Sustainable Travel
- LP17: Parking Provision
- LP27: Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople
- LP30: Biodiversity and Geodiversity
- LP31: Trees, Woodland, Hedges and Hedgerows

3.2 Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) and Guidance:

- Huntingdonshire Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (2017)
- Developer Contributions SPD (2011)
- Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape SPD (2022)
- Huntingdonshire Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2017)
- Cambridgeshire Flood and Water SPD (2017)
- LDF Developer Contributions SPD (2011)
- Annual Monitoring Review regarding housing land supply (2020)
- Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Local Plan (2021)

Local policies are viewable at <https://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk>

3.3 The National Design Guide (2021):

- C1 - Understand and relate well to the site, its local and wider context
- I1 - Respond to existing local character and identity
- I2 - Well-designed, high quality and attractive
- B2 - Appropriate building types and forms
- M3 - Well-considered parking, servicing and utilities infrastructure for all users
- N3 - Support rich and varied biodiversity
- H1 - Healthy, comfortable and safe internal and external environment
- H2 - Well-related to external amenity and public spaces
- H3 - Attention to detail: storage, waste, servicing and utilities.

3.4 National Planning Policy for Traveller sites (Dec 2024)

For full details visit the government website

4. PLANNING HISTORY

Immediate vicinity (Middle Drove)

- 4.2 1400997/FUL - Two static and two touring caravans with retrospective use of day/room facilities block for one extended gypsy/traveller family (APPROVED)
- 4.3 15/00075/FUL - Proposed one static caravan and touring caravan with a day room/facilities block/tack room for one extended gypsy/traveller family (APPROVED)
- 4.4 15/00273/FUL - Change of use of stables and land to 1 gypsy and traveller extended family - to include retention of 1 static caravan, 1 touring caravan and existing stables, and erection of utility block, day room, 1 static caravan and 1 touring caravan. (APPROVED)
- 4.5 22/01787/S73 - Removal of Condition 2 (expiration date) and 3 (scheme of improvement) of 17/00592/FUL (APPROVED TEMP UNTIL 23.04.2030)
- 4.6 22/01915/S73 - Variation of conditions 1 and 8 and removal of conditions 2 and 3 of 16/02196/FUL (APPROVED TEMP UNTIL 23.04.2030)
- 4.7 21/01476/FUL - Retrospective change of use of land to one Gypsy / Traveller Pitch with two residential static caravans and two touring caravans, establishment of access and formation of hardstanding (temporary or permanent) for extended Gypsy / Traveller family. (PENDING CONSIDERATION)
- 4.8 21/01477/FUL - Retrospective change of use of land to one Gypsy / Traveller Pitch with five residential static caravans and five touring caravans, establishment of access and change of use of existing hardstanding for occupation by the applicants and their family. (PENDING CONSIDERATION)
- 4.9 21/01478/FUL - Retrospective change of use of land to one Gypsy / Traveller pitch with five residential static caravans and five touring caravans, establishment of access and use of hardstanding for occupation by the applicants and their family. (PENDING CONSIDERATION)
- 4.10 21/01479/FUL - Retrospective change of use of land to one Gypsy / Traveller pitch with five residential static caravans, and five touring caravans, establishment of access and use of hardstanding for occupation by the applicants and their family (temporary or permanent). (PENDING CONSIDERATION)
- 4.11 21/01481/FUL - Retrospective change of use of land to one Gypsy / Traveller pitch with two residential static caravans and two touring caravans (temporary or permanent), development of day room, establishment of access and use of existing hardstanding for occupation by the applicants and their family. (PENDING CONSIDERATION)

- 4.12 23/02167/FUL - Retrospective single traveller pitch with associated mobile home, touring caravan and dayroom for family that have their immediate family adjacent the site. (PENDING CONSIDERATION)

Wider vicinity (Harpers Drove)

- 4.13 1100981CLED - Certificate of lawfulness (existing) for continued siting of mobile home for residential use (APPROVED)
- 4.14 17/01874/FUL - Gypsy and traveller use four statics, four touring caravans and facilities for extended family. (APPROVED)
- 4.15 21/01475/FUL - Retrospective change of use of land to one Gypsy / Traveller pitch with day room, two residential static caravans and a touring caravan (temporary or permanent), establishment of additional access and use of existing hardstanding for residential occupation by the applicants and their family. (PENDING CONSIDERATION)

5. CONSULTATIONS

- 5.1 Ramsey Town Council – Objection.

Development would have a significant adverse impact on the character and appearance of the landscape. It would also increase traffic and access issues resulting in concern over highway safety. The scale of the site dominates the existing settled community. Nor is the site adequately serviced by infrastructure and would contribute to a significant flood risk being situated in Flood Zone 3.

- 5.2 Environment Agency – No objection.

- 5.3 Environmental Health – No objection,

6. REPRESENTATIONS

- 6.1 No representations have been received.

7. ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 When determining planning applications, it is necessary to establish what weight should be given to each plan's policies in order to come to a decision. The following legislation, government policy and guidance outline how this should be done.
- 7.2 As set out within the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (Section 38(6)) and the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (Section 70(2)) in dealing with planning applications the Local

Planning Authority shall have regard to have provisions of the development plan, so far as material to the application, and to any other material considerations. This is reiterated within the NPPF (2024). The development plan is defined in Section 38(3)(b) of the 2004 Act as “the development plan documents (taken as a whole) that have been adopted or approved in that area”.

- 7.3 In Huntingdonshire the Development Plan (relevant to this applications) consists of:
- Huntingdonshire’s Local Plan to 2036 (2019)
 - Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Minerals and Waste Local Plan (2021)
- 7.4 The statutory term ‘material considerations’ has been broadly construed to include any consideration relevant in the circumstances which bears on the use or development of the land: *Cala Homes (South) Ltd v Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government & Anor* [2011] EWHC 97 (Admin); [2011] 1 P. & C.R. 22, per Lindblom J. Whilst accepting that the NPPF does not change the statutory status of the Development Plan, paragraph 2 confirms that it is a material consideration and significant weight is given to this in determining applications.
- 7.5 The main issues to consider in the determination of this application are:
- The Principle of Development (Including Impact upon the Character and Appearance of the Area, Amenity, Flood Risk and Highway Safety, Access, and Parking Provision)
 - Biodiversity
 - Developer Contributions
 - Other matters

The Principle of Development (Including Impact upon the Character and Appearance of the Area, Amenity, Flood Risk and Highway Safety, Access, and Parking Provision)

- 7.6 The application site is located in the countryside and therefore must be assessed against Policy LP10 of the Local Plan which states that “Development in the countryside will be restricted to the limited and specific opportunities as provided for in other policies of this plan and that all development in the countryside must:
- a. seek to use land of lower agricultural value in preference to land of higher agricultural value:
 - i. avoiding the irreversible loss of the best and most versatile agricultural land (Grade 1 to 3a) where possible, and
 - ii. avoiding Grade 1 agricultural land unless there are exceptional circumstances where the benefits of the proposal significantly outweigh the loss of land;
 - b. recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside;
- and

c. not give rise to noise, odour, obtrusive light or other impacts that would adversely affect the use and enjoyment of the countryside by others.”

- 7.7 With regard to part a, the proposal would result in the loss of small amount of Agricultural Land. This loss would conflict with Policy LP10 to a degree. However, this amount of loss is not considered to be significant in terms of the availability of best and most versatile land across the district.
- 7.8 The site is located in an area defined as 'Fens' according to the Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Assessment SPG and is "distinctive for its low-lying, flat, and often regimented open character". Indeed views north and south from the site reinforce the area's open, low-lying character with generally uninterrupted views across the Fen landscape to distant horizons with generally agricultural fields surrounding the site. The SPG identifies that the flat and horizontal nature of the landscape can give vertical features an unusual prominence.
- 7.9 The application site is part of a cluster of 5 applications all seeking permission for 1 pitch each on wider site now known as Gypsy Lane. Taking into account the existing development, the cumulative impact of the development on the open character of the area must be considered. Cumulatively, this would result in a notable cluster of pitches and built form and the associated paraphernalia which would come with the residential uses. The visual impacts of these cumulative sites on the wider landscape must be considered.
- 7.10 The site is visible from Harpers Drove which runs parallel to Middle Drove from the south and from Ray's Drove to the north. Even then views are often obscured by existing buildings and hedgerow to the rear of curtilages and field margins. The site is only really visible when approaching along Middle Drove itself which again is characterised by a sporadic and sparse mixture of built form, hedgerow and open spaces. Notwithstanding this, the site sits by itself and is quite exposed within the wider countryside. Within the group of 5 application, there are 3 garden areas serving pitches on the eastern side and also 2 undeveloped areas on the western side which has helped break up the development. There is also hedging along the boundaries of the wider site which also helped soften the visual impact. There is however an impact on the visual amenity of the Countryside due to the cluster of pitches, and the separation from other built form on Middle Drove.
- 7.11 The application site is therefore not considered to be sufficiently visually separated from other lawful gypsy and traveller sites or sites where applications are pending. As such, the proposal is considered to cause harm to the character and appearance of the area when considered in isolation and cumulatively with existing development in the locality. For the above reasons, it is considered

that the proposed development would not recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside in accordance with Policy LP10 part b. This will need to be weighed up at the end of the report.

- 7.12 Given the scale and location of the proposed development, it is considered that it would not give rise to noise, odour, obtrusive light, or other impacts that would adversely affect the use and enjoyment of the countryside by others in accordance with Policy LP10 part c.

Gypsy and Traveller Status

- 7.13 A primary consideration is whether planning policies relating to gypsies and travellers are relevant in the consideration of this application.
- 7.14 The national Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS) document was updated December 2024 with an amended definition of Gypsies and Travellers in paragraph 1 within Annex 1:

Persons of nomadic habit of life whatever their race or origin, including such persons who on grounds only of their own or their family's or dependants' educational or health needs or old age have ceased to travel temporarily or permanently, and all other persons with a cultural tradition of nomadism or of living in a caravan, but excluding members of an organised group of travelling showpeople or circus people travelling together as such.

- 7.15 This proposal seeks to provide 1 gypsy and traveller pitch. A pitch generally comprises one mobile caravan, one static caravan and an amenity block. However, pitches can contain a higher number of caravans given the size of the household. In this instance the pitch comprises 5 static caravans, 5 touring caravans and a dayroom. It does appear that the site may have been subdivided over time but this is not reflected in this application. Officers have therefore assessed the application as submitted.
- 7.16 When assessing the location of the site against the built-up areas definition and the tables on pages 53 to 55 of the Local Plan to 2036, the site lies outside the built-up area of Ramsey Heights, which is a Small settlement, the site is therefore considered to be located within the countryside.
- 7.17 Local Plan policy LP27 relates to Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople and its purpose, as stated in paragraph 7.33 of the Local Plan, is to enable the appropriate provision of sites to meet the specific needs of such groups. It states that new traveller sites outside of the built-up area could be supported in sustainable locations where they respect the scale of the nearest settled community and would be very strictly limited in open countryside that is away from existing settlements.

- 7.18 The Council would therefore support a proposal which contributes to the delivery of Gypsy and Traveller pitches where it satisfies each of criteria a) to j) of Policy LP27.

Need for Gypsy and Traveller sites

- 7.19 The Local Plan to 2036 does not specifically allocate any sites for gypsies, travellers or travelling showpeople.
- 7.20 As stated above, the site is not located within the built-up area of Ramsey Heights, and therefore in planning policy terms it is in the open countryside where planning policies for the countryside apply. The Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS) updated in December 2024 is not opposed in principle to traveller sites being located in the countryside, so long as they are not within Green Belt land. Huntingdonshire does not have any areas of Green Belt. Stipulations in the PPTS include: -
* Local planning authorities should very strictly limit new traveller site development in open countryside that is away from existing settlements or outside areas allocated in the development plan; -
* Local planning authorities should ensure that sites in rural areas respect the scale of, and do not dominate, the nearest settled community, and avoid placing undue pressure on the local infrastructure’.
- 7.21 Paragraph 4 of the NPPF (2024) states that it should be read in conjunction with the Government's Planning Policy for Traveller Sites and that decisions on traveller sites should also have regard to the Framework so far as relevant.
- 7.22 The Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS) sets out the Government's overarching aim to ensure fair and equal treatment for travellers, in a way that facilitates the traditional and nomadic way of life of travellers while respecting the interests of the settled community. The PPTS includes policies on plan-making and on decision-taking. Paragraph 24 of the PPTS states that local planning authorities should determine applications in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development and the policies in the NPPF and PPTS.
- 7.23 Paragraph 25 of the PPTS states that when considering planning applications local planning authorities (LPAs) should consider the following:
a) The existing level of local provision and need for sites,
b) The availability (or lack) of alternative accommodation for the applicants,
c) Other personal circumstances of the applicant,
d) The locally specific criteria used to guide the allocation of sites in plans or which form the policy where there is no identified need for pitches/plots should be used to assess applications that may come forward on unallocated sites, and

- e) That LPAs should determine applications for sites from any travellers and not just those with local connections.
- 7.24 Paragraph 27 of the PPTS requires weight to be attached to factors such as:
- a) Effective reuse of brownfield land, untidy or derelict land;
 - b) Sites which positively enhance the environment for example by soft planting;
 - c) Promoting opportunities for healthy lifestyles, such as provision of adequate landscaping and play areas for children
 - d) Not over enclosing or isolating a site with hard landscaping, walls and fences.
- 7.25 The criteria and means by which new traveller development is to be controlled is set out in further policies within the PPTS and in local policies which closely reflect the NPPF policies, and these are considered below.
- 7.26 Under the PPTS Policy B (plan making), planning authorities should, amongst other things, set pitch targets for gypsies and travellers which address likely needs in their area, working collaboratively with neighbouring local planning authorities. In producing their local plans, planning authorities should, amongst other things:
- a) identify and update annually, a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide five years' worth of sites against their locally set targets;
 - b) identify a supply of specific, developable sites or broad locations for growth, for years six to ten and, where possible, for years 11-15:
 - c) consider production of joint development plans that set targets on a cross-authority basis, to provide more flexibility in identifying sites;
 - d) relate the number of pitches to the circumstances of the specific size or location of the site and the surrounding population's size and density;
 - e) protect local amenity and environment.
- 7.27 Paragraph 11 of The PPTS (2024) sets out that criteria should be set to guide land supply allocations where there is identified need. Where there is no identified need, criteria-based policies should be included to provide a basis for decisions in case applications nevertheless come forward. Criteria based policies should be fair and should facilitate the traditional and nomadic life of travellers while respecting the interests of the settled community.
- 7.28 Paragraph 13 of the PPTS (2024) requires LPAs to ensure that traveller sites are sustainable economically, socially and environmentally and includes the criteria that should be used in the setting of LPA policies.

- 7.29 Policy H (decision taking), paragraph 23 of the PPTS (2024) notes that planning law requires applications for planning permission to be determined in accordance with the provisions of the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 7.30 In line with PPTS Paragraph 25, following factors are considered:
- PPTS Paragraph 25 (a) The existing level of provision and need for traveller pitches:*
- 7.31 For the purposes of plan preparation, paragraph 9 of PPTS advises local planning authorities that they should set pitch targets which address the likely permanent and transit site accommodation needs of Travellers in their area, working collaboratively with neighbouring local planning authorities. Policy H, para 28 of the PPTS, states that the absence of a 5-year supply of deliverable sites paragraph 11(d) of the NPPF apply. Local Planning authorities should consider how they could overcome planning objections to a particular proposal using planning conditions or planning obligations.
- 7.32 Policy LP27 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 refers to The Cambridgeshire, Kings Lynn & West Norfolk, Peterborough and West Suffolk Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment 2016 (GTAA 2016), which identified a need within Huntingdonshire for an additional 9 permanent residential Gypsy and Traveller pitches between 2016 and 2036, of which 5 were needed between 2016 and 2021.
- 7.33 The Council has consulted on a Preferred Options Draft Local Plan to 2046. Comments received from stakeholders and statutory consultees will be processed, and reviewed, and further technical evidence will be gathered to inform the Proposed Submission Local Plan. The aim is to consult on that in summer 2026.
- 7.34 No gypsy or traveller sites were submitted in the call for sites process, and therefore none have been put forward as draft allocations in the new Local Plan.
- 7.35 In addition to this, and part of the evidence base document that will inform and shape the new Local Plan, the Council has recently published an updated Gypsy and Traveller (GTAA), Travelling Showperson, boat dwellers and other caravan dwellers Accommodation Assessment 2024 which can be viewed here: <https://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/planning/local-plan-update/evidence-library-for-local-plan-update/>
- 7.36 This concludes that there is an overall minimum need for 127 additional Gypsy and Traveller pitches across Huntingdonshire District over the period 2023/24 to 2045/46. Of this need, 36 are needed in the first five years, 69 over the period 2028/29 to

2041/42 and 22 over the period 2042/43 to 2045/46. Due to this, the Council is not currently meeting its need in terms of gypsy and traveller pitches.

- 7.37 Within the conclusion section of the report, it advises that in order to meet its need for pitches, the Council should consider regularising sites that are not permanently authorised or temporary authorised in flood zone 3 areas where flood mitigation is in place, alongside other approaches. Members should note that each site should be assessed on its own merits, and each application should be assessed on its own merits.
- 7.38 The conclusion section of the report also goes onto state that notwithstanding evidence in this GTAA on need, additional need may arise over the plan period, for instance from a higher number of households moving into Huntingdonshire than anticipated. It is therefore recommended that the Local Plan references the need in the GTAA as a minimum need which is likely to be met but sets out policies to inform future planning applications for private sites.
- 7.39 On the basis of this, it is considered that there is a need for pitches within the district. This will be weighed up at the end of the report.

PPTS Paragraph 25 (b) the availability (or lack) of alternative accommodation for the applicants:

- 7.40 As discussed above, there is a shortage of Gypsy and Traveller sites in Huntingdonshire. The only public site in the district, in St Neots, is full.
- 7.41 It is therefore considered that there is a lack of alternative accommodation for the applicants.

PPTS Paragraph 25 (c) other personal circumstances of the applicant:

- 7.42 This proposal seeks to provide 1 gypsy and traveller pitch.
- 7.43 Information regarding gypsy/traveller status or personal circumstances has been provided with the application. Policy LP27 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 is therefore relevant and the application will be assessed with regard to any travellers not just those with local connections.
- 7.44 Article 1 of the First Protocol Human Rights sets out that a person is entitled to the peaceful enjoyment of his possessions and that no one shall be deprived of his possessions except in the public interest. Article 8 of the Human Rights Act states that everyone has the right to respect for his private and family life and his home. Refusing would represent an interference with the home and family life of the proposed occupiers, such that both Articles would

be engaged. There is also a positive obligation imposed by Article 8 to facilitate the gypsy way of life.

- 7.45 The future potential occupants of the proposed pitches are an ethnic minority, and thus have the protected characteristic of race under s149(7) of the Equality Act 2010. The proposal would meet the needs of those persons with a relevant protected characteristic, by reason of race, and so, as required by section 149(1) of the Equality Act 2010, the public sector equality duty is applicable.

PPTS Paragraph 25 (d) that the locally specific criteria used to guide the allocation of sites in plans, or which form the policy where there is no identified need for pitches, should be used to assess applications that may come forward on unallocated sites:

- 7.46 The criteria within policy LP27 is therefore relevant and is discussed within material considerations below.

PPTS Paragraph 25 (e) that they should determine applications for sites from any travellers and not just those with local connections:

- 7.47 This proposal seeks to provide 1 gypsy and traveller pitch. Information regarding gypsy/traveller status or personal circumstances has been provided with the application. Policy LP27 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 is therefore relevant and the application will be assessed with regard to any travellers not just those with local connections, which can be secured via a planning condition.

Sustainability in terms of Policy LP27 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036

- 7.48 Policy LP27 of the Local Plan to 2036 sets out a range of criteria to be satisfied. These are set out below, and the scheme is subsequently assessed against the provisions of each of these criteria:

LP27.a) The location is within 1.5 miles of a primary school and 2 miles of a GP surgery:

- 7.49 Paragraph 26 of the PPTS states that Local Planning Authorities should very strictly limit new traveller site development in open countryside that is away from existing settlements or outside areas allocated in the development plan.

- 7.50 Ramsey Heights itself has no such facilities. A convenience store, public house and Primary School exists approximately 2.1 miles north of the site at Ramsey St Mary's and a pedestrian footpath links these settlements. The site is located approximately 3 miles from the main services and facilities that the nearest large

settlement, Ramsey has to offer. This includes primary and secondary education, doctor's surgery, library and other amenities. It is noted that Ramsey Town is not connected to Ramsey Heights by continual footpath but a bus top exists at Ugg Mere Court Road and regular bus trips are available throughout the weekday to Ramsey.

- 7.51 The location of the proposed development is broadly in accordance with the aims of the PPTS, and there would not be a significant level of harm associated with the required car journeys in this instance.

LP27.b) The character and appearance of the wider landscape would not be significantly harmed:

- 7.52 As discussed earlier in this report during the assessment against Policy LP10 part b, the application site is part of a group of 5 applications all seeking 1 pitch each on wider site now known as Gypsy Lane. Taking into account the existing development, the cumulative impact of the development on the open character of the area must be considered. Cumulatively, this would result in a notable cluster of pitches and built form and the associated paraphernalia which would come with the residential uses. The visual impacts of these cumulative sites on the wider landscape must be considered. The site is visible from Harpers Drove which runs parallel to Middle Drove from the south and from Ray's Drove to the north. Even then views are often obscured by existing buildings and hedgerow to the rear of curtilages and field margins. The site is only really visible when approaching along Middle Drove itself which again is characterised by a sporadic and sparse mixture of built form, hedgerow and open spaces. Notwithstanding this, the site sits by itself and is quite exposed within the wider countryside. Within the group of 5 application, there are 3 garden areas serving pitches on the eastern side and also 2 undeveloped areas on the western side which has helped break up the development. There is also hedging along the boundaries of the wider site which also helped soften the visual impact. There is however an impact on the visual amenity of the Countryside due to the cluster of pitches, and the separation from other built form on Middle Drove.

- 7.53 The application site is therefore not considered to be sufficiently visually separated from other lawful gypsy and traveller sites or sites where applications are pending. As such, the proposal is considered to cause harm to the character and appearance of the area when considered in isolation and cumulatively with existing development in the locality. For the above reasons, it is considered that the proposed development would not recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside in accordance with Policy LP10 part b. This will need to be weighed up at the end of the report.

LP27.c) The location and scale of sites does not dominate the nearest settled community, when the proposal is considered collectively with other nearby traveller sites

- 7.54 LP27, criterion c) is based on the National Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (2024) paragraphs 14 and 26. Paragraph 26 states that: “Local planning authorities should ensure that sites in rural areas respect the scale of, and do not dominate the nearest settled community, and avoid placing an undue pressure on the local infrastructure.” No definition is provided of what should be considered the ‘nearest settled community’. However, the nearest settled community in this context is considered to be the village of Ramsey Heights rather than the sporadic dwellings nearby.
- 7.55 Gypsy and Traveller sites on Middle Drove amounts to 6 lawful pitches with a further lawful 4 pitches on Harpers Drove.
- 7.56 There is a further 6 in total proposed on Middle Drove by other planning applications which are due for consideration on the same 16 March 2026 DMC meeting agenda. 1 of these being located further to the east and closer towards Ugg Mere Court Road, and the other 5 being located in a grouping at the far western end of the Drove. There is also 1 additional pitch proposed for consideration on Harpers Drove by an application which is also on this same 16 March 2026 DMC meeting agenda. If all applications currently under consideration at this DMC meeting were granted, the total amount of pitches would be 12 on Middle Drove and 5 of Harpers Drove.
- 7.57 It should be noted that Ramsey Heights is considered a Small Settlement under Policy LP9 of the Local Plan. Ramsey Heights has no services or facilities available. A convenience store, public house and Primary School exists approximately 2.1 miles north of the site at Ramsey St Mary's (also a Small Settlement) and a pedestrian footpath links these settlements. The site is located approximately 3 miles from the main services and facilities that the nearest large settlement, Ramsey (Market Town – Ramsey Spatial Planning Area Policy LP7) has to offer. This includes primary and secondary education, doctor's surgery, library and other amenities. It is noted that Ramsey Town is not connected to Ramsey Heights by continual footpath but a bus top exists at Ugg Mere Court Road and regular bus trips are available throughout the weekday to Ramsey.
- 7.58 Given the context and nature of the Drovers, nearby properties have experienced an increase in vehicular movements along the Drove as a result of the accumulation of authorised and unauthorised Traveller pitches. There has most likely also been an additional demand on local services and facilities. Officers however cannot comment further on the unauthorised Traveller pitches.

7.59 Having regard to the number of lawful pitches in combination with the proposed number of Traveller pitches, against the number of existing permanent dwellings within the built up area of Ramsey Heights, and the impact this application proposal (and the cumulative impact of the lawful and proposed traveller pitches along Middle Drove and Harpers Drove) would have on the settled community, it is considered that it would not result in dominance on the settled community of Ramsey Heights and would not place an undue pressure on the local infrastructure. However, future applications would be assessed on their own merits, and whether a threshold for the area has been met.

7.60 Paragraph 7.41 of the Local Plan which states, "It is anticipated that new Gypsy and Traveller sites will be in the form of small family sized sites of up to four pitches although some larger sites that already exist, or new sites of up to eight pitches, may be appropriate depending upon local circumstances." Overall, it is considered that the proposal is acceptable against this criterion.

LP27.d) The proposed boundary treatment provides a good balance between minimising the development's impact on surrounding countryside and its integration into the local community

7.61 Paragraph 7.42 of the Local Plan states that appropriate boundary treatments should be provided which facilitate integration with the local community rather than completely enclose the site forcing a sense of isolation. As discussed under part b above, Within the group of 5 application, there are 3 garden areas serving pitches on the eastern side and also 2 undeveloped areas on the western side which has helped break up the development. There is also hedging along the boundaries of the wider site which also helped soften the visual impact. There is however an impact on the visual amenity of the Countryside due to the cluster of pitches, and the separation from other built form on Middle Drove.

LP27.e) There will not be a significant adverse effect on the amenity of nearby residents or the effective operation of adjoining uses

7.62 Given the context and nature of the Drovers, nearby properties have experienced an increase in vehicular movements along the Drove as a result of the accumulation of authorised and unauthorised Traveller pitches along the drove. There has therefore been a degree of impact upon adjoining uses through noise and disturbance which conflicts with criterion e and Policy LP14 of the Local Plan.

LP27.f) The site provides a high level of residential amenity for the proposed residents, for example in relation to protection from noise and provision of play facilities

7.63 Gypsy and Traveller sites tend to be self-sufficient sites. Children would play within the relatively large pitch areas without the need to be located near to formal recreation facilities. The application site contains a garden area. Given the countryside location of the site, it is considered that the proposal would result in a high standard of residential amenity for future occupiers.

LP27.g) The health and safety of occupants is not put at risk, including through unsafe access to sites, poor air quality, contamination or unacceptable flood risk

7.64 The land is located off Middle Drove which is a private road with a junction onto the C110 Ugg Mere Court Road. As outlined above, there is existing development located on the Drovers. The Highway Authority has advised for each application that the additional vehicle movements associated with the proposal won't be a significant intensification of use of the junction. The access is therefore considered safe, in highway safety terms.

7.65 In regard to contamination, Environmental Health have advised on other applications on Harpers Drove and Middle Drove, that the superficial geology at this application site is Peat, which can produce significant quantities of hazardous ground gases, namely methane and carbon dioxide. Whilst the caravans will not be at risk of ground gasses, the day room will unless measures are implemented to prevent gas from entering the building. A condition requiring either a ground gas risk assessment which will be used to determine whether or not the proposed day room building requires protection against the ingress of gas, or the installation of a methane gas resistant membrane to the day room foundations. Even though this application is retrospective, it is considered that this condition should be imposed on any consent.

7.66 The site is recognised as lying within Flood Zone 3a in accordance with the EA's latest planning flood mapping and the Council's 2017 level 1 SFRA and therefore at a high probability of flooding. The 2017 SFRA does not take into account the existing defences under control by the Middle Level Commissioners Internal Drainage board (IDB).

7.67 National guidance and Policy LP5 of the Local Plan to 2036 seek to steer new developments to areas at lowest risk of flooding and advises this should be done through application of the Sequential Test, and if appropriate the Exceptions Test (as set out in paragraphs 170-182 of the NPPF 2024).

7.68 The applicant has submitted an FRA in which it concurs that the applications site is within Flood Zone 3 but considers the residual risk to be low due to the existing maintenance of current flood defences by the IDB.

- 7.69 This application is supported by a site-specific Flood Risk Assessment (FRA).
- 7.70 The EA considers that the main source of flood risk at the location is associated with watercourses under the jurisdiction of the IDB and therefore raises no objection. However, the EA does remind the LPA of their requirement to determine whether the application passes the sequential test based on the flood vulnerability of the development and SFRA maps. They go on to advise that caravans are classed as 'highly vulnerable' development for the purposes of flood risk whereby the NPPF and associated PPG advise that highly vulnerable development in high probability food risk areas should not be permitted.
- 7.71 Where development is proposed in areas of high or moderate probability of flooding (FZ3 and FZ2 respectively), the proposal must be sequentially assessed to identify through evidence whether there are other site(s) in lower areas of flood risk reasonably available to accommodate the proposal. It is for local planning authorities, taking advice from the Environment Agency as appropriate, to consider the extent to which Sequential Test considerations have been satisfied, taking into account the particular circumstances in any given case. The developer should justify with evidence to the local planning authority what area of search has been used when making the application, in accordance with Policy LP5.
- 7.72 Members should note that the Council recently considered and resolved to approve permanent gypsy and traveller pitches on Legacy Park Somersham under application reference 25/00973/S73. Legacy Park also sits within Flood Zone 3. Members debated the item in September last year and resolved to grant permanent permission. That application contained a sequential test. For completeness, the assessment of that sequential test will be set out in the subsequent paragraphs.
- 7.73 The applicant and the Council agreed that that the appropriate geographical area for the test is the Huntingdonshire District Council area. This satisfied Stage A (Geographical Area over which the Test is to be applied) of the sequential test.
- 7.74 Stage B of the sequential test is for the applicant to identify reasonably available sites. The applicant sets out that the following:
- Social Rented Site: only social rented site in Huntingdonshire is the former local authority site at St Neots. The site is fully occupied with a waiting list for pitches.
 - Local Plan Allocations: There are no allocations for Gypsy and Traveller residential use in the adopted Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036.
 - Sites with Permanent Planning Permission for Gypsy and Traveller Residential Development: None of the sites approved

over the last 5 years can be considered as reasonably available for the occupants of the pitches at Legacy Park (with the possible exception of the two pitches at Straight Drove, Farcet, but that is because at the time of writing we have been unable to confirm whether the site is occupied. Given the nature of the site, consider it highly unlikely it would be available). Whilst this is unknown, given that this site is only for 2 pitches, it wouldn't be suitable to accommodate the required need on this application. Most, if not all the sites that have been approved are small, family owned sites, or extensions to such sites. Such sites tend to be strongly favoured by gypsy's and travellers, and in most cases, once they have secured permissions, such families tend to hold onto them for their children and grand-children, which means that they are rarely available for sale. While the Council has been willing to approve appropriate Zone 1 sites, because of the challenges for gypsy's and travellers in acquiring suitable land, such sites are not coming forward at a fast enough rate to keep up with the need for accommodation. Secondly, there are a significant number of sites with planning applications undetermined or granted for temporary periods in Flood Risk Zone 3, notably at Ramsey Heights. Reflecting land prices and other factors there is a strong tendency for the sites which have been acquired by Gypsies in recent years to be in Flood Risk Zone 3.

- Land and Sites for Sale: Generally, estate and land agents do not deal much in Traveller sites.. Where land is sold, it tends to be within the community, although Travellers do monitor land available for auction with a view to acquiring suitable sites. 3.12 The only source of information about Traveller sites available for sale that we are aware of is the Dragon Driving website, which is used almost exclusively by Travellers. Excluding sites, which were described as sold, on 7 April 2025 the Equestrian Property, Land and Buildings section of the website contained four adverts for land or pitches with planning permission, one for a house with stables, 12 for land either without planning permission or with applications undetermined, and five for bungalows with land. Adverts were for properties all over the country. None was in Huntingdonshire.
- Applicant's personal experience: Mr Adams is a Romany Gypsy business man with strong local connections. Like many Gypsies and Travellers, he found it very difficult to acquire land where he and his family could live in a way that reflects their cultural preferences. At one stage he, his family and his parents lived at Crystal Lakes caravan park site at Fenstanton, but the site was badly flooded. (This was fluvial flooding along the Great Ouse, rather than flooding of the protected Fens.) They then lived on an industrial site at Wyton near Huntingdon, occupying a caravan and an industrial unit adapted for domestic use. Because of being unable to acquire a suitable site they then lived in a house near Huntingdon, although Mr Adams often slept in a caravan in the drive because of his intolerance of housing. While occupying the house he was actively looking to acquire an appropriate site with the potential for Gypsy and Traveller residential use. Mr Adams

eventually purchased the land at Legacy Park in 2006. Drawn from his own experience, Mr Adams makes two points on why it is difficult for Gypsies and travellers to acquire land in Huntingdonshire. Most of the land that comes to the market is large scale agricultural land, or medium sized sites with potential for housing. Neither are affordable for gypsy's and travellers. Secondly, if people do try to buy land, and there is any suggestion the purchase is by gypsies and travellers, the sale is often withdrawn.

- 7.75 This satisfied Stage B (identify reasonably available sites) of the sequential test.
- 7.76 Stages C, D and E of the sequential test is for the Applicant to obtain flood risk information for all sites, apply the Sequential Test, and Conclusion.
- 7.77 The applicant set out the following argument that 'Based on consideration of various potential sources of sites: social rented sites; local plan allocations; sites with permanent planning position; and information on land and sites for sale, together with Mr Adams' personal experience of trying to buy land, we have been unable to identify any reasonably available sites within Huntingdonshire, which offer realistic alternative accommodation for the occupants of the application site, let alone any sites at lower risk of flooding than Legacy Park. This means the sequential test is passed.'
- 7.78 The Council has consulted on a Preferred Options Draft Local Plan to 2046. Comments received from stakeholders and statutory consultees will be processed, and reviewed, and further technical evidence will be gathered to inform the Proposed Submission Local Plan. The aim is to consult on that in summer 2026.
- 7.79 No gypsy or traveller sites were submitted in the call for sites process, and therefore none have been put forward as draft allocations in the new Local Plan.
- 7.80 The Council has recently published an updated Gypsy and Traveller(GTAA), Travelling Showperson, boat dwellers and other caravan dwellers Accommodation Assessment 2024 which can be viewed here: <https://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/planning/local-plan-update/evidence-library-for-local-plan-update/>
- 7.81 This concludes that there is an overall minimum need for 127 additional Gypsy and Traveller pitches across Huntingdonshire District over the period 2023/24 to 2045/46. Of this need, 36 are needed in the first five years, 69 over the period 2028/29 to 2041/42 and 22 over the period 2042/43 to 2045/46. Due to this, the Council is not currently meeting it's need in terms of gypsy and traveller pitches.

- 7.82 Within the conclusion section of the report, it advises that in order to meet its need for pitches, the Council should consider regularising sites that are not permanently authorised or temporary authorised in flood zone 3 areas where flood mitigation is in place, alongside other approaches. Members should note that each site should be assessed on its own merits.
- 7.83 The conclusion section of the report also goes onto state that notwithstanding evidence in this GTAA on need, additional need may arise over the plan period, for instance from a higher number of households moving into Huntingdonshire than anticipated. It is therefore recommended that the Local Plan references the need in the GTAA as a minimum need which is likely to be met but sets out policies to inform future planning applications for private sites.
- 7.84 It is considered that there is a lack of alternative accommodation for gypsies and travellers.
- 7.85 For those reasons, the Council agreed that the sequential test for 25/00973/S73 was passed, and the applications were granted permanent permission for gypsy and traveller pitches in Flood Zone 3.
- 7.86 Officers are of the view that this current application can rely upon that previously passed sequential test as the development proposal is for the same type of development, and the circumstances (such as the lack of local plan allocations has not changed and the site-specific is similar in nature) have not significantly changed. That decision was made by Members in September 2025 and the decision is therefore very recent.
- 7.87 The Cambridgeshire Flood and Water SPD states (page 33) that the passing of the sequential test 'does not mean that the proposed development is acceptable in terms of flood risk as it may be necessary to undertake the Exception Test and a site specific flood risk assessment.'
- 7.88 The applicant has provided a site specific flood risk assessment. The Exception Test will also be discussed below.
- 7.89 The Environment Agency has commented on the nearby applications in respect of the recent new 5 year temporary consents on One Acre Stables and Two Acre Stables, and supported the inclusion of various flood resilience measures. These can be implemented via a planning condition. Likewise, an evacuation plan condition is also recommended.
- 7.90 In respect of the wider community benefits, permitting the development would address the immediate housing needs of the applicant and their family thereby preventing a potential roadside existence for them.

- 7.91 The GTAA also states that much of the need is arising from sites on Middle Drove and recommends the regularising of sites that are not permanent authorised or temporarily authorised in flood zone 3 areas where flood mitigation is in place. Permitting the development would also help towards addressing the unmet need within the District in response to the GTAA.
- 7.92 The site is located within an Internal Drainage Board catchment and through the operation and maintenance of the pumping stations and the channel system the Board seek to maintain a general standard capable to providing flood protection to agricultural land and developed areas of 1 in 20 and 1 in 100 years respectively.
- 7.93 Officers have considered this point in detail, especially in light of the PPG which sets out that initially, the presence of existing flood risk management infrastructure should be ignored, as the long-term funding, maintenance and renewal of this infrastructure is uncertain.
- 7.94 However, Officers have enough confidence that the existing systems, assets, and defences provided by the various water level and flood RMA's (Environment Agency, Middle Level Commissioners and IDB) are appropriate for the design life of the development. For all of these reasons, Officers consider the exception test is passed for this site.
- 7.95 It is therefore considered that the Sequential and Exceptions tests are both passed. This will be weighed in the planning balance.
- LP27.h) There is adequate space for operational needs, including the parking and turning of vehicles*
- 7.96 It is considered that the proposed plans demonstrate there is adequate space for vehicles to park, and enter and leave the site in a forward gear and therefore the proposal is acceptable against this criterion.
- LP27.i) There are appropriate management arrangements in place, where the site may have multiple owners or tenants or be used for transit purposes*
- 7.97 Given the context and the separation from other sites, a management condition is not considered necessary.
- LP27.j) The site can be safely and adequately serviced by infrastructure*
- 7.98 The adjoining site is served by mains water and mains electricity, and as such it is considered feasible for the proposed development to also be served by these utilities. Small package

sewage treatment plants are the preferred means of waste disposal when connection to mains drainage is not possible or impractical.

Biodiversity

7.99 Policy LP30 of the Local Plan states that a proposal will be required to demonstrate that all potential adverse impacts on biodiversity and geodiversity have been investigated. A proposal that is likely to have an impact, either direct or indirect, on biodiversity or geodiversity will need to be accompanied by an appropriate appraisal, such as a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, identifying all individual and cumulative potential impacts on biodiversity and geodiversity. A proposal will ensure no net loss in biodiversity and provide a net gain where possible, through the planned retention, enhancement and creation of habitats and wildlife features, appropriate to the scale, type, and location of development.

7.100 The application is not accompanied by an ecological assessment. It is considered that there would be some degree of loss in biodiversity given the proposal would replace a grassed paddock. However, it is considered that the level of biodiversity loss in this instance would be relatively minor. In this case it is considered that the low level of biodiversity loss could be satisfactorily mitigated by ecological enhancements which could be secured by a planning condition. The application is not subject to statutory Biodiversity Net Gain as it predates the legislation. Further to the west is the Woodwalton Site of Special Scientific and Fenland Special Area of Conservation interest. However, given the location and scale of development, no significant impact upon the SSSI should occur. Therefore, subject to a condition for ecological enhancements, it is considered that in this case the proposal would meet the aims of Policy LP30 of the Local Plan.

Developer Contributions

Bins

7.101 Part H of the Developer Contributions SPD (2011) requires a payment towards refuse bins for new residential development. A completed signed and date Unilateral Undertaking is being sought. On this basis the proposal would provide a satisfactory contribution to meet the tests within the CIL Regulations. The proposal would accord with Policy LP4 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 and the Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document (2011).

Other Matters

Intentional unauthorised development

7.102 The establishment of additional pitches on the site, without planning permission amounts to intentional unauthorised development, as such the 2015 ministerial statement (Green Belt and Intentional Unauthorised Development 2015) is relevant. By way of mitigation, the occupants have had limited options in respect of accommodation and has sought to regularise the situation through a planning application. Officers also acknowledge that there has been a significant delay in determining the application, which has added to the uncertainty the applicant faced.

Conclusion

7.103 Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

7.104 Article 1 of the First Protocol (Human Rights Act) sets out that a person is entitled to the peaceful enjoyment of his possessions and that no one shall be deprived of his possessions except in the public interest. Article 8 of the Human Rights Act states that everyone has the right to respect for his private and family life and his home. Refusing would represent an interference with the home and family life of the proposed occupiers, such that both Articles would be engaged. There is also a positive obligation imposed by Article 8 to facilitate the gypsy way of life.

7.105 Occupants of gypsy and traveller pitches are an ethnic minority and thus have the protected characteristic of race under s149(7) of the Equality Act 2010. The proposal would meet the needs of those persons with a relevant protected characteristic, by reason of race, and so, as required by section 149(1) of the Equality Act 2010, the public sector equality duty is applicable.

7.106 There is therefore a need to have due regard to eliminating discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations.

7.107 Officers are of the view that this application can rely upon the previously passed sequential test for permission 25/00973/S73 as the development proposal is for the same type of development, and the circumstances (such as the lack of local plan allocations has not changed and the site-specific is similar in nature) have not significantly changed. That decision was made by members in September 2025 and the decision is therefore very recent.

7.108 Officers have enough confidence that the existing systems, assets, and defences provided by the various water level and flood RMA's (Environment Agency, Middle Level Commissioners and IDB) are appropriate for the design life of the development. It is therefore considered that the Sequential and Exceptions tests are both passed.

- 7.109 The Council has recently published an updated Gypsy and Traveller(GTAA), Travelling Showperson, boat dwellers and other caravan dwellers Accommodation Assessment 2024 which can be viewed here: <https://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/planning/local-plan-update/evidence-library-for-local-plan-update/>
- 7.110 This concludes that there is an overall minimum need for 127 additional Gypsy and Traveller pitches across Huntingdonshire District over the period 2023/24 to 2045/46. Of this need, 36 are needed in the first five years, 69 over the period 2028/29 to 2041/42 and 22 over the period 2042/43 to 2045/46. Due to this, the Council is not currently meeting its need in terms of gypsy and traveller pitches.
- 7.111 Within the conclusion section of the report, it advises that in order to meet its need for pitches, the council should consider regularising sites that are not permanently authorised or temporarily authorised in flood zone 3 areas where flood mitigation is in place, alongside other approaches. It is considered that the that there is flood mitigation possible which aligns with the above. Members should note that each site should be assessed on its own merits, and each application should be assessed on its own merits.
- 7.112 The conclusion section of the report also goes onto state that notwithstanding evidence in this GTAA on need, additional need may arise over the plan period, for instance from a higher number of households moving into Huntingdonshire than anticipated. It is therefore recommended that the Local Plan references the need in the GTAA as a minimum need which is likely to be met but sets out policies to inform future planning applications for private sites.
- 7.113 It is considered that there is a lack of alternative accommodation for gypsies and travellers. Approval of this pitch would go towards the Council meeting some of this unmet need.
- 7.114 The establishment of additional pitches on the site, without planning permission amounts to intentional unauthorised development, as such the 2015 ministerial statement (Green Belt and Intentional Unauthorised Development 2015) is relevant. This weighs negatively against the application. By way of mitigation, the occupants have had limited options in respect of accommodation and has sought to regularise the situation through a planning application. Officers also acknowledge that there has been a significant delay in determining the application, which has added to the uncertainty the applicant faced.
- 7.115 The noise and disturbance from increased vehicle activity is afforded negative weight in the balance. The application site is part of a group of 5 applications all seeking 1 pitch each on wider site

now known as Gypsy Lane. There is an impact on the visual amenity of the Countryside due to the cluster of pitches, and the separation from other built form on Middle Drove. It is considered that the proposed development would not recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside in accordance with Policy LP10 part b which is also afforded negative weight in the balance.

- 7.116 Having regard to the number of lawful pitches in combination with the proposed number of Traveller pitches, against the number of existing permanent dwellings within the built up area of Ramsey Heights, and the impact this application proposal (and the cumulative impact of the lawful and proposed traveller pitches along Middle Drove and Harpers Drove) would have on the settled community, it is considered that it would not result in dominance on the settled community of Ramsey Heights and would not place an undue pressure on the local infrastructure. However, future applications would be assessed on their own merits, and whether a threshold for the area has been met.
- 7.117 5 year temporary consents have been granted along Middle Drove in the past. Members should note that the immediate vicinity also benefits from planning permissions for permanent gypsy and traveller pitches, and those permissions only had a condition imposed stating the site shall not be occupied by any persons other than gypsies and travellers. The permissions were therefore not granted on a personal basis. This means that these permitted pitches can be occupied anybody who meets the definition of a gypsy/traveller as defined in Annex 1 to Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS) December 2024. The reasoning for temporary consents was due to the nature of the sites being in Flood Zone 3 and to await the publishing of the GTAA and also the conclusion of the Call for Sites to see if any alternative sites could come forward in areas at lower risk of flooding. The Council has now concluded these matters. The publication of the GTAA has identified an unmet need and no draft allocations for gypsy and traveller sites have been put forward in the draft Local Plan. Therefore, Officers deem the justification for temporary consents has fallen away. This means there are no strong planning reasons to restrict the planning permission to a temporary nature or on the basis of a personal consent.
- 7.118 Any identified conflict or harm does not warrant a refusal of the application when weighed against the unmet gypsy and traveller need within the District. Taken all of that in account, it is considered that the application should benefit from permanent planning permission with a condition imposed stating the site shall not be occupied by any persons other than gypsies and travellers.

8. RECOMMENDATION - APPROVAL subject to the following conditions:

- Approved plans
- Gypsy and traveller occupancy
- Maximum number of pitches/caravans
- Site development scheme (including landscaping, SuDS etc)
- Flood mitigation measures
- Flood evacuation plan
- Hazardous ground gases

If you would like a translation of this document, a large text version or an audio version, please contact us on 01480 388388 and we will try to accommodate your needs.

CONTACT OFFICER:

Enquiries about this report to **Lewis Tomlinson Senior Development Management Officer** – lewis.tomlinson@huntingdonshire.gov.uk

From: developmentcontrol@huntingdonshire.gov.uk
Sent: 23 July 2021 14:22
To: DevelopmentControl
Subject: Comments for Planning Application 21/01479/FUL

Comments summary

Dear Sir/Madam,

Planning Application comments have been made. A summary of the comments is provided below.

Comments were submitted at 23/07/2021 2:20 PM from [REDACTED].

Application Summary

Address: Magpie Farm Middle Drove Ramsey Heights PE26 2RG

Proposal: Change of use of land to one Gypsy / Traveller pitch with five residential static caravans, and five touring caravans, establishment of access and use of hardstanding for occupation by the applicants and their family (temporary or permanent).

Case Officer: [REDACTED]

[Click for further information](#)

Customer Details

Name: [REDACTED]

Email: [REDACTED]@ramseytowncouncil.org.uk

Address: [REDACTED]

Comments Details

Commenter Type: Town or Parish Council

Stance: Customer objects to the Planning Application

Reasons for comment:

Comments: Unanimously refused.
Development would have a significant adverse impact on the character and appearance of the landscape. It would also increase traffic and access issues resulting in concern over highway safety. The scale of the site dominates the existing settled community. Nor is the site adequately serviced by infrastructure and would contribute to a significant flood risk being situated in Flood Zone 3.

Kind regards

Development Management Committee

Application Ref: 21/01479/FUL



Scale = 1:7,500

Date Created: 05/03/2026



