

<p>Reference: 20/00408/FUL</p>	<p>Site: Manor View Southend Road Corringham Essex SS17 9EY</p>
<p>Ward: Corringham And Fobbing</p>	<p>Proposal: Use of land for a four pitch gypsy/traveller site with layout comprising the siting of six mobile homes, two touring caravans, one day room and a static caravan used as a day room</p>

Plan Number(s):		
Reference	Name	Received
J003547-DD-01	Site Location Plan	1 April 2020
J003547-DD-02 Rev A	Existing Site Layout	1 May 2020
J003547-DD-03 Rev A	Proposed Site Layout	13 May 2020

The application is also accompanied by:

- Covering letter

Applicant:

Mr R Ward

Validated:

3 April 2020

Date of expiry:

26 June 2020 (extension of time agreed with applicant)

Recommendation: Refuse planning permission

This application is scheduled for determination by the Council's Planning Committee because the application is considered to have significant policy or strategic implications (in accordance with Part 3 (b) Section 2 2.1 (a) of the Council's constitution).

1.0 DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL

- 1.1 This application seeks planning permission for a permanent gypsy/traveller site with four pitches comprising a total of six mobile homes, two touring caravans, one day room and a static caravan to be used as a day room. The site presently has temporary

planning permission which was granted at appeal for five years for a change of use to a four pitch gypsy and traveller residential site, involving the development of three day rooms, a stable/day room block, and the siting of up to eight caravans, of which no more than four would be mobile homes.

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

- 2.1 The site is located on the northern side of Southend Road (B1420), adjacent to the residential property known as Willow Cottage. Located to the north east is the junction with the A13, (Five Bells Roundabout) where there are sporadic commercial uses such as a petrol station and caravan sales site.
- 2.2 The site is approximately 62 metres in length and 45 metres in depth. The site is within the Green Belt.
- 2.3 The land has been occupied by the applicants since March 2013. In 2013 the land was resurfaced with scalplings, the vehicular access widened and the land fenced off and subdivided into four pitches, with construction of stable and utility blocks, fencing, and siting of static caravans.
- 2.4 Prior to the current occupation, the site had not been put to any particular use in recent years. Aerial photographs taken in 2004 show the land to be characterised by dense vegetation with a building sited close to the northwest boundary. In 2004 there was a narrow access taken from Southend Road and what appeared to be two skips within the site.

3.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

3.1 The following table provides the planning history:

Application Ref.	Description of Proposal	Decision
13/00328/FUL	Siting of four caravans, four utility blocks and space for touring caravans and cars, fencing. Construction of three stables.	Refused
14/00016/FUL	Change of use, for a temporary period of five years, to a four pitch Gypsy and Traveller residential site, involving the retention of an existing shed/barn and the development of three day rooms, a stable/day room block, and the siting of up to eight caravans, of which no more than four would be mobile homes, together with landscaping.	Allowed on appeal
18/01132/CV	Variation of details reserved by condition no. 3 (approved plans) of appeal planning	Refused

	<p>permission ref. APP/M1595/A/14/2217368 (Council ref: 14/00016/FUL -Change of use, for a temporary period of five years, to a four pitch Gypsy and Traveller residential site, involving the retention of an existing shed/barn and the development of three day rooms, a stable/day room block, and the siting of up to eight caravans, of which no more than four would be mobile homes, together with landscaping) to amend layout on plots 1 & 2, changes to fencing and tarmac hardstanding instead of gravel</p>	
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4.0 CONSULTATIONS AND REPRESENTATIONS

4.1 Detailed below is a summary of the consultation responses received. The full version of each consultation response can be viewed on the Council's website via public access at the following link: www.thurrock.gov.uk/planning

4.2 PUBLICITY:

This application has been advertised by way of individual neighbour notification letters, press advert and public site notice which has been displayed nearby.

Twenty two (22) objections raising the following concerns:

- Increase in mobile homes at the site
- Increase in traffic
- Access to the site unsafe
- Security with travellers nearby
- Conditions for temporary consent not complied with
- Pitches are being sub-let to travellers not consented by the temporary permission
- Foul and surface water drainage
- Permanence of buildings
- Tarmac is permanent unlike the gravel
- Out of character with the area
- Disturbance from horses
- Green Belt policies – not appropriate for a traveller site
- Impact upon local services such as health care and education facilities

4.3 ANGLIAN WATER

No objections

4.4 CADENT GAS

No objections.

4.5 ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH:

No objections, with condition.

4.6 HIGHWAYS:

No objections.

4.7 LANDSCAPE AND ECOLOGY

No objections.

5.0 POLICY CONTEXT

5.1 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The revised NPPF was published on 19 February 2019. The NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies. Paragraph 2 of the NPPF confirms the tests in s.38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and s.70 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and that the Framework is a material consideration in planning decisions. The following chapter headings and content of the NPPF are particularly relevant to the consideration of the current proposals:

- 5. Delivering a sufficient supply of homes;
- 11. Making effective use of land;
- 13. Protecting Green Belt land;
- 15. Conserving and enhancing the natural environment;

5.2 National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

In March 2014 the former Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) launched its planning practice guidance web-based resource. This was accompanied by a Written Ministerial Statement which includes a list of the previous planning policy guidance documents cancelled when the NPPF was launched. NPPG contains a range of subject areas, with each area containing several sub-topics. Those of particular relevance to the determination of this planning application include:

- Appeals

- Before submitting an application
- Brownfield land registers
- Design: process and tools
- Determining a planning application
- Effective use of land
- Enforcement and post-permission matters
- Green Belt
- Housing needs of different groups
- Natural environment
- Noise
- Use of planning conditions
- Water supply, wastewater and water quality

5.3 Planning Policy for traveller sites (PPTS)

5.4 Local Planning Policy: Thurrock Local Development Framework (2015)

The “Core Strategy and Policies for Management of Development” was adopted by Council on the 28 February 2015. The following policies apply to the proposals:

OVERARCHING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT POLICY

- OSDP1 (Promotion of Sustainable Growth and Regeneration in Thurrock)¹

SPATIAL POLICIES

- CSSP4 (Sustainable Green Belt)

THEMATIC POLICIES

- CSTP3 (Gypsies And Travellers)
- CSTP18 (Green Infrastructure)

POLICIES FOR MANAGEMENT OF DEVELOPMENT

- PMD1 (Minimising Pollution and Impacts on Amenity)
- PMD2 (Design and Layout)
- PMD6 (Development in the Green Belt)
- PMD8 (Parking Standards)
- PMD9 (Road Network Hierarchy)

5.5 Thurrock Local Plan

In February 2014 the Council embarked on the preparation of a new Local Plan for the Borough. Between February and April 2016 the Council consulted formally on an 'Issues and Options (Stage 1)' document and simultaneously undertook a 'Call for Sites' exercise. In December 2018 the Council began consultation on an Issues and Options [Stage 2 Spatial Options and Sites] document, this consultation has now closed and the responses have been considered and reported to Council. On 23 October 2019 the Council agreed the publication of the Issues and Options 2 Report of Consultation on the Council's website and agreed the approach to preparing a new Local Plan.

5.6 Thurrock Design Strategy

In March 2017 the Council launched the Thurrock Design Strategy. The Design Strategy sets out the main design principles to be used by applicants for all new development in Thurrock. The Design Strategy is a supplementary planning document (SPD) which supports policies in the adopted Core Strategy.

6.0 **ASSESSMENT**

Background:

6.1 In 2015 planning permission was granted at appeal for the change of use of the land for a temporary period of five years, to a four pitch gypsy and traveller residential site, involving the development of three day rooms, a stable/day room block and the siting of up to eight caravans, of which no more than four would be mobile homes. In allowing the appeal, the Planning Inspector granted a personal permission to the applicant. The temporary permission expires on 16th July 2020.

6.2 The assessment below covers the following areas:

- I. Plan designation and principle of development
- II. Residential impacts
- III. Highways impacts
- IV. Other matters

I. PLAN DESIGNATION AND PRINCIPLE OF DEVELOPMENT

6.3 Under this heading it is necessary to consider the following key questions:

- i. whether the proposals constitute inappropriate development in the Green Belt (GB);
- ii. the effect of the proposals on the open nature of the GB and the purposes of including land within it; and
- iii. whether the harm to the GB is clearly outweighed by other considerations so as to amount to the very special circumstances (VSC) necessary to justify inappropriate development.

i. Whether the proposals constitute inappropriate development in the GB

6.4 All of the site is located within the GB and consequently all of the built development proposed would be sited on the GB. Therefore adopted Core Strategy policies CSSP4 and PMD6 apply to the proposals alongside part 13 of the NPPF (Protecting GB land).

6.5 Paragraph 133 of the NPPF confirms that the Government attaches great importance to GBs and states that the

“fundamental aim of GB policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of GB are their openness and their permanence”.

With regard to proposals affecting the GB, paragraph 143 states that

“Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the GB and should not be approved except in very special circumstances”.

Paragraph 144 goes on to state that local planning authorities should ensure that “substantial weight” is given to any harm to the Green Belt and that very special circumstances will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by way of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.

6.6 With reference to proposed new buildings in the Green Belt, paragraph 145 confirms that a local planning authority should regard their construction as inappropriate, with the following exceptions:

- a) buildings for agriculture and forestry;
- 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 GB and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it;

- c) the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building;
- d) the replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces;
- e) limited infilling in villages;
- f) limited affordable housing for local community needs under policies set out in the development plan (including policies for rural exception sites); and
- g) limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land, whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would:

- not have a greater impact on the openness of the GB than the existing development; or
- not cause substantial harm to the openness of the GB, where the development would re-use previously developed land and contribute to meeting an identified affordable housing need within the area of the local planning authority.

6.7 A permanent four pitch gypsy/traveller site does not fall into any of the exceptions listed at (a) to (g) in the paragraph above. Consequently, the proposals comprise inappropriate development with reference to the NPPF.

6.8 Consideration also needs to be given to Department of Communities and Local Government 'Planning Policy for Traveller Sites' [published in August 2015]. This document sets out the Government's planning policy for traveller sites. The document has been produced to be read in conjunction with the NPPF. Policy E of the document reinforces the guidance within the NPPF and states that Traveller sites, both temporary and permanent, in the Green Belt are inappropriate development which is by definition harmful to it and should not be approved except in very special circumstances.

6.9 Development plan policy, as expressed in the Core Strategy and Policies for the Management of Development (2015) is consistent with national policy on GB matters. Core Strategy policy CSSP4 sets out the objective of maintaining the purpose, function and open character of the GB. In order to implement this policy, the Council will:

- maintain the permanence of the boundaries of the GB;
- resist development where there would be any danger of coalescence; and
- maximise opportunities for increased public access, leisure and biodiversity.

In addition, Core Strategy policy PMD6 states that, inter-alia, planning permission will only be granted for new development in the GB provided it meets as appropriate the requirements of the NPPF. Consequently, it is a straightforward matter to conclude that the development constitutes inappropriate development in the GB.

ii. The effect of the proposals on the open nature of the GB and the purposes of including land within it

6.10 The analysis in the paragraphs above concludes that the gypsy/traveller site development is inappropriate development which is, by definition, harmful to the GB (NPPF para. 143). However, it is also necessary to consider whether there is any other harm (NPPF para. 144).

6.11 As noted above paragraph 133 of the NPPF states that the fundamental aim of GB policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of GBs being described as their openness and their permanence. The proposals would comprise a substantial amount of permanent built development in an area which was previously open. Advice published in NPPG (July 2019) addresses the role of the GB in the planning system and, with reference to openness, cites the following matters to be taken into account when assessing impact:

- openness is capable of having both spatial and visual aspects;
- the duration of the development, and its remediability; and
- the degree of activity likely to be generated, such as traffic generation.

6.12 It is considered that the proposed development would have a detrimental impact on both the spatial and visual aspects of openness, i.e. an impact as a result of the footprint of development and building volume. The intended permanency of the development would therefore impact upon openness.

6.13 Therefore, it is considered that the amount and scale of development reduces the openness of the site. As a consequence the loss of openness, which is contrary to the NPPF, should be accorded substantial weight in the consideration of this application.

6.14 In the context of impact on the openness of the GB, it is also necessary to consider the proposals against the scheme allowed on appeal (14/00016/FUL) and the relevant conclusions reached by the Planning Inspector (paragraph 28):

From the terms of the PPTS it has already been established that the appeal proposal is inappropriate development, which is, by definition, harmful, even taking into account it is only for a temporary period. The introduction of static caravans, tourers, utility/day rooms, hardsurfacing, stables and associated domestic paraphernalia would harm the openness of the Green Belt. The hardstandings and shed, present before the Ward family occupied the appeal site, along with the boundary fencing and gates, already reduce the openness of the Green Belt in that urbanising features exist where once they did not. Whilst it is likely that the appeal site has been used for

purposes other than agriculture, over the years, due to the limited intensity of use and the lack of lawful status, the weight given to off-setting the harm caused by the appeal proposal against any previous use or development is significantly reduced. In such circumstances, the gypsy and traveller site would cause a loss of openness in the Green Belt, temporarily encroaching upon the countryside, in conflict with the purposes of including land in the Green Belt. The harm would be limited and not permanent, but nevertheless carry some weight against the appeal, adding appreciably to the substantial harm by reason of inappropriateness. The development would conflict with RCS Policies PMD6 and CS policy CSSP4 the Framework and PPTS.

6.15 To summarise the Inspector's conclusions on the subject of openness, the development would diminish openness (as a spatial concept) on the site itself.

6.16 Paragraph 134 of the NPPF sets out the five purposes which the GB serves as follows:

- a) to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
- b) to prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another;
- c) to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
- d) to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
- e) to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

6.17 a) to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas

The site is located in a rural location. For the purposes of the NPPF, the site is considered to be outside of any 'large built up areas'. It would not therefore result in the sprawling of an existing built up area.

6.18 b) to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

The development would not conflict with this Green Belt purpose.

6.19 c) to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment

With regard to the third Green Belt purpose, the proposal would involve built development on what was an open and undeveloped part of the site. It is therefore considered that the proposal would constitute an encroachment of built development into the countryside in this location. The development would consequently conflict with this purpose.

6.20 d) to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns;

As there are no historic towns in the immediate vicinity of the site, the proposals do not conflict with this defined purpose of the Green Belt.

- 6.21 e) to assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land)

In general terms, the development could occur in the urban area. So, in principle; there is no spatial imperative why Green Belt land is required to accommodate the proposals.

- 6.22 In conclusion under the headings (i) and (ii) it is concluded that the current proposals would lead to harm to the GB by way of inappropriate development (i.e. definitional harm), would be harmful by way of loss of openness and would be harmful as a result of conflict with GB purposes (c) and (e). In accordance with paragraph 144 of the NPPF substantial weight should be afforded to this harm

- iii. Whether the harm to the GB is clearly outweighed by other considerations so as to amount to the VSC necessary to justify inappropriate development

- 6.23 Paragraph 144 of the NPPF states that, when considering any planning application, local planning authorities “should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt. VSC will not exist unless the potential harm to the GB by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations”.

- 6.24 Neither the NPPF nor the Core Strategy provide guidance as to what can comprise VSC, either singly or in combination. However, some interpretation of VSC has been provided by the Courts. The rarity or uniqueness of a factor may make it very special, but it has also been held that the aggregation of commonplace factors could combine to create VSC (i.e. ‘very special’ is not necessarily to be interpreted as the converse of ‘commonplace’). However, the demonstration of VSC is a ‘high’ test and the circumstances which are relied upon must be genuinely ‘very special’. In considering whether VSC exist, factors put forward by an applicant which are generic or capable of being easily replicated on other sites, could be used on different cases leading to a decrease in the openness of the GB. The provisions of VSC which are specific and not easily replicable may help to reduce the risk of such a precedent being created. Mitigation measures designed to reduce the impact of a proposal are generally not capable of being VSC. Ultimately, whether any particular combination of factors amounts to VSC will be a matter of planning judgment for the decision-taker.

6.25 The Planning Statement and additional representations submitted by the applicant to accompany the application sets out the applicant's case for VSC under the following main headings:

1. Site is existing
2. Lack of gypsy sites – unmet need
3. Best interests of the children

6.26 The detail of the applicant's case under the headings above and consideration of the matters raised are provided in the paragraphs below.

6.27 1. Site is existing

The applicant states the application proposes to retain the existing site, albeit with an alternative layout and positioning of the mobile homes to that which was granted at appeal. The existing landscaping would be retained in full and a condition which seeks to ensure the retention of the landscaping could be imposed.

6.28 Consideration

As detailed above, in allowing the appeal on the site the Inspector considered that the site was acceptable in a specific form *and for a limited period only*. The Inspector made it clear that it was acceptable due to the temporary nature of the permission. This is further established by the conditions which were attached to the permission to ensure that the land was restored to open countryside after the temporary permission expires on 16 July 2020.

6.29 It is considered that limited weight should be given to this matter in consideration of the application.

6.30 2. Lack of gypsy sites – unmet need

The applicant cites the recent upheld appeal at Beauchamp Place, Malvern Road (APP/M1595/W/19/3225961). The applicant highlights the unmet need for gypsy and traveller sites and the likely time period, with the Inspector considering *'it is likely to be 2024/25 when the first new sites are available for occupation and this is with a fair wind.'*

6.31 Consideration

Planning Policy for Traveller Sites' (August 2015) states that Local Planning Authorities should set pitch targets within their Local Plan. Policy CSTP3 (of the amended 2015 Core Strategy) details the approach of the Council to gypsy and

traveller accommodation within the Borough and sets out a target of 87 additional pitches for the Plan period to 2026 (the Core Strategy was originally adopted in December 2011).

- 6.32 The Thurrock Gypsy Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) Need Summary Report, of January 2018 indicates a need for 10 additional pitches for Gypsy and Traveller households that meet the planning definition, 38 additional pitches for households that may meet the definition and 37 for households that do not meet the planning definition up to 2033.
- 6.33 The requirements of the GTAA will be addressed through the new Local Plan. This will allow for planned provision in the Borough.
- 6.34 Policy H 'Determining planning applications for traveller sites' contained within the Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (August 2015) requires, amongst other things, the Local Planning Authority to consider the existing local level of provision and need for sites and the availability of alternative accommodation for the applicants. There are no known available sites within the Borough where four pitches would be available within Council owned sites. However this does not justify the development in this Green Belt location.
- 6.35 The issue of whether or not there is a shortfall in the supply of traveller sites on its own will be unlikely to comprise very special circumstances to justify inappropriate development in the Green Belt.
- 6.36 The Council acknowledges the present lack of 5 year supply for gypsy and traveller sites. Nevertheless, as with any development within GB it is important that the correct process is followed. It does not follow that because there is a lack of supply at this time, that permission should be granted for a permanent development on this site.
- 6.37 The Inspector previously afforded the matter of unmet need significant weight, however this was for a temporary permission. The present application is for a permanent permission and this is a very different consideration.
- 6.38 3. Best interests of the children

The applicant states that the "best interests of the children" are of paramount importance. There are presently 10 young children at the site, who it is said would have to lead a roadside existence, be taken out of education and be unable to access healthcare. The appeal in 2015 drew attention to personal circumstances of the family and the implications that would arise from refusing this application to retain the use of the site that would significantly impact the mental health and well-being of all of the children resident on the application site.

6.39 Consideration

The personal circumstances presented by applicants are an important consideration in the planning balance. In this case, the applicants have not expanded upon this factor and have relied on the previous appeal decision. There is no evidence to indicate that alternative sites have been considered.

6.40 In a practical sense, health and education facilities could be accessed from other locations and there is no spatial reason why these facilities could only be accessed by the development of this GB site. Accordingly, it is recommended that the personal circumstances of the applicant are given limited weight in the consideration of the application and alone do not outweigh the harm caused by the proposed development.

6.41 The following sections of this report further assess the other material planning considerations of the application in terms of whether the circumstances detailed above could, when taken together, be considered to be very special.

6.42 A summary of the weight which has been placed on the various Green Belt considerations is provided below;

Summary of Green Belt Harm and Very Special Circumstances			
Harm	Weight	Factors Promoted as Very Special Circumstances	Weight
Inappropriate development	Substantial	Site is existing	Very limited weight
Reduction in the openness of the Green Belt			
Conflict (to varying degrees) with a number of the purposes of including land in the Green Belt – purposes c and e.		Lack of gypsy sites – unmet need	Significant weight
		Best interests of the children	Limited weight

6.43 As ever, in reaching a conclusion on Green Belt issues, a judgement as to the balance between harm and whether the harm is clearly outweighed must be reached. In this case there is harm to the Green Belt with reference to both inappropriate development and loss of openness. However, this is not considered to be the full extent of the harm; the other harm is considered further in this report. Several factors

have been promoted by the applicant as 'Very Special Circumstances' and it is for the Committee to judge:

- i. the weight to be attributed to these factors;
- ii. whether the factors are genuinely 'very special' (i.e. site specific) or whether the accumulation of generic factors combines at this location to comprise 'very special circumstances'.

- 6.44 Where a proposal represents inappropriate development the applicant must demonstrate Very Special Circumstances which clearly outweigh the harm to the Green Belt. The applicant has not advanced factors which would amount to very special circumstances that could overcome the harm that would result by way of inappropriateness and the other harm identified in the assessment.
- 6.45 There are no planning conditions which could be used to make the proposal acceptable in planning terms. The proposal is clearly contrary to Policies CSSP4, and PMD6 of the adopted Thurrock Local Development Framework Core Strategy and Policies for the Management of Development (as amended 2015) and the National Planning Policy Framework 2019.

II. RESIDENTIAL IMPACTS

- 6.46 The development is located in close proximity to Willow Cottage which is situated to the west of the site. The dwelling sits well back on its plot with much of the garden area to the front. The ground levels drop down from Manor View, meaning Willow Cottage is at a lower level. During the assessment of the previous appeal, the Planning Inspector considered that on the basis that any buildings and structures were brought in from the common boundary with Willow Cottage by at least 7 metres and effective landscaping was provided, the amenities of the neighbours would be safeguarded
- 6.47 Whilst it is recognised that the permanent use of the land would be a different prospect for neighbouring properties than the current temporary arrangements, in light of the proposed layout of the site and the previous appeal decision it is not considered that an objection on the grounds of neighbour amenity could be substantiated.

III. HIGHWAYS IMPACTS

- 6.48 The Council's Highway Officer has raised no objection to the development proposal. Accordingly, no objection is raised on highways grounds.

IV. OTHER MATTERS

- 6.49 The development does not presently give concern regarding additional pressure to healthcare or schools in the area.
- 6.50 The adjoining neighbours have raised concerns about the drainage at the site. Drainage was installed on the site and the matter has been investigated by the enforcement team. Drainage was found to be on site and there have been no comments received from the Environmental Health Officer in regards to this application. No objection is therefore raised in this regard.

7.0 CONCLUSIONS AND REASON(S) FOR REFUSAL

- 7.1 The proposed development is inappropriate development in the Green Belt which is by definition harmful. In addition, the proposed development is considered to be an unacceptable urbanising feature which is harmful to the openness and would erode the rural character of the Green Belt. Substantial weight should be given to any harm to the Green Belt.
- 7.2 The development would seriously conflict with Policies CSSP4 and PMD6 of the Core Strategy, the NPPF and Policies E and H of Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (August 2015). The circumstances of the applicants and their needs have been carefully considered however it is not considered that these factors clearly outweigh the harm caused to the Green Belt together with the other harm identified. No very special circumstances therefore exist to enable an exception to policy to be made in this instance.
- 7.3 The proposal would, if permitted, result in the urbanisation of this rural site, resulting in significant harm to the character and appearance of this rural area contrary to the above policies and guidance.

8.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 8.1 REFUSE for the following reasons:

1. The proposed development is inappropriate development in the Green Belt which is by definition harmful. In addition, the proposed development is considered to be an unacceptable urbanising feature which is harmful to the openness and rural character of the Green Belt. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policies PMD6 and CSSP4 of the Core Strategy, the National Planning Policy Framework and Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (August 2015). The information put forward by the applicant has been carefully considered, but does not amount to the very special circumstances that would be required to enable an exception to policy to be made in this instance.

Positive and Proactive Statement

The Local Planning Authority has acted positively and proactively in determining this application by identifying matters of concern with the proposal and determining the application within a timely manner, clearly setting out the reason(s) for refusal, allowing the Applicant/Agent the opportunity to consider the harm caused and whether or not it can be remedied by a revision to the proposal. The Local Planning Authority is willing to liaise with the Applicant/Agent to discuss the best course of action and is also willing to provide pre-application advice in respect of any future application for a revised development.

Documents:

All background documents including application forms, drawings and other supporting documentation relating to this application can be viewed online:

www.thurrock.gov.uk/planning

