

ANGUS COUNCIL

DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS COMMITTEE – 10 MARCH 2015

SEASONAL WORKER CARAVANS

REPORT BY HEAD OF PLANNING AND PLACE

Abstract:

This report identifies that planning applications have been submitted for the renewal of a number of planning permissions for seasonal worker caravan sites throughout Angus. The Proposed Angus Local Development Plan provides a policy for the consideration of proposals for seasonal worker accommodation. That policy is criteria based and it is considered appropriate to form a Short Life Working Group to establish how those criteria will be applied in a consistent manner.

1. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Committee: -

- (i) Establishes a Short Life Working Group to formulate an appropriate framework for the assessment of planning applications against the criteria established by Policy TC5 of the Angus Local Development Plan.
- (ii) Nominates four elected members to sit on the Short Life Working Group.
- (iii) Instructs the Head of Planning and Place to identify relevant officers to support the work of the Short Life Working Group and to make arrangements for it to meet as and when required.
- (iv) Instructs the Head of Planning and Place to report the conclusions of the Short Life Working Group to the Development Standards Committee.

2. ALIGNMENT TO THE ANGUS COMMUNITY PLAN/SINGLE OUTCOME AGREEMENT/ CORPORATE PLAN

This report contributes to the following local outcome(s) contained within the Angus Community Plan and Single Outcome Agreement 2013-2016:

- Our communities are developed in a sustainable manner
- Our natural and built environment is protected and enjoyed

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 There are a number of sizeable seasonal worker caravan sites established in Angus. Those were generally granted planning permission for a temporary period of 5-years and are subject to conditions that limit the period of occupation.
- 3.2 A number of those permissions are due to expire in the near future and planning applications have been / are being submitted to allow the use to continue. In addition, a number seek to vary their terms and obtain permission to allow the site to be occupied for 12-months of the year.

4 DISCUSSION

- 4.1 Changes in the nature and operation of agriculture (including horticulture) across Angus have seen growth in the use of seasonal and transient workers. This has resulted in an increased requirement for temporary accommodation associated with the place of employment, normally an agricultural unit or business.
- 4.2 Agriculture is an important component of the Angus economy and the Council recognise the important role the provision of suitable temporary accommodation for seasonal and transient workers has in supporting agricultural activity. However, it is important to ensure that such accommodation is well located to minimise environmental and amenity impacts. It is also important to ensure that the standard of accommodation and available infrastructure is sufficient to ensure the amenity and safety of occupants.
- 4.3 The Proposed Angus Local Development Plan contains a policy on seasonal and transient worker accommodation. That Policy states: -

Policy TC5 - Seasonal or Transient Worker Accommodation

Proposals for the development of temporary accommodation (including residential caravans and mobile homes) for seasonal or transient workers will only be permitted where:

- *there is a functional and essential economic need for the amount and type of accommodation proposed that cannot be reasonably met elsewhere in the locality;*
- *the accommodation is required to house seasonal or transient workers employed on the agricultural unit;*
- *the proposal involves the conversion, reuse or redevelopment of suitable vacant buildings or brownfield land on, or adjoining, the agricultural unit or it can be demonstrated that there are no such buildings or sites capable of accommodating the proposed development;*
- *the proposed site will provide a good residential environment with adequate access to facilities;*
- *the scale and nature of the development is in keeping with local landscape character and pattern of development; and*
- *there is no unacceptable impact on the built and natural environment, surrounding amenity, access and infrastructure.*

Planning permission will not normally be granted for more than 5 years when the requirement for seasonal or transient worker accommodation can be reviewed. Temporary structures, including residential caravans, must be removed when the need for them ceases or the planning permission expires, whichever is sooner.

- 4.4 That policy is criteria based and a number of the criteria are relevant to the activities of other regulatory regimes such as caravan site licensing, or activities of other agencies such the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service. In these circumstances it is considered appropriate to form a short life working group comprising four elected members and officers from relevant service areas of the Council. This group would formulate an appropriate framework for the assessment of the policy criteria in order to allow the policy to be applied on a consistent basis, having regard to the regulatory and operational requirements of other service areas and agencies.
- 4.5 Where a planning permission is granted for a seasonal worker caravan site the operator is also required to obtain a caravan site license. The license regime is regulated through the Civic Licensing Committee. In these circumstances it is suggested that there may be benefit in the short life working group comprising a number of elected members that sit on Civic Licensing Committee as well as Development Standards.

5. OTHER MATTERS

There are no financial implications arising from the recommendations contained in this report.

There are no human rights or equalities implications arising directly from this report.

NOTE: No background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to any material extent in preparing the above Report.

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