



# Knowle, Dorridge and Bentley Heath (KDBH) Neighbourhood Forum

## Response to Planning Application: Ref. No: PL/2022/00069/COU Land Adjacent Yew Tree Cottage, Box Trees Road, Dorridge, Solihull

Change of use from land for equestrian use to holiday caravan site (13 pitches)

FAO: Benn Watkinson, Case Officer

### 1. Summary

The KDBH Neighbourhood Forum objects to this application. The proposed development causes harm to the Green Belt and creates significant potential for greater future risk of harm, and fails to meet the requirement that such developments must demonstrate “very special circumstances” to be considered.

We therefore request the Council refuse planning permission on the basis set out below, referencing both KDBH Neighbourhood Plan policies and our support for concerns raised by other Council consultees.

### 2. Policy VC1

#### Green Belt:

The site is currently undeveloped land in the Green Belt. Hard standings with up to 13 caravans stationed on them will inevitably impact on openness. Furthermore, the applicant’s assertion that ‘there is no development above ground’ (buildings) is considered implausible given the nature of the proposed caravan park amenity. The provision of toilet and shower facilities, as a minimum, are almost always needed and expected - particularly given the applicant’s case that users will be contributing to the local economy (more comments below), ie. not simply passing through.

In addition, there is a need to recognise and address concerns that this application risks being a first step to obtain permission to build in the Green Belt which, once established, will then lead to submission of further applications for shower blocks, cafe, reception building etc to make the site commercially viable.

The applicant must explain how basic amenities would be provided.

The Forum considers that the proposal meets the test to be categorised as ‘inappropriate development’ that is harmful to Green Belt. Such development must only be considered where ‘very special circumstances’ can be clearly and robustly evidenced, eg. do benefits outweigh the harm.

Part of the applicant’s case is that the development will bring benefits, helping to ‘diversify the local economy and encourage use of local services’. Site location is therefore an important consideration. The site is not in an accessible location. There are few local amenities, facilities, or tourist attractions within a reasonable walking distance. The applicant mentions visitors going to a wide area, including Warwick, Leamington Spa and Stratford-on-Avon, as well as Solihull. Realistically, since the site location is not part of, or close to, a recognised holiday destination, the actual local community benefits will, at best, be very limited - particularly given that the lack of amenity and basic infrastructure facilities will, as discussed above, discourage stays of any length.



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### 3. Policy NE1

#### **Preserving local habitats and biodiversity:**

The Forum notes and fully supports the need for an Ecological Appraisal to inform the potential impact of the proposed development on species and biodiversity.

### 4. Traffic and Transport Policy Goal (10.1)

#### **Safe transport infrastructure; sustainable transport and travel:**

The Forum notes and fully supports the SMBC Highways concerns regarding:

- Safety and suitability of the existing vehicular access for use as a caravan site use; lack of existing footways along Box Trees Road within the vicinity of the site.
- Accessibility: distance to the nearest bus stops and low frequency of bus services resulting in visitors being reliant on the use of a private vehicle to travel to local facilities and amenities.

Roger Cook  
Chair  
Knowle Dorridge and Bentley Heath Neighbourhood Forum