



CARAVAN SITES POLICY

(AS AMENDED 28 AUGUST 2002)

1. INTRODUCTION

The aim of this policy is to provide a framework to guide the siting and use of caravans throughout the Western Isles in the interests of visual and living amenities, bearing in mind the need for a range of types of accommodation to meet the varied housing and tourism needs of the Western isles.

2. INDIVIDUAL RESIDENTIAL CARAVANS PRIOR TO BUILDING A NEW HOUSE

- (1) Where it has been determined that the erection of a house on any one holding or feu is acceptable in principle, then one caravan in full time residential use shall be permitted at any one time on the holding/feu. Evidence of any existing planning permission for a house, whether outline or detailed, would help. **Only in exceptional circumstances will the caravan be permitted in a location that is not immediately adjacent to the site for the proposed house.**
- (2) *Caravans sited in accordance with 2.* Shall be the subject of temporary planning consent only. **Only in special circumstances is it envisaged that the specified period will exceed two years.**
- (3) *The temporary siting of a caravan in accordance with 2. a) above* is to allow for arrangements to be made for the erection of a permanent house on the holding/feu. **Applications for renewal of consent for a caravan beyond an initial two-year period will only be granted in exceptional circumstances.**

3. RESIDENTIAL CARAVAN SITES WITHIN TOWNSHIPS

- (1) It is hoped that the Scottish Executive and Community Scotland will provide the necessary funding and/or accommodation to satisfy the local demand for housing. However, it is accepted that the provision of permanently occupied caravans in suitably located and well-controlled sites, that meet the Comhairle's adopted model standards for Caravan Site Licences, may provide short-term alleviation of the disparity between housing demand and supply.
- (2) **Any planning permission granted for such sites will be restricted to a maximum period of 10 years.**

- (3) Applications for renewal of consent for residential caravan sites will only be granted where the need can still be demonstrated and where there has been evidence of a high standard of control during the period of the previous permission, including the existence and compliance with a Caravan Site Licence.

4. RESIDENTIAL CARAVANS OUTWITH TOWNSHIPS

There will be a strong presumption against residential caravans outwith townships. Account will be taken of Policy DM1 of the Western Isles Structure Plan (Consultative Draft) that does not permit sporadic or uncontrolled linear development unless,

- (1) a specific locational need has been demonstrated;
- (2) or the local planning authority considers that the development should be supported because of the social and economic benefits arising;
- (3) and the proposal does not result in excessive additional public expenditure for site servicing or have a significant detrimental effect on the environment or amenity.

5. HOLIDAY/TOURING CARAVAN SITES WITHIN TOWNSHIPS

- (1) The Caravan Sites (Exemption from Licensing) (Scotland) Order 1961 allows up to three caravans to be sited on an agricultural holding during the period of 1st April to 30th September of any year without the need for Planning Permission or a Site Licence. It is accepted that most crofters wanting to have a caravan on their croft would want a large static caravan that will be well fixed to the site. It is difficult to justify requiring such caravans to be moved off the croft just for the winter months. Accordingly, **planning applications for the retention of holiday/touring caravans outwith the period 1st April to 30th September of any year will generally be favourably considered subject to the following criteria:**

- (2) Occupation is limited to the period 1st April to 30th September of any year.
- (3) The siting of the caravan is acceptable in terms of the impact on the landscape and adjoining properties.
- (4) Good maintenance of the caravan(s) and site.
- (5) **Any permission will be for a maximum period of 10 years.**

- (2) **Proposals for the development of larger tourist caravan sites shall be regarded as acceptable in principle, if they are of a scale and density**

consistent with the character of the surrounding area. The criteria in 6 (1) below will also be taken into account in determining planning applications.

- (3) The siting of a single caravan on holdings/feus of less than two acres, for tourist use, will only be permitted where there is no other caravan on site including any permitted under the provisions of 2 (1) above.**

6. HOLIDAY/TOURING CARAVAN SITES OUTWITH TOWNSHIPS

- (1) Sites catering for multiples of towable 'tourer' caravans or caravanettes and tents shall not be regarded as unacceptable in principle, but all planning applications for such sites will be determined on the basis of the following criteria:**

- (1) The scale of the development will need to be capable of assimilation into the surrounding landscape.
- (2) On sites adjacent to beaches, the scale of the development will need to be consistent with the recreational capacity of the beach.
- (3) For coastal sites it will have to be demonstrated that development can take place without damage to the foreshore/machair.
- (4) The site will need to have satisfactory road access and provision of water, drainage and refuse disposal facilities.

- (2) Sites with permanently positioned static caravans will not be encouraged.**

- (3) Individual caravans (including caravans for use as sheilings) shall not normally be permitted.**

7. GENERAL PROVISIONS

- (1) The provisions of the Comhairle's Structure Plan and Local Plan Policies on control of development and the protection of the built and natural environments shall take precedence over any of the provisions of this policy.
- (2) Applications for the siting of caravans for uses other than residential shall be treated on their merits.
- (3) None of the provisions of this policy shall be constructed as relieving an applicant of the necessity to obtain a Caravan Site Licence, where appropriate.
- (4) In determining planning applications for caravan sites (individual or otherwise) the planning authority shall take account of the siting, design and external appearance, means of access, landscaping, outcome of the statutory neighbour notification process and any other material consideration.

- (5) In no circumstances will a permanent planning permission be granted for caravans themselves although the site may receive such a consent if a convincing case can be put forward.
- (6) For the purpose of clarification 'caravan' means any structure (not being a tent or railway carriage standing on a railway) designed or adapted for human habitation which is capable of being moved from one place to another (by being towed or transported) including a motor vehicle so designed or adapted, but this definition is not to include a "twin-unit caravan" if its dimensions exceeds any of the following limits, namely
- a) Length: 60 Feet
 - b) Width: 20 Feet
 - c) Overall height of living accommodation: 10 Feet
- (7) For the avoidance of doubt, it is hereby stated that a single caravan which has received a planning permission in accordance with the provisions of this policy shall, where it is on a site that is an agricultural holding, be regarded as one of the three caravans permitted on certain sites in the circumstances specified in the Caravan Sites (Exemption for Licensing) (Scotland) Order 1961.
- (8) For all applications for the siting of caravan(s) the applicant shall indicate the expected life span of the structure and outline proposals for its disposal.

8. MONITORING OF EXISTING CARAVAN SITES.

Monitoring and, if necessary, enforcement will be undertaken by Officers of the Comhairle to ensure maintenance of appropriate standards and compliance with the terms of this Policy. An indication of how this will be pursued is contained in the attached flow diagram entitled "*Action to be taken in respect of caravans in situ*".

ACTION TO BE TAKEN IN RESPECT OF CARAVANS IN SITU.

