

Do I need planning permission for glamping, camping and caravanning sites?

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BUSINESS GUIDE

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Terminology

When it comes to planning there are certain terms that will be useful for you to be aware of. The below are not planning definitions but are helpful to distinguish for the purposes of understanding this guide.

- **Operational development/building works** – the building of something attached to your land
- **Change of use** – the change of use of land or buildings
- **Permitted development** – certain development (building or change of use) is permitted by planning law, and does not need planning consent from the Council. However, it often requires 'prior notification' to the Council to inform them that you intend to use your permitted development rights.

Planning basics

On the whole, whenever you undertake operational development i.e. the building of something, you will need to demonstrate you either have permitted development rights, or will need planning consent.

You can generally change the use of land from agriculture to 'something else' for up to 28 days per year without the need to make a planning application through permitted development rights. However, anything that occurs for over 28 days in a year will generally require permission, even if it is only seasonal.

What about mobile structures?

Generally speaking even if something is capable of being moved, more often than not it is not actually moved. Therefore, even if something is mobile, if it is located within a 'planning unit' (generally a site) for over 28 days in a year then a change of use of that land will be required.

Do I need planning for....

A basic camping and caravanning site?

There is an exemption for sites which hold a camping and caravanning site certificate which allows up to five pitches (tents or caravans). [Click here](#) for more information on the camping and caravanning certificate information.

This exemption covers the pitches only, if you add any extra built facilities such as shower blocks or kitchen facilities or amenity areas you are likely to require planning for these elements.



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If you want to have over five pitches then you will require planning permission and a separate caravan site licence.

The siting of seasonal 'tents' including bell tents / yurts / safari tents?

Yes. If the 'season' is for more than 28 days of the year then planning consent will be required.

The stationing of camper vans, converted buses or other 'quirky' accommodation?

Possibly. If they are sited and used for more than 28 days of the year then yes they will require planning consent.

The siting of wooden pods, lodges, log cabins or treehouses?

Yes. You will need planning consent.

Installing a shower block or a roof over a washing-up station or bin store?

Yes. Planning consent will normally be required for any permanently stationed structures, regardless of whether they are of 'mobile' construction or not, and even for caravan or camp sites which in themselves don't require planning.

Adding a decking area with hot tub to a bell tent or yurt?

Yes. Planning consent will be required for any permanent structures.

For a shepherd hut retreat at the end of the garden for personal use?

No. Providing various size restrictions are met, there is no requirement for planning consent, providing the use is incidental to that of the dwelling house and not a self-contained unit.

Are such projects generally supported and approved?

There are some issues which can be 'deal-breakers' as to whether you will be able to gain planning consent. The two main factors which Planning Authorities may consider cannot be overcome, namely Greenbelt and Highways issues.

Greenbelt

Some parts of the country are covered by a designation called Greenbelt, which is a policy tool the Government uses to prevent urban sprawl among other priorities. In planning terms Greenbelt is considered to be very important, and therefore Council's give a high level of weighting to whether a proposal is 'appropriate' in the Greenbelt.

Matters considered in a planning application:

- Greenbelt
- Highways/ access
- Siting
- Design
- Scale
- Use
- Residential amenity
- Visual Impact
- Landscape impact
- Water management/drainage



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Generally speaking the Greenbelt planning policy is to prevent any change of use or building of anything other than a few exempted items. Even though logically a few shepherds huts or low key camping in the Greenbelt doesn't seem like an issue, most of the time it simply doesn't meet planning policy of the Greenbelt.

Occasionally you can demonstrate what's called 'very special circumstances' to overcome the Greenbelt 'no' position. It's recommended that if you are located in Greenbelt always seek professional planning advice before you approach the Council. To determine if you are located in a Greenbelt area you can use a tool called [Magic Maps](#).

There are other designations such as SSSI's (Sites of Special Scientific Interest) and AONB's (Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty) which can make planning harder but should not be completely prohibitive like Greenbelt can be. Again, you can check any designations using [Magic Maps](#), and take early advice.

Highways/access

If your site does not have good enough access off a highway then your development is unlikely to be successful. You could have an amazingly exciting project but if it cannot be accessed safely then it is highly unlikely to gain approval. Don't forget you may be able to put in alternative accesses though.

Other matters considered in a planning application:

- Siting
- Design
- Scale
- Use
- Residential amenity
- Visual Impact
- Landscape impact
- Water management/drainage

If you can overcome and clearly show how your application deals with or meets all of the above, and any local criteria, then as a general rule of thumb, local authorities are supportive of planning applications that support rural businesses, create jobs, support farm incomes etc.

It's recommended that you include a planning statement giving information about your proposed business, how it's going to run, how it meets planning policy, and provide additional detail on each of the above planning matters.

"Through permitted development rights, you are able to change the use of land from agriculture to 'something else' for up to 28 days per year without the need to make a planning application"

Author information



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Hannah and her team offer a wide range of rural professional consultancy services including; farm and rural planning, grant applications, BPS, cross compliance and budgeting. To find out more visit www.mouleandco.co.uk

