



DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

Application Reference Number	15NP0052
Description / Site Address	Notification for prior notification of forestry development: Replacement of existing vented causeway bridge with a single span bridge at Yoke Burn, Kidland Forest, Alwinton, Morpeth, Northumberland
Applicant	Forestry Commission
Agent	Famelton Engineering
Expiry date of publicity / consultations	
Last date for decision	22 July 2015

Details of Proposal

This application has been submitted in order to determine whether prior approval is required from the Local Planning Authority for a proposed replacement single span bridge over Yoke Burn, Kidland Forest, Alwinton. This request is made to the Local Planning Authority under Part 6 Class E 'Forestry Developments' of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (GPDO).

The proposed bridge would replace an existing vented causeway bridge (Irish bridge), which is to be removed due to its failure to meet user requirements and standards. The proposed bridge would replicate the position of the existing Irish bridge, and would measure approximately 11m in length and 4m in width, spanning the Burn. The structure would be constructed from concrete with galvanised steel beams and wooden handrails, as set out in the Method Statement provided.

The application site falls within the River Coquet and Coquet Valley Woodlands Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), part of which comprises commercial forestry land, wholly falling within Northumberland National Park.

Planning Policy

The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2012)

*Core Planning Principles
Chapter 7: Requiring Good Design*

National Planning Policy Guidance (2014)



Northumberland National Park Authority Core Strategy and Development Policies

Policy 3: *General Development Principles*

Policy 17: *Biodiversity and Geodiversity*

Policy 20: *Landscape Quality and Character*

Relevant Planning History

05NP0054 - Replacement of bridge on River Alwin, North West of Kitty's Crag, on Forest Road from Clennell to Kidland Forest, Harbottle, Morpeth, Northumberland. *Conditional planning permission granted 16th November 2005.*

Consultations/Representations

NNPA Access and Recreation Officer: No Objections. *The proposed location forms part of a public bridleway route, however the proposal will not impact upon public use of this route. The works must not impact upon access to this route, disturb the path surface or prevent or deter public use of the path without necessary legal diversion or closure.*

NNPA Ecologist: No Objections. *Following discussions with Natural England regarding this proposal, it is noted that both Natural England and the Environment Agency wish for the existing structure to be removed, and have given support for the proposal. Subject to accordance with the Method Statement submitted, it is believed that the works will result in a net benefit for the ecology of the river.*

NNPA Landscape and Forestry Officer: No Objections. *Whilst the proposed bridge would be larger than the existing bridge, this will not substantially impact upon the landscape character or views of this part of the National Park. The removal of the redundant structure and landscaping of the site following construction is welcomed. Further comments provided regarding tree protection.*

Assessment

The main issues to be taken into consideration in the assessment of this application are:-

- Principle of Development
- The siting and means of construction of the private way

Principle of Development

The formation, alteration or maintenance of private ways for the purposes of forestry can be undertaken under permitted development rights set out within Part 6 of the 2015 GPDO, provided that the works are reasonably necessary for the purposes of forestry, and meet further criteria set out within legislation. Where these criteria are met, the Local Planning Authority can only assess whether prior approval is required to assess the siting and means of construction of the private way.



The proposed bridge would not fall within 25 metres of the metalled portion of a trunk road or classified road, and is considered to be reasonably necessary for the purposes of forestry; based on the information made available to the Local Planning Authority, it is thus considered that the requirements set out within Part 6 of the 2015 GPDO have been met, and the principle of the development is deemed to be acceptable.

The siting and means of construction of the private way



Photographs showing the existing vented causeway (Irish) bridge at the site, taken June 2015

Whilst larger than the existing causeway bridge, it is not considered that the proposed replacement bridge would impact detrimentally upon the landscape character or views of the surrounding area.

The application is accompanied by a detailed Method Statement, Ecological Assessment, and further supporting information setting out the proposed design and construction methods for the removal of the existing Irish bridge and proposed replacement bridge. The NNPA Ecologist has considered this information in detail, and following confirmation from Natural England that both themselves and the Environment Agency are supportive of the proposed works, is satisfied with the proposed means of construction, provided that this is undertaken in accordance with the Method Statement submitted.

It is further noted that the works would be undertaken within the River Coquet SSSI; however, the works have received support from Natural England (due to the nature of the structure to be removed and the location of the new bridge supports) and are considered by the NNPA Ecologist to be of net gain for the ecology of the river.

The proposed installation of a temporary bridge whilst the works are being undertaken, in order to maintain access across the Burn, is further supported.



RECOMMENDATION

In light of the assessment detailed above, it is considered that **prior approval is NOT required.**

	Signature	Date
Planning Officer		20/7/15
Head of Development Management or Chief Executive		20/7/15