

**Installation of 9no. Shepherds Huts for holiday
accommodation, Ingram, Northumberland**

Planning Statement

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Planning Statement supports the full planning application for the installation of 9no. Shepherds Hut lodges at land within the village of Ingram, Northumberland.
- 1.2 This document sets out the development proposal, relevant planning policies and justifications for the proposal, and addresses the issues that affect the site and surroundings, as highlighted in the accompanying plans and supporting documents which include:

Plans

- Location Plan
- Site Plan, drg. no. DJD/586/10
- Proposed Site Layout, drg. no. DJD/586/12
- Elevations and Plans, drg. no. DJD/586/11
- Example images of the proposed Shepherds Huts (indicative)

Documents

- Planning Statement (this document)
- Heritage, Design and Access Statement
- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal
- Flood Risk Assessment

- 1.3 This document concludes that when taking into consideration the planning policies, development issues and overall benefits, the proposed development of the site is fully justified and should be granted planning permission.

2 Site Context and Surroundings

- 2.1 The site of the proposed development is located within the village of Ingram, Northumberland. The site is located to the east of Ingram, and is just outside of the boundary of Northumberland National Park. The site is within the Kyoie Hills and Glendale Area of Landscape Value. The site is bounded by:
- To the west by the Valley Cottage Café, car parking facilities, the Church of St Michael (Grade II Listed), and the National Park Information Centre, with the village of Ingram and the National Park beyond;
 - To the north by the River Breamish, with open countryside beyond and the National Park to the north-west;
 - To the east by open countryside with a Site of Nature Conservation Importance beyond (the River Breamish between Brandon-Ingram); and
 - To the south by an agricultural field and an access track which forms the boundary of the Northumberland National Park.
- 2.2 Existing access to the site is via a track leading from the car parking facilities at the Valley Cottage Café and Information Centre. The application site is accessible by foot

and cycle from Ingram and the surrounding area, including the village of Powburn which is located approximately 4 miles to the east, which is situated on the A697 and serves the wider area including access to Wooler, Berwick, Alnwick, Morpeth, and Newcastle.

- 2.3 The development site has previously been leased by the Northumberland National Park and used for camping, storage, sign building, and dry stone wall practice. The site is no longer used for these purposes and is now vacant and available for Shepherds Hut accommodation.

3 Development Proposal

- 3.1 The development proposal involves the provision of 9no. Shepherds Hut style detached lodges, as illustrated on drawing numbers DJD/586/12 and DJD/586/11.
- 3.2 Each Shepherds Hut measures 8ft.5in x 20ft. with a curved ridge height of 10ft.6in. The Shepherds Huts would be on wheels and sourced locally, including the timber frames, roof cladding, wool insulation, and iron wheels. The external cladding will be either reclaimed wood or corrugated tin, which will be a natural colour such as faded blue, green, or grey. Each hut would provide self-catering accommodation with one bedroom, kitchen, and bathroom facilities. The site is sensitively designed to give maximum privacy to each Shepherds Hut and to minimise any visual impact looking towards the site from the surrounding area.
- 3.3 As shown on drawing number DJD/586/11, each Shepherds Hut will be accompanied by an area of wooden decking. This will provide a stable seating area for each hut, and will be positioned alongside the door side of the hut, up to the door in height.
- 3.4 The development includes the provision of 9no. car parking spaces, as indicated on drawing number DJD/586/12. The surface of the parking area and access track to each individual lodge will be compacted hardcore (6mm rolled gravel), which will provide a permeable material to assist with attaining sustainable surface water drainage.
- 3.5 A package treatment plant will be installed on-site, as indicated on drawing number DJD/586/12. This will provide a foul drainage system for all of the Shepherds Huts, treating foul water flows before discharging directly into the River Breamish.

4 National Planning Policy Framework

- 4.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published in March 2012 and sets out the Governments planning policies for England. The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. Paragraph 7 highlights there are 3 dimensions to sustainable development including a) an economic role, whereby contributing to building a strong economy by ensuring sufficient land is available in the right place at the right time; b) a social role, whereby supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities and c) an environmental role, whereby contributing to protecting and enhancing the natural, built and historic environment.

- 4.2 It is considered that the development proposal represents a sustainable development and accords with the NPPF in the following ways:
- 4.3 Economic: The proposed development is located within the village of Ingram. The NPPF (paragraph 28) states that planning policies should support economic growth in rural areas by supporting sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments that benefit businesses and communities in rural areas, including the expansion and provision of tourist facilities in locations where this need is not met by existing facilities. The proposed Shepherds Huts offer a unique style of accommodation that is currently not offered in Ingram or the surrounding area, therefore benefiting the area by expanding the range of its tourism offer. The proposed development would support the local economy in Ingram, particularly in its being located adjacent to the National Park Information Centre and the Valley Cottage Café which will benefit economically from the additional and regular visitors using the Shepherds Huts, given that the Huts are fully insulated and attract visitors throughout the year including the winter months. The proposed development will contribute to the local rural economy by providing employment through the construction and installation of the Shepherds Huts (with materials, labour and craftsmanship being sourced from the local area), as well as the increased number of visitors to the area. More directly, the proposed development is anticipated to provide at least one full-time job, with somebody being employed to be responsible for the maintenance, management and visitor bookings of the Shepherds Huts. The proposed development seeks to diversify the local rural economy by providing a unique style of tourist accommodation which is currently unavailable in the surrounding area, as well as providing an alternative source of income generation besides traditional rural farming.
- 4.4 Social: The NPPF (paragraph 17) promotes development that supports rural communities, and seeks to support the vitality of rural communities through the provision of sustainable rural tourism, as well as promoting local services and community facilities. The proposed development is located in the village of Ingram and benefits the vitality of the local community by providing regular visitors to the area, who will make use of the services and facilities within Ingram such as the Valley Cottage Café, National Park Information Centre, and the historic church of St Michael. The proposed development will also benefit the communities and services of the wider area, with it being located approximately 4 miles from Powburn, a local service centre with a pub, service station, and bus service providing access to the wider area including Wooler, Berwick, Alnwick, Morpeth and Newcastle.
- 4.5 Environmental: The proposed development meets the environmental requirements of the NPPF through its contribution to the natural, built and historic environment. Shepherds Huts are a traditional feature of the Ingram Valley landscape, having been used for centuries by shepherds during lambing season. The proposed development builds on this heritage value by utilising the traditional and functional style of the huts as tourist facilities, without compromising the integrity of the landscape's traditional character. The proposed development would have no negative impact upon the environment in terms of ecology, drainage and utilities, as set out in this planning application. The proposed development will enhance the natural and built environment by removing the disused materials on the site, creating an attractive and open space for tourist accommodation.

5 Relationship with the Development Plan

- 5.1 The relevant development plan for development in this area is the Berwick upon Tweed Borough Local Plan, adopted in April 1999.
- 5.2 Policies that are considered to specifically relate to this planning application include:
- F3 – Kylee Hills and Glendale Area of High Landscape Value
 - F8 – Nature Conservation
 - F10 – Protected Species and Habitats
 - F31 – Social and Economic Welfare
 - R9 – Tourism Accommodation
 - M14 – Parking Provision
- 5.3 The relationship between the relevant planning policies within the above document and the proposed development are set out below.

Landscape Character

- 5.4 The proposed development site is within the Kylee Hills and Glendale Area of High Landscape Value, defined by Policy F3 of the Berwick Borough Local Plan. Policy F3 sets out policies to protect the countryside, permitting development which is compatible with the principal objective of conserving or enhancing the natural beauty of the area, subject to several criteria being met. The relevant criteria of Policy F3 to the proposed development are identified below, demonstrating how the proposed development meets these criteria.
- 5.5 *i)a) Located within or immediately adjoining an existing settlement*
The proposed development site is located within the village of Ingram, Northumberland. The site adjoins the village and is located within walking distance of the entire settlement.
- 5.6 *i)b) Expand the Borough's infrastructure for tourism, compatible with the area's existing tourism role and its primary attractions of the natural and built environments*
The proposed development will contribute to the area's capacity for tourism. The development will provide 9no. Shepherds Huts, providing a unique form of accommodation in an attractive area with access to numerous attractions of the natural and built environment. The popularity of high-end camping ('glamping') has increased dramatically over recent years, providing a level of camping where guests can enjoy unique types of living spaces in a camping environment that is not the traditional hotel or B&B accommodation. High-end camping offers a greater level of comfort, warmth, toilet, washing, and cooking facilities than traditional camping, whilst also being an attractive holiday proposition throughout the year including the winter months when traditional camping is not as popular. The proposed Shepherds Huts would greatly add to the area's existing tourism infrastructure, providing a type of accommodation that is different to many of the existing traditional forms of holiday accommodation in the area, thus increasing the tourism offer without impacting upon the popularity of the existing tourism facilities. The development site is in a highly attractive and desirable location, being easily accessible and in a high quality landscape environment, adjacent to the Northumberland National Park, and also the

many attractions of the built environment that the wider area has to offer, including Alnwick Castle, Chillingham Castle, Bamburgh Castle, Holy Island, and much more. The proposed development forms part of a wider project to enhance the visitor experience to this area of Northumberland, including the development of the Valley Cottage Café adjacent to the site, the upgrading of public toilets by Northumberland National Park, and the development of the nearby Linhope Lodge Sporting Lettings.

- 5.7 *ii) Accords with its surroundings by virtue of its scale, density, height, massing, layout, materials, hard and soft landscaping including indigenous species, means of enclosure and access*

The proposed development is for 9no. Shepherds Hut style lodges. The huts will measure 8ft.5in x 20ft, with a maximum ridge height of 10ft.6in. The Shepherds Huts will source many of its materials from the North East, including the reclaimed wood and tin cladding, the wool and flax insulation, and the iron wheels and metal chassis forged by local blacksmiths. Cladding will either be reclaimed wood or corrugated tin, with colours varying within a subdued range of natural hues such as natural faded blue, green or grey in order to blend into the natural surroundings of the area. The layout of the site is shown on drawing number DJD/586/12, which shows the Shepherds Huts being positioned in order to provide maximum privacy to each hut and to minimise any visual impact looking into the site from the surrounding area. Shepherds Huts are a traditional form of accommodation used by shepherds during lambing season in order to provide warmth, shelter, and facilities throughout the lambing process. Shepherds Huts have been commonplace in the Ingram Valley for centuries, and there are still many huts in varying states of repair all over the farms and hills of Northumberland. Therefore, the setting of the proposed Shepherds Huts in this location is highly appropriate, given the heritage value of this style of accommodation in the area. It is fitting that a traditional and functional living space should be utilised as a high-end unit of accommodation to attract visitors to this area.

- 5.8 *iii) Relates to and accords with Policy R9*
iv) Relates to and accords with Policies elsewhere in the Berwick Borough Local Plan
Policy R9 relates to the development of tourist accommodation. As outlined in sections 5.11 - 5.13 of this Planning Statement, the proposed development accords with Policy R9 and the other policies of the Berwick Borough Local Plan.

Nature Conservation

- 5.9 The development site is located in close proximity to a Site of Nature Conservation Importance, namely the River Breamish between Brandon – Ingram. This is protected under Policy F8 of the Berwick Borough Local Plan, which permits development in this area when it would not significantly adversely affect the nature conservation interest of the site, no alternative site is reasonably available and the benefits of the proposed development would clearly outweigh the benefits of safeguarding the nature conservation value of the site. Furthermore Policy F10 of the Berwick Borough Local Plan does not permit development that would adversely affect any protected species or habitats.
- 5.10 It is considered that the proposed development does not have an adverse impact upon the River Breamish as a Site of Nature Conservation Importance or upon any protected species or habitats, as demonstrated in the accompanying Preliminary Ecological

Appraisal submitted with this application. The proposed Shepherds Huts will be located a suitable distance from the River Breamish, not only to maintain safety and reduce flood risk, but also to protect the river as a conservation asset. The existing landscaping and planting will be retained around the river bank, and additional planting may be introduced where appropriate to further enhance this section of the River Breamish. The location of the proposed development is unique in that it is an available site located within the village of Ingram, which is suitable for the provision of the Shepherds Hut accommodation in terms of economic, social, and environmental benefits. These benefits to the local economy, community, and environment are considered to be significant factors in favour of the proposed development, plus the fact that the development will not present any adverse impact towards the River Breamish as a Site of Nature Conservation Importance or towards any protected species or habitats, it is considered that the development should be approved for planning permission.

Tourism and Community

5.11 Policy R9 of the Berwick Borough Local Plan relates specifically to the development of tourism. Policy R9 states that the development of new sites for touring caravans or camping (including static caravans, chalets, log-cabins or other purpose built holiday accommodation), will be permitted provided that it meets the following criteria:

- i) The site is largely enclosed from the surrounding landscape by dense woodland and/or other landscape features;*
- ii) It will be integrated successfully into the wider landscape, including heritage and nature conservation interests;*
- iii) A high standard of amenity will be provided for visitors to the site, in terms of both the setting of the accommodation and/or pitches, and the external appearance of accommodation;*
- iv) A management plan, to ensure that site amenity and the visual relationship between the site and its landscape setting will be maintained or enhanced, is agreed;*
- v) It will not result in the irreversible loss of Grade 1, 2, or 3a agricultural land, other than to accommodate any related facilities permitted as part of the development;*
- vi) It will not adversely affect the amenity or services of adjoining communities; and*
- vii) The local road network can accommodate the additional traffic generated by the development.*

5.12 It is considered that the proposed development meets all of the criteria set out in Policy R9. In terms of landscape (criteria i, ii, iv), the site is currently enclosed by tree planting and hedgerow along its western and southern border, with vegetation along the northern border adjacent to the bank of the River Breamish. Besides the existing landscape features, the design of the proposed Shepherds Huts significantly reduce the impact of the development on the landscape, as well as integrating the development into the wider landscape in terms of heritage. As has been mentioned, Shepherds Huts have been present in the Ingram Valley for centuries as a traditional unit for shepherd's accommodation. Therefore the units themselves can be regarded as a heritage asset in the landscape, which demonstrates how the proposed development is integrating the site into the wider landscape, as well as preserving the character of this traditional landscape.

- 5.13 In terms of impact upon amenity (criteria iii, v, vi), the proposed development will be sensitively designed in terms of materials, visual appearance, and setting, in order to ensure that it has no adverse impact upon the landscape character, but instead enhances the landscape by providing a subtle and high quality open space. The proposed development will not result in the loss of high quality agricultural land, as the site is currently used for the storage of materials and has limited agricultural land quality. The proposed development will enhance the site from its existing state, presenting a significant opportunity to reinstate and create a high quality space in the landscape. The proposed development will not have a negative impact upon the amenity or services of the local community. Rather, the development will attract visitors to the area, who will add to the immediate vitality of Ingram village and increase the use of local services and facilities such as the Valley Cottage Café, National Park Information Centre, and historic church of St Michael. In terms of impact upon the road network (criteria vii), it is anticipated that the proposed development will have a very limited impact. The proposed development will generate a minimal amount of traffic, at a level which the existing road network and capacity can certainly accommodate.

Parking Provision

- 5.14 It is considered that the proposed development will have a minimal impact upon the local road network, and provides an appropriate level of car parking for the scale of development. 9no. car parking spaces are provided on site, which equates to 1no. car parking space per Shepherds Hut when the site is at maximum capacity. This is considered to be sufficient, given that the huts accommodate two people and therefore would be unlikely to generate more than one car per hut. It is considered that this is acceptable under the provision of Policy M14 of the Berwick Borough Local Plan, and is an appropriate level of provision for the scale and nature of the development.

6 Heritage, Design and Access Statement

- 6.1 Please refer to the accompanying Heritage, Design and Access Statement prepared by Darcy Architects, August 2015.

7 Flood Risk and Drainage

- 7.1 The northern section of the development site lies within Flood Zone 2. Therefore, a Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy has been undertaken by Fairhurst (August 2015), and has been submitted as part of this planning application. The Flood Risk Assessment demonstrates that the site is suitable for all types of development. The proposed development involves a limited amount of impermeable surface, given the permeability of the car park and access track (rolled gravel surface), and the limited direct contact with the ground that the huts have, meaning that surface water is able to freely drain towards the River Breamish at a greenfield rate. In terms of foul drainage, a package treatment plant will be installed towards the north of the site, as indicated on drawing number DJD/586/12. Given site levels, this location allows for all of the huts to drain to before discharging to the River Breamish, without the need

for additional pumping. Further details regarding foul drainage can be submitted prior to development of the site.

8 Utilities

8.1 There is an existing water supply to the site, sourced from the Northumberland National Park artesian borehole. There is also an existing mains electricity supply to the site. It is intended to extend these water and electricity supplies across the site to serve each individual Shepherds Hut. In terms of foul drainage it is proposed to install a package treatment plant on-site, as indicated on drawing number DJD/586/12. This will treat the foul drainage from each hut, before discharging into the River Breamish.

9 Ecology

9.1 Please refer to the accompanying Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (including a Breeding Bird Risk Assessment) undertaken by E3 Ecology, August 2015.

10 Conclusion

10.1 This Planning Statement has considered the issues which arise from the current planning application, which seeks permission for the development of 9no. Shepherds Hut lodges at Ingram, Northumberland.

10.2 In summary:

- The proposed development will greatly support rural economic growth in the local area, providing a unique form of holiday accommodation that is not currently available in the area, which is available all year round given the high quality specification of the Shepherds Huts. The huts will be constructed and installed using locally sourced materials, labour and craftsmanship, further supporting local rural businesses. It is anticipated that at least one full-time job will be created, with somebody employed to be responsible for the maintenance, management and visitor bookings of the Shepherds Huts;
- The proposed development will support the vitality of the local rural community, providing additional visitor numbers to the area which will benefit the nearby services and facilities, both in Ingram and beyond;
- The proposed Shepherds Huts will contribute to the character of the natural, built, and historic environment because they are a traditional feature of the Ingram Valley, having been used for centuries as traditional shepherd accommodation. The proposed development will contribute to this heritage element of the environment; and
- The proposed development will maintain and enhance visitor numbers to the Northumberland National Park, particularly given the site's proximity to the National Park and the Information Centre.

10.3 It is therefore concluded that the development proposal is fully justified when considered against national and local planning policies, and it is respectfully requested that the proposed development is granted planning permission.