



## DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

<b>Application Reference Number</b>	16NP0035
<b>Description / Site Address</b>	Forestry determination in respect of the alteration of an existing road at Threestone Burn Forest
<b>Expiry date of publicity / consultations</b>	4 May 2016
<b>Last date for decision</b>	6 May 2016

### Details of Proposal

This application has been submitted in order to determine whether prior approval is required from the Local Planning Authority for the proposed construction of a forestry track at Threestone Burn Forest. 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 road would extend an existing road within the forest by approximately 730 metres with turning points at either end, the majority of which would be located along the path of an existing forest ride with one new watercourse crossing. The track would span 5 metres in width and would be constructed from locally sourced grey/cream/brown stone, as detailed within the information submitted.

The application site lies within the Threestone Burn forest, some 8km south of Wooler. The site falls wholly within Northumberland National Park. The Cheviot Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) lies some 1.2km west of the site, with The Allers and Lilburn Valley Junipers SSSI some 2.5km to the east, both of which lie outside of the forest area.

### Planning Policy & Guidance

#### National Policies

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2012)

National Planning Practice Guidance (2015)

#### Local Policies

#### **Northumberland National Park Authority Core Strategy and Development Policies Document (Core Strategy) (2009)**

Policy 3	<i>General Development Principles</i>
Policy 17	<i>Biodiversity and Geodiversity</i>
Policy 19	<i>Tranquillity</i>
Policy 20	<i>Landscape Quality and Character</i>
Policy 22	<i>Trees, Woodlands and Forests</i>

### Supplementary Planning Guidance

NNPA Building Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (Design Guide SPD)

NNPA Landscape Supplementary Planning Document (Landscape SPD)



### **Relevant Planning History**

None relevant to this application.

### **Consultation/Representations**

#### **NNPA Access and Recreation Officer: No objections.**

*As there are no Public Rights of Way in the vicinity, the development is not likely to impact upon existing public access.*

#### **NNPA Ecologist: Comments made – further information required.**

*The proposed track is unlikely to impact upon features of interest within the Cheviot SSSI as it is associated with the removal of the conifer forest and is wholly inside the forest. The proposed route would result in least disturbance to peat which is present within the area and is therefore acceptable.*

*The track crosses a watercourse however no methodology for this crossing has been submitted. Due to the possibility of siltation occurring and resultant impacts upon the watercourse, clarification and a proposed methodology should be sought in respect of this aspect of the works.*

#### **NNPA Landscape and Forestry Officer: No response received**

#### **NNPA Historic Environment Officer: No response received**

### **Assessment**

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

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

#### **The Principle of the 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 with 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 track 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 therefore considered that the requirements set out within Part 6 of the 2015 GPDO have been met. The principle of the development is therefore deemed to be acceptable.



### **The siting and means of construction of the private way**

It is not considered that the proposed track extension would have a significant impact upon the landscape or views of this part of the National Park given that this would be wholly contained within the forest, and would connect to a number of established tracks within this area.

As aforesaid, the application site is not specifically designated as an ecologically protected area, however is within relatively close proximity to the Cheviot and Allers & Lilburn Valley Junipers SSSI. Notwithstanding this, the biodiversity and ecology of Northumberland National Park is recognised as one of the special qualities of the Park and is therefore an important consideration in the assessment of any development proposal.

In providing comments on the proposed development, the NNPA Ecologist notes that the proposed track would cross a watercourse, however that no details setting out a methodology for undertaking this work has been provided. This information is considered to be necessary in order to ensure that the proposed means of crossing would not adversely impact upon this watercourse. Prior approval would therefore be required in order to request the submission of such information in order to demonstrate that the works would not have a detrimental impact upon the ecology of the area.

### **Recommendation & Conditions**

In light of the assessment detailed above, it is considered that **prior approval IS required.**

	<b>Signature</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>Planning Officer</b>		
<b>Head of Development Management or Chief Executive</b>		