



## **DELEGATED DECISION REPORT**

<b>Application Reference Number</b>	16NP0108CO
<b>Description / Site Address</b>	Neighbouring Authority Consultation - Proposed development of new fishing lake and erection of 7 holiday home log cabins, 6 craft workshops and observatory with new access road, sewage treatment plant and boathouse and extension/refurbishment of existing shop/cafe at Border Park Services, Border Park Filing Station, Rochester, Newcastle Upon Tyne, NE19 1TR
<b>Expiry date of publicity / consultations</b>	N/A
<b>Last date for decision</b>	13 December 2016

### **Details of Proposal**

This application relates to a planning application which has been made to Northumberland County Council. Northumberland National Park Authority has been consulted on the proposal as the neighbouring Local Planning Authority.

The notification relates to NCC application 16/03934/FUL for the creation of a new visitor type complex consisting of 7no. holiday lodges, 6no. workshop/shop buildings, an observatory, lake and boathouse, the refurbishment of an existing building alongside associated landscaping and sewage treatment works at Border Park Services, Rochester. The site lies adjacent to the National Park boundary, close to the settlement of Byrness and Catcleugh Reservoir. The site at present consists of a disused cafe/shop building and filling station, formerly part of a small fuel service station adjacent to the A68. The site is bordered by land associated with the dwelling known as Rose Cottage to the north west, with the River Rede running alongside the site to the south west.

Planning permission was initially sought from Northumberland County Council under application reference 15/01054/FUL for this scheme comprising 9no. holiday units. A Neighbouring Authority Consultation response was prepared under application 15NP0093CO raising an objection to the scheme as it was considered that the overall scale, style, materials, height and number of the proposed buildings would have an inappropriate urbanising effect upon this part of the National Park which would be contrary to Core Strategy policy 20 and the NPPF. A recommendation was however made that, should Northumberland County Council grant planning permission for the development, 4no. conditions should be attached. Application 15/01054/FUL was subsequently withdrawn and re-submitted under 16/03934/FUL as amended.

### **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)



### Relevant Planning History

**T/20070253** Demolish existing shop/cafe and rebuild new shop/restaurant and construct twelve log cabins with new access road and sewage treatment plant, including change of use of land to holiday park. *Application refused 25.06.2007*

*Reasons for refusal:*

- 1) *The cabins and shop/restaurant, by virtue of scale and absence of landscaping, would be a significant intrusive and inappropriate development that would detract from the Area of High Landscape Value; and*
- 2) *By reason and scale and prominence, the development would have an urbanising, intrusive and inappropriate impact upon landscape and setting of Listed Buildings*

**T/20070853** Demolish existing shop/cafe and rebuild new shop/restaurant and construct twelve log cabins with new access road and sewage treatment plant. *Application permitted 18.10.2007*

- *12no. lodges (timber logs with shingle roof; master bedroom and bathroom in roofspace)*
- *Two storey restaurant and shop with raised terrace*
- *Principle of shop and restaurant established by existing facilities; would not detract from viability or vitality of other established operations and are therefore acceptable. Acceptable visual impact from road and Pennine Way.*
- *Principle of log cabins acceptable providing that their impact is appropriate. Site can accommodate lodges subject to suitable landscaping; as extensive landscaping proposed these are acceptable. No skyline impact as development is in valley bottom*
- **It is understood that this development was not implemented**

**T/20081078** Variation of condition 5 of permission 20070853 (dated 18/10.2007): To demolish existing shop/cafe and rebuild new shop/restaurant and construct twelve log cabins with new access road and sewage treatment plant to allow residency for eleven months... *Application permitted 03.03.2009*

**15/01054/FUL** Proposed development of new fishing lake, erection of 9 holiday home log cabins, 6 small craft workshops/shops & observatory with new access road, sewage treatment plant, boat house & refurbishment of existing shop/cafe. *Application withdrawn*

**16/03934/FUL** Proposed development of new fishing lake and erection of 7 holiday home Log Cabins, 6 craft workshops and observatory with new access road, sewage treatment plant and boathouse and extension/refurbishment of existing shop/cafe. *Application pending consideration*

### Consultation/Representations

None undertaken as part of this application.

**Consultations undertaken as part of 15NP0093CO**



**NNPA Ecologist:** *This proposal is close to the River Rede which is important downstream for Freshwater Pearl Mussel. I would therefore hope that the County Ecologist, Natural England and Environment Agency have been consulted to ensure that the construction of the facilities, sewage treatment, construction and operation of the fishing lake will not impact on the water quality or increase siltation of the river.*

*Whilst not designated as a SSSI or SAC, this river holds the only population of this endangered invertebrate in Northumberland, which is listed on Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act and is a species of principle importance under Section 41 species on the NERC Act.*

**NNPA Landscape and Forestry Officer:** *The site lies just outside the National Park, adjacent to the A68, which marks the National Park boundary at this point.*

*Within this area, the recommended Landscape Character guidelines for development include:-*

- *Where tourism and recreational development is required, care should be taken to avoid exerting an urbanising influence on the landscape and development should generally remain low-key;*
- *New buildings should respect local building materials and styles;*
- *Any lighting should be kept to a minimum and installed effectively to protect dark skies;*

*The proposed development would not accord with the above guidelines for development. The scale of the development is inappropriate, specifically the height of the gift shop and number of individual lodges, which would lead to an urbanising effect in this part of the National Park.*

*The proximity to the A68, a key entry point to the Northumberland National Park and principal receptor site for this development, means that the development, principally due to the scale and style, is likely to have a substantial effect upon the landscape character and views both into and out from the National Park.*

*No reference is made to any external light requirements or works to existing trees on site; therefore it is not possible to determine the effect that this development might have on the National Park in these respects.*

### **Assessment**

The principle of development is to be considered by Northumberland County Council as the responsible Planning Authority. In the context of this report, Northumberland National Park Authority is providing a view as a consultee as to whether the proposed development would detrimentally impact upon the Park's landscape character, views into and out of the Park, and any impacts upon the Park's tranquillity, biodiversity and geodiversity.

The siting of new development in such an open countryside location *within* Northumberland National Park would be resisted under Core Strategy policy 5 unless it could be demonstrated that the development could not take place in an alternative location and would conserve or enhance the special qualities of the National Park; the re-use of existing buildings within the open countryside can however be supported in principle. The Authority is however supportive of proposals which enable the creation of sustainable tourism and recreation developments, providing that such



developments do not adversely impact upon the special qualities of the National Park, in accordance with Core Strategy policies 14 and 15. The Landscape SPD provides supplementary guidance on development in this location, advising that care should be taken in order to ensure that tourism and recreational development does not exert an urbanising influence on the landscape and that development should be low key; that new buildings should respect local buildings materials and styles; and that any lighting should be kept to a minimum and should be installed effectively to protect dark skies. As the development falls outside of the National Park boundary, it is acknowledged that no such consideration of the principle of the development can be made.

The proposed lodges would be constructed from timber panels with cedar shingled roofs, providing a distinct contrast to the stone and slate permanent residential properties typical of the surrounding area. However by virtue of their overall scale (both considerable footprint and two storey height) and design (through which despite their proposed materials, the lodges would appear to visitors as substantial new two storey houses within the open countryside) it is considered that the proposed development would not be low key and by virtue of the overall number of units proposed, despite a reduction from 9no. lodges to 7no. lodges, would have an urbanising influence on the landscape which would be contrary to the advice set out within the NNPA Landscape SPD and would be harmful to the landscape character of and views into the National Park.

Notwithstanding the above, NNPA does however recognise the positive implications of the proposed development, through which tourist accommodation and facilities (including the re-introduction of a petrol filling station on the site alongside shops and a café) would be provided, and acknowledges that new holiday accommodation may now be required to be of such a 'luxury' standard in order to fulfil the requirements of and be attractive to modern day visitors within a competitive market. The built aspect of the development (excluding the pond) would be set against the A68 akin to the Border Forest Holiday Park, some 1km to the south east, and Byrness village, some 700m to the north west, thus restricting the overall spread of development, and has been designed in such a way as to minimise views from the surrounding area, utilising topography and landscaping. The development would additionally improve the appearance of the existing site, comprising the redundant café and filling station, which would in turn impact beneficially upon the National Park.

It is therefore recommended that no objections are raised to the proposed development as, on balance, it is considered that the positive impacts of the scheme – the renovation of an existing redundant site, the provision of facilities, visitor accommodation and employment, and the potential increase in users and visitors to the site and area – would outweigh the aforementioned detrimental impacts of the development upon the special qualities and character of the National Park. A representation would however be made to Northumberland County Council in which these aforementioned concerns regarding the scale and design of the proposed lodges are raised, in addition to the recommendations below.

### ***Other matters***

A recommendation was attached to application 15NP0093CO that Natural England, the Environment Agency and relevant County Council Ecologists be consulted on the application. It is noted that all of these parties have been consulted on this application and therefore no such recommendation is required.



A recommendation was additionally attached to application 15NP0093CO that, should planning permission be granted, a condition be attached requiring the submission of details pertaining to external lighting, in order to ensure that there is no harmful impact upon the tranquillity of the surrounding area. As no such information has been submitted in support of this application, it is therefore recommended that such a condition be recommended in this case.

### **Recommendation & Conditions**

By virtue of the overall scale (footprint and height) and design of the lodges (through which these would likely appear to visitors as substantial new two storey houses within the open countryside) it is considered that the proposed development would not be low key and by virtue of the overall number of units proposed, despite a reduction from 9no. lodges to 7no. lodges, would have an urbanising influence on the landscape. It is therefore considered that the proposed development would be contrary to the advice set out within the NNPA Landscape SPD and would be harmful to the landscape character of and views into the National Park. Notwithstanding these concerns, it is however recommended that no objections are raised to the application subject to the condition recommended below as, on balance, the positive impacts of the proposed scheme would outweigh the aforementioned concerns. It is therefore requested that the Case Officer notes these concerns in determining the application.

Taking into account the above, it is recommended that **no objections are raised** subject to the following condition:

1. *Prior to the fixing of any external lighting [within the site/on the buildings hereby permitted], details of the external lighting shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Details should include:*

- *The specific location of all external lighting units;*
- *Design of all lighting units;*
- *Details of beam orientation and lux levels; and*
- *Any proposed measures such as motion sensors and timers that will be used on lighting units*

*The approved lighting scheme shall be installed in accordance with the approved details and shall be maintained as such thereafter, unless removed entirely.*

*Reason: In order to ensure that there is no harmful effect upon the tranquillity and intrinsically dark character of the area, including the Northumberland Dark Sky Park through excessive light pollution, in accordance with paragraph 125 of the NPPF.*

### **Background Papers**

Application files 15NP0093CO and 16NP0108CO



	<b>Signature</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>Planning Officer</b>	R Adams	13/12/2016
<b>Head of Development Management or Chief Executive</b>	S Buylla	13/12/2016