DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

Application Reference Number	18NP0019	
Description / Site Address	Change of use from agricultural land to camping field at	
	Greencarts Farm, Humshaugh, Northumberland, NE46	
	4BW	
Expiry date of publicity / consultations	12 April 2018	
Last date for decision	17 May 2018	

Details of Proposal

This application seeks approval for the change of use of an agricultural field to provide a camp site for both tents and touring caravans. The site is located at Greencarts Farm, approximately 500m north of Hadrian's Wall and to the north-west of Walwick.

The application is seeking approval for the change of use of a field to the north of the farmhouse to provide accommodation for tents and touring caravans. The site is approximately 1.9ha in size. The applicants have advised that the campsite would operate from March to October with the site used for sheep outside of these months. The applicants already successfully operate a tourist facility on their land, offering camping, a bunkhouse and camping barn. This application seeks approval to expand the existing tourist offer at the site.

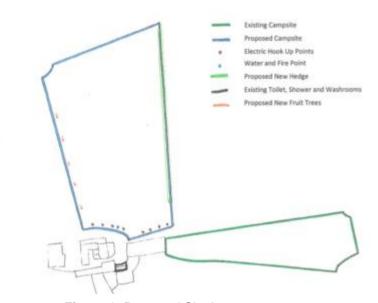


Figure 1: Proposed Site Layout

Although this is a new planning application, the applicants have indicated that the field has been used as a campsite for a number of years, albeit without the benefit of planning permission (the supporting information indicates that agricultural subsidies were removed in 2011 to reflect the change of use). As such, the site already has electric hook up points and a water and fire point in place with no further development proposed under this application. The applicants have however



indicated that they would provide a new hedge to the eastern boundary and trees to the western boundary to provide additional screening.

The applicant has advised that the field has been used in the past by large groups of school children taking part in the Duke of Edinburgh Awards and World Challenge and also by people participating in the Macmillan Cancer Walk. The site is also used by people walking Hadrian's Wall. The application has therefore been submitted to help satisfy the increasing tourist demand at the site.

Planning Policy & Guidance

National Policies

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2012) National Planning Practice Guidance

Local Policies

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

Policy 1	Delivering Sustainable Development	
Policy 3	General Development Principles	
Policy 5	General Location of New Development	
Policy 14	A Sustainable Local Economy	
Policy 15	Sustainable Tourism & Recreation Development	
Policy 17	Biodiversity and Geodiversity	
Policy 18	Cultural Heritage	
Policy 19	Tranquillity	
Policy 20	Landscape Quality and Character	
Policy 21	Farming	
Policy 25	Renewable Energy	

Supplementary Planning Guidance

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

Relevant Planning History

04NP0048

Demolition of framed agricultural building; construction of 2 new service buildings to north and east of barn adjacent to farmhouse; change of use of barn to bunk barn and field to campsite and temporary positioning of portacabin for shower/wc. *Conditional planning permission granted* 18/08/2014



04NP0056

Temporary change of use of barn to bunk barn. Conditional planning permission granted 15/09/2014

Consultation/Representations

Humshaugh Parish Council: No comments received

Historic England: We do not believe that the proposal would impact directly on any archaeological remains from the Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site. In addition, having considered the scale and location of the development, although the development will be visible from the Roman frontier, it will not harm the understanding and appreciation of Roman military planning and land use, which is what we are trying to protect when talking about setting in this context. As such, Historic England has no objection to the application on heritage grounds.

NNPA Historic Environment Officer: No objection: There are no recorded heritage assets which might be impacted upon within the proposal boundary. Given the low archaeological potential, with the nature and location of the proposal, there are no reasonable grounds for objection.

NNPA Ecologist: No objection: I have no objections to this application. I note that there is no new sewage or foul water provision as existing is being used. I support the planting of the new hedge along the eastern boundary. We should condition that this is a native hedge.

If it is helpful to the applicant I would suggest something along the lines of:

70% hawthorn, 10% blackthorn, 10% hazel, 5% dog rose and 5% holly planted in a double staggered row at a density of 6 plants per metre. Plants of local provenance, size 40-60 cm protected with either individual spirals and canes or a double rabbit fence. Weeding should be carried out and replacements should be provided to ensure that all plants are alive after 3 years. Some standard trees such as rowan or oak would be good every 10-20 metres.

NCC Public Protection: No objection: *Private Water Supply* - there is no mains water to the site with Greencarts Farm supplied from Teppermoor spring private water supply. As the field in question has been used for camping for some time, there is no increase in water usage; sufficiency of the supply is not considered to be an issue. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that a wholesome supply of water is available to meet the demands of the proposed camping field.

Noise - no complaints have been received relating to noise and/or nuisance arising from the site

Licensing – Greencarts farm currently have a camping site licence. The applicant is advised to contact our licensing team to discuss licensing requirement of the new field.

Advice to developer – the effectiveness of the development's design in ensuring that a nuisance is not created is the responsibility of the applicant / developer and their professional advisors / consultants. Applicants / developers should, therefore, fully appreciate the importance of obtaining



competent professional advice. In all cases, the Council retains its rights under Section 70 of the Environment Protection Act 1990, in respect of the enforcement of Statutory Nuisance.

NCC Highways: No objection: No issues arise.

Publicity

The application was advertised by means of a site notice displayed on the 3rd April 2018. Three responses have been received. This includes two representations from neighbours and a further representation from a Planning Consultant submitted on behalf of one of the aforementioned neighbours. The representations are summarised below:

- For the majority of the season we experience no disturbance or inconvenience but have experienced occasional disturbance including noise, fireworks, shouting etc. and also dangerous driving on the lanes around the campsite. The proposal would significantly increase the size of the site, likely increasing the instance of disturbance and anti-social behaviour;
- Various instances of anti-social behaviour emanating from the site noisy rowdy behaviour; vehicles racing up and down the road; use of vehicles (including horn) on site in the early hours; littering; trespass and theft; disturbance and inappropriate feeding of horses; using neighbouring land as a toilet;
- Recognise that many of the instances of anti-social behaviour are not matters that can be dealt with through the planning system but should be resolved before this retrospective application is considered;
- Recommend that any approval is subject to submission of an appropriate management plan and screening;
- It is considered that the proposals fail to satisfy a number of criteria in Core Strategy policy 3

 (c) particularly in relation to amenity; the applicants have not submitted a Sustainability Statement;
- The proposals are contrary to the core principles on paragraph 17 of the NPPF, particularly
 in relation to securing 'a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of
 land and buildings'
- Clients do not object in principle to Greencarts Farm operating as a campsite but it is rather
 the clientele attracted to the site and lack of management which causes the problems. As
 such, if the application is to be approved, the following matters should be considered;
 - A temporary consent is given;
 - The site area is reduced or re-located to another part of the farm;



- More information is provided to enable the application to be properly determined and a management plan provided to control anti-social behaviour;
- The licensing situation is properly investigated;
- The proposal includes proper facilities to make the site more attractive to people who come to enjoy peace and tranquillity of the National Park

Assessment

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

- The Principle of the Development
- Design
- Amenity
- Impact on National Park Special Qualities
- Foul drainage and utilities;
- Highways
- Renewable energy considerations

The principle of the development

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) places emphasis on a presumption in favour of sustainable development to guide decision making. Policy 1 of the NNPA Core Strategy Local Development Framework (Core Strategy) seeks to ensure that development proposals will conserve or enhance the special qualities of the National Park. The effects of the proposed scheme on these qualities are discussed in more detail later in this report.

The proposals do not fall within a settlement identified within Policy 5 as providing the focus for new development within the National Park. However, the pre-amble to Core Strategy Policies 14 and 15 recognises that not all new development will be within the identified settlements, with tourism specifically identified as an end use which may be acceptable in the open countryside.

Policy 14 specifically supports proposals which involve the creation of new businesses and expansion of existing businesses which relate to the special qualities of the National Park but do not negatively impact them. Policy 15 offers support for sustainable tourism and recreation developments which relate to and allow opportunities for visitors to increase their understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the National Park without detrimentally impacting upon them, particularly where they integrate with existing facilities. Policy 21 is also supportive of appropriate schemes which allow farms to diversify.

NPPF Paragraph 28 seeks to support economic growth in rural areas by requiring planning policies to take a positive approach to sustainable new development, supporting the growth and expansion of all types of business and sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments that benefit businesses in rural areas, communities and visitors, and which respect the character of the countryside.



In this instance, the proposals relate to the expansion of an existing tourist facility which would allow the further diversification of the applicant's farm while allowing visitors easy access to attractions within the National Park such as Hadrian's Wall. As such, it is considered that the principle of the development is acceptable and would accord with NPPF Paragraph 28 and the Core Strategy policies 5, 14, 15 and 21 and the NPPF.

Design

The planning application is for a change of use to allow a sheep grazing field to be used for camping and touring caravans for part of the year (March to October). No new development is proposed as part of the application and, as such, it is not considered that there are any design considerations in relation to the application.

Amenity

At its closest point, the boundary with the neighbouring property, West Cockplay Farm, is approximately 140m from the proposed campsite, with West Cockplay farmhouse at a distance of approximately 280m. Trees / woodland to the edge of the application site and the boundary of West Cockplay Farm provide a degree of natural screening between the two properties, with this at its most effective in terms of providing screening during the summer months when the camp site would be at its busiest.

Notwithstanding the above – and in the context where the field has been used for camping for a number of years (albeit without the benefit of planning permission) - the occupier of West Cockplay Farm has objected to the proposals, outlining various occurrences of anti-social behaviour emanating from the site, including noise nuisance, disturbance, littering and invasions of privacy, all of which have had a detrimental impact on his family's living conditions. Similar concerns have been raised by the occupiers of Ash Tree Cottage, which is located approximately 850m to the east of the application site.

While the above issues have clearly resulted in distress to the occupiers of neighbouring properties, the development is not considered to be inherently harmful to amenity and rather than being planning issues, the instances of anti-social behaviour arising from the site and detailed by the neighbours relate to site management and the adequacy or otherwise of measures in place to prevent or quickly address anti-social activities when they occur. Similarly, the issues of theft, trespass and dangerous driving occurring outside of the site are criminal matters which cannot be controlled through the planning system. While the neighbours have requested that the site be relocated or reduced in area to provide a greater distance between the camping field and their properties, there is already a significant buffer and, as noted above, as concerns largely relate to instances of anti-social / criminal behaviour occurring away from the site, this would not be addressed through a reduction in size / relocation of the site.

Neighbours have also requested that any permission which may be granted is done so on a temporary basis in order to ensure that use of the site could be stopped if appropriate management measures are not initiated. However, as noted above, the site has been operating as campsite for a

number of years, albeit without the benefit of planning permission. As discussed below, Northumberland County Council Public Protection has advised that no complaints in relation to the site have been received (although the responses to the application clearly indicate that neighbours do have concerns). On this basis it is not considered that there is sufficient justification to warrant issuing a temporary permission.

Concerns have also been raised as no information has been provided in relation to the maximum number of tents / caravans which would be allowed on-site at any given time. The applicant has however advised that at present the number of tents using the site generally does not exceed 30 although this can increase to 40 when groups of scouts or people participating in the Duke of Edinburgh Awards or World Challenge Training etc. book the site. Similarly, the number of caravans or motor homes using the field is generally under five although numbers in excess of ten can be experienced on bank holiday weekends. While it is not intended to restrict the number of tents / caravans allowed on site as part of this permission, under the Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960 and the Public Health Acts, the campsite will also require a Licence from Northumberland County Council. This licence can condition the number and type of units allowed on site at any time based on the size of the site and the availability of amenities (toilets / showers / water etc.).

In light of the comments received, NCC Public Protection have been consulted and confirmed that no official complaints have been received relating to noise and / or nuisance arising from the site. In the absence of any reported issues, the distance between the application site and neighbouring properties and as the behaviour of users of the site is not a material planning issue, it is considered that there would be insufficient grounds to warrant refusal of the application based on a detrimental impact on the living conditions of the residents of neighbouring properties.



Figure 2: View from site towards West Cockplay Farm (the land in the foreground is in the applicant's ownership)

However, in response to the concerns raised, the applicant has submitted additional information, including a revised set of Campsite Rules for the site. The applicant has advised that bookings will



no longer be taken for groups of six or more people under the age of 25 and anybody acting in an anti-social manner will be asked to leave the site immediately. A no entry sign is also to be located on the gate at the northern end of the site which – while not a formal right of way - provides a potential means of access toward West Cockplay Farm. This would reduce trespassing and littering of the neighbouring property.

The applicant advises that the 'Campsite Rules' will be advertised both on the Greencarts website and through notices displayed on site and include the following: the requirement to book-in before pitching tents; no cars to be driven on the camping fields after 10pm; no lights or music after 11pm; no noise after 12pm or before 8am; dogs to be under control at all times; requirement to use the bins provided and no rubbish to be left on site; requirement to stay within the campsite boundaries; guidelines on fire safety. Subject to an appropriate condition requiring the campsite to operate in accordance with the submitted details, the proposals are considered to accord with the requirements of Core Strategy Policy 3 in this regard.

This is also in the context where Public Protection have advised that it is the applicants responsibility to ensure that a nuisance is not created and that the Council retains its rights under Section 79 of the Environment Protection Act 1990, in respect of the enforcement of statutory nuisance.

Impact on National Park Special Qualities

Biodiversity

Core Strategy policy 17 is supportive of proposals which protect, enhance and restore biodiversity and geodiversity across the National Park. The site does not have any statutory or non-statutory designation for biodiversity or geodiversity and is currently used part of the year for sheep and part of the year for camping and touring caravans (currently without the benefit of planning permission). The NNPA Ecologist has been consulted and has raised no objection. The ecologist has however welcomed the intention to plant a new hedge to the eastern boundary of the site and advised that this should incorporate an appropriate mix of native species. The ecologist's response provides an example of an appropriate species mix and also options for the establishment and management of the hedgerow. Subject to appropriate condition securing the establishment and retention of an appropriate native hedgerow, the proposals are considered to accord with the requirements of policy 17.

Cultural Heritage

Core Strategy Policy 18 is supportive of proposals which conserve, enhance, and promote the quality and integrity of the cultural heritage of the National Park. Although the proposals do not involve any physical development, as the site is located within the Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site, the NNPA Historic Environment Officer and Historic England have been consulted.

Historic England have advised that they consider that the proposals would not directly impact on any archaeological remains from the World Heritage Site or harm it's setting as it would not detract



from the understanding and appreciation of Roman military planning and land use. They have therefore raised no objection to the application on heritage grounds. The NNPA Historic Environment Officer has similarly raised no objection. The proposals are therefore considered to be in accordance with the requirements of Policy 18.

Tranquillity

Core Strategy Policy 19 requires an assessment of the impacts:

- a) of the level of noise, traffic and light generated as a result of the development;
- b) on the sense of openness of the National Park; and
- c) on the quiet enjoyment of the landscape

As noted, the field had been used for camping – albeit without planning permission – for a number or years without a detrimental impact on general noise or traffic levels in the area (impacts on residential amenity are considered above). The site is not in close proximity to any publically accessible sites or rights of way so it is considered that the proposals would result in little impact on the quiet enjoyment of the landscape.

While the submitted plans do not indicate that there would be any additional lighting required as part of the proposal, as the site is within the Dark Sky Park, it is considered appropriate to attach a condition to restrict the installation of any external lighting required in association with the proposed development without approval first being sought from the Authority. Subject to a suitably worded condition, it is considered that the proposals would accord with the requirements of Core Strategy Policy 19.

Landscape

Core Strategy policy 20 states that 'The natural beauty and heritage of the National Park will be conserved and enhanced whilst being responsive to landscape change' and 'Development which would adversely affect the quality and character of the landscape will not be permitted'. The primary visual receptor is the road to the east which is at a distance in excess of 250m. While the site is visible from the road, the application does not propose any permanent development with the application only seeking approval for a change of use to allow the field to be used by tents and touring caravans. In addition, as the site would only be used between March to October, this would largely be during the period when existing hedgerow adjacent to the road would be most effective in providing natural screening. The applicants are also proposing new hedgerow planting to the eastern boundary which would further ameliorate any potential impacts on the landscape. The delivery of the hedgerow would be secured by a suitably worded condition. It is also considered appropriate to attach a further condition to prevent the storage of any non-agricultural machinery or equipment at any time which would again reduce the potential for adverse impacts on landscape. Subject to the imposition of the above conditions, it is considered that any impact on landscape would be minimal and the proposals are therefore considered to accord with the requirements of Policy 20.

Foul drainage and utilities

A non-mains drainage assessment is normally required to establish whether a new foul drainage system or connection to an existing system would be acceptable. However, as no new operational development is proposed and it is not intended to install a new system or connect to an existing system, it is considered unreasonable to request further information in relation to foul drainage in this instance. As noted the site has been operating without planning permission for a number of years with the applicant advising that the existing system has been able to adequately cope with the demand.

Notwithstanding the above, concerns have been raised over the adequacy of the existing amenity blocks to serve the increased number of users of the site, with neighbours complaining about people from the site using their land as a toilet. As noted, no operational development is proposed as part of the application, with permission sought solely for a change of use of the land. As well as planning permission, for the field to operate as a camp site the applicant would also need - following grant of planning permission - to obtain a Caravan and Camping Site licence from Northumberland County Council. Conditions can be attached to this licence controlling the layout of the site, how many tents / caravans are allowed and the number of toilets / washing facilities required to service the facility. This licence can therefore restrict the number of users based on the adequacy of the existing facilities on site. If further amenities are required, this would likely constitute operational development requiring planning permission.

Public protection have advised that the property is supplied with water from the Teppermoor spring private water supply with the property benefiting from 2 x 10000 litre water storage tanks. As there is no increase in water usage, it is not considered that sufficiency of the supply is an issue although Public Protection have stated that it is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that a wholesome supply of water is available to meet the demands of the facility. The proposals are therefore considered to be in accordance with the requirements of Policy 3 in this regard.

Highways

The proposed access to the site would be along the farm track which serves the existing farmhouse and tourist facility. Parking would be within the application site. NCC highways have been consulted on the proposals and have advised that the change of use would not have a material impact on the highway and have therefore raised no objection. The proposals are therefore considered to be acceptable on parking and highway safety grounds.

Renewable energy considerations

Core Strategy policy 25 requires all new developments, including conversions, to minimise the amount of energy used during construction, achieve high energy efficiency, and utilise renewable energy sources in order to offset at least 10% of the predicted energy requirements of the development. As this application is for a change of use with no new operational development proposed, the requirements of policy 25 are not considered to be a relevant requirement in this instance.

Other issues

Concerns have been raised as to whether a Camping Licence has been obtained from Northumberland County Council for the existing site. While this is not relevant to the current application and also relates to a regime separate from planning and therefore is not a material consideration when determining the application, NCC Public Protection have advised that a licence is in place for the existing facility.

A further representation has highlighted the absence of a Sustainability Statement. Given that the application is for a change of use with no operational development proposed, the Authority has adopted a proportionate approach and is satisfied that the provision of a Sustainability Appraisal would not be essential to the determine the application.

Recommendation & Conditions

Grant conditional permission subject to the following conditions:

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To ensure that the development is commenced within a reasonable period of time from the date of this permission, as required by Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).

- 2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans and documents:
 - Application form, received 16th March 2018:
 - Site Location Plan, received 22nd March 2018
 - Greencarts Farm proposed change of use plan site plan received 15th March 2018
 - Supporting Statement, received 15th March 2018
 - Supporting Letter received 11th May 2018
 - Greencarts Campsite & Bunk House Campsite Rules received 11th May 2018

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt, to enable the local planning authority to adequately manage the development and to ensure the proposal accords with policies 1, 3, 5, 18, 19 and 20 of the Northumberland National Park Authority Core Strategy & Development Policies Document (Core Strategy) and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

3. The campsite hereby approved shall operate in complete accordance with the Management Plan details submitted in the supporting letter from the applicant received 11th May 2018 and 'Greencarts Campsite & Bunk House: Campsite Rules and European Guidelines on Fire Safety at Campsites'

received 11th May 2018



Reason: To protect residential amenity and provide a commensurate level of protection against noise, in accordance with Core Strategy Policy 19 and the NPPF.

4. The site hereby approved shall be used for tents and touring caravans only and no static caravans should be brought onto the site at anytime.

Reason: In the interests of protecting the visual character of the area and the special qualities of the National Park, in accordance with Core Strategy policies 1, 3 and 20 and the NPPF.

5. The site shall not be used other than for agriculture during the period between 1st November and 29th February without the prior written approval of the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of protecting the visual character of the area and the special qualities of the National Park, in accordance with Core Strategy policies 1, 3 and 20 and the NPPF.

6. The site shall not be used for the storage of caravans or other non-agricultural machinery / equipment at any time.

Reason: In the interests of protecting the visual character of the area and the special qualities of the National Park, in accordance with Core Strategy policies 1, 3 and 20 and the NPPF.

7. Within 8 weeks of the first use as a campsite, a scheme for the establishment of a hedgerow to the eastern boundary of the site and tree planting to the western boundary of the site, shall be submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority. The scheme should include details of all species and specifications of trees and shrubs to be planted. The landscaping shall be carried out in full accordance with the approved details in the first planting season following the commencement of the development. Any trees, shrubs or plants which die, or are otherwise removed, within a period of five years of the completion of the development shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of a similar size and species, unless the Local Planning Authority gives written consent to any variation.

Reason: In the interests of protecting the visual character of the area and the special qualities of the National Park, in accordance with Core Strategy policies 1, 3 and 20 of the NPPF.

- 8. Prior to the fixing of any external lighting associated with the development hereby approved, details of the external lighting shall be submitted to and agreed in writing with 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 during the operation of the development, unless removed.

Reason: In order to ensure that there is no harmful impact upon the tranquility and intrinsically dark character of Northumberland National Park and the Northumberland International Dark Sky Park through excessive light pollution, in accordance with Policies 1 and 19 of the Core Strategy and paragraph 125 of the NPPF.

Informative Notes

- 1. This planning permission is granted in strict accordance with the approved plans. It should be noted however that:
 - a) Any variation from the approved plans following commencement of the development, irrespective of the degree of variation, may constitute unauthorised development and may be liable to enforcement action.
 - b) You, your agent, or any other person responsible for implementing this permission should inform the Local Planning Authority immediately of any proposed variation from the approved plans and ask to be advised as to the best method to resolve the matter. Most proposals for variation to the approved plans will require the submission of a new application.
- 2. This consent is granted subject to conditions and it is the owner and the person responsible for the implementation of the development who will be fully responsible for their compliance throughout the development and beyond. Some conditions may require work to be carried out, or details to be approved prior to the commencement of the development.
 - Where pre-commencement conditions are not complied with, the whole of the development could be unauthorised, and you may be liable to enforcement action. In some circumstances, the only way to rectify the situation may be through the submission of a new application. If any other type of condition is breached then you may be liable to a breach of condition notice.
- 3. This permission allows the change of use of land but further planning permission will be required for any operational development such as amenity blocks, roads or access.
- 4. The effectiveness of the development's design in ensuring that a nuisance is not created is the responsibility of the applicant / developer and their professional advisors / consultants. Applicants / developers should, therefore, fully appreciate the importance of obtaining competent professional advice.

In all cases, the Council retains its rights under the Section 79 of the Environment Protection Act 1990, in respect of the enforcement of Statutory Nuisance

Background Papers

EIA Screening Opinion Planning File 18NP0019

	Signature	Date
Planning Officer	C Godfrey	16.05.18
Head of Development Management	S.Buylla	16 th May 2018