

From: [DC Consultation](#)
To: [Laura Garth](#)
Subject: FW: Planning Application Consultation 19NP0099 Langleeford, Wooler, Northumberland, NE71 6RG
Date: 27 November 2019 07:48:58

From: Robert Mayhew
Sent: 26 November 2019 16:40
To: DC Consultation
Cc: Jay Smith; Gill Thompson
Subject: RE: Planning Application Consultation 19NP0099 Langleeford, Wooler, Northumberland, NE71 6RG

Application Reference Number: 19NP0099

Proposed Development: Installation of mesh track (1000m x 2m) at Langleeford, Wooler, Northumberland, NE71 6RG

Dear Jay,

Thank you for consulting me on the above proposed development. I would like to make the following observations with respect to the landscape, tree and Dark Sky Park implications for the National Park, of the proposals as set out in the applicant's documentation.

Firstly, from what I have ascertained from the application documentation, there are few if any perceived implications for notable trees or effects upon the Dark Sky Park status of the National Park arising from this application. There are no trees in the vicinity of the application site and whilst the proposal is likely to have a temporary effect on stabilising the grouse track surface for a period of time, there is not expected to be a great deal of night time use of this track and an increase in external artificial light is not anticipated as a result of these proposals.

That leaves the landscape effects. My first observation is that the current use of these informal tracks that service two lines of existing shooting butts is not sustainable on the fragile blanket bog habitat that they traverse. Hence the loss of existing vegetation, pooling of water, erosion and bear peat areas that are being formed. This exposure of the underlying peat may cause carbon release and hence have climate change implications for the future and it is the exposure of the peat that will in time lead to an increasing effect on the landscape character and views of this part of the National Park.

The use of plastic mesh to stabilise the surface of such tracks has been trialled on [Moorhouse National Nature Reserve](#) in the North Pennines and the applicant has also provided photographic evidence of sites where this temporary restoration technique has previously been used to aid the re-establishment of moorland vegetation on the track surface. From a landscape perspective, the stabilisation of the track surface and promotion of blanket bog vegetation is welcomed and, other than a temporary visual effect for the initial first year or two, the subsequent visual effect upon the landscape character and views should be enhanced, so long as the track is used sustainably and by appropriate

vehicles.

Despite the above observations, I have to say that I have my reservations as to the introduction of rolls of plastic mesh into this fragile peatland environment given the increasing global concerns over the use of plastics. This is because experience tells me that in time, due to the elements that this material is likely to be subjected to, freeze/thaw in the winter and sunlight exposure in the summer if a vegetation surface is not maintained, the high-density polyethylene material will degrade over time and eventually break up into small pieces and hence its stabilising effects will be lost. The experiments undertaken to date have not established the effectiveness of this track repair technique over longer periods of time. I would suggest that the applicant needs to be mindful of this and that the moorland tracks across the estate need to be used sustainably by appropriate vehicles, respecting the fragility of the environment that the tracks are set within. I accept that the management of the moorland is an essential part of upland management but if this cannot be done sustainably, then perhaps the position of the shooting butts needs further consideration?

I have no objections with respect to this development but would ask that the points raised above are passed on to the applicant and taken into consideration when determining this application.

If you have any points of clarification or require further information please do not hesitate to come back to me

Regards

Robert Mayhew

Head of Conservation

-----Original Message-----

From: DC Consultation

Sent: 18 October 2019 16:27

To: Robert Mayhew

Subject: Planning Application Consultation 19NP0099 Langleeford, Wooler, Northumberland, NE71 6RG

Please see the attached consultation regarding a planning application which has been received by Northumberland National Park Authority. Full details can be viewed at <http://nnpa.planning-register.co.uk/plaPlanningAppDisplay.aspx?AppNo=19NP0099>

DC Consultation, Development Control Consultation