

From: [DC Consultation](#)
To: [Jay Smith](#); [Margaret Telfer](#)
Subject: FW: Planning Application Consultation 19NP0099 Langleeford, Wooler, Northumberland, NE71 6RG
Date: 02 December 2019 07:46:00

From: Gill Thompson
Sent: 28 November 2019 17:02
To: DC Consultation
Subject: RE: Planning Application Consultation 19NP0099 Langleeford, Wooler, Northumberland, NE71 6RG

Dear Jay,

I have looked at this application with accompanying photographs and have the following comments:

This site is on deep peat and is therefore not a suitable site for a track with either imported material or soil reversion. This is acknowledged in the supporting documentation. The site is within a SSSI and is priority habitat.

Route – alternative routes are discussed but due to the nature of the ground and other surrounding areas of blanket bog these are dismissed. I would prefer that there was no driving across the bog at all, but they are currently doing that without any mitigation and if this continues more damage will occur. We do not have powers to stop that, only Natural England could if they deemed unsatisfactory within the SSSI. Recent research (2017) by Natural England (in partnership) on Moor House NNR showed that mesh tracks were suitable for some access over blanket bog. Physical and hydrological impacts were not recorded after realistic driving trials. I therefore consider because of this report that it is acceptable to allow mesh to be used to prevent further damage to the blanket bog. The level of use they have described (daily quad bike and several loaded argocat passes per year) is in the order of that used in the trials. The mesh study (*Blanket Bog Track Trial, Moor House NNR by Moorland Association, North Pennines AONB, Natural England*) was however a time limited trial and the report states *'From the results, Natural England (NE) is content to continue to give and renew time-limited consents (typically five years) for mesh tracks on designated blanket bog sites as a pragmatic solution to the balance between required access and conservation objectives.'* You may therefore want to consider whether the planning permission is for a limited period, however I do think that once the vegetation has started to grow through and knit the mesh to the bog, removal may cause damage. Natural England will have to give their consent for this work and they may only give a time limited consent.

Type of mesh - In the documentation it says the mesh proposed is suitable for pedestrian, wheelchair and slope grass reinforcing, but does not mention vehicles. The details do look different to the mesh I have seen in the Moorhouse trials and on Comb fell. I would want to be sure that this is heavy duty enough to last and take the weight of the vehicles in this situation as if it does not last further damage to the bog may occur by removal and re-laying. The specification in the Moorhouse trials was UV Stabilised HDPE, 0.0145 m (thickness) and weight 2 kg m⁻². The spec provided states the mesh proposed is part recycled HDPE 660g/m⁻² which seems lighter weight. In one place a thickness of 4mm is stated which is thinner than the 14mm used in the trial. I would like to confirm that this would not break down in sunlight and it is

strong enough to take the weight. I would suggest that they should match the mesh used in the trial rather than try a different specification. They state green would be used and this would be satisfactory.

The method statement mentions pinning the mesh down and strimming the vegetation prior to laying. Where mesh has been laid in other places, this has been done to ensure that the mesh is flush with the ground to allow vegetation to grow through and to prevent lifting and potentially breaking. On the photos they provided it shows since they have been driving over the route the vegetation is flattened, but some cutting may be required. I consider this installation method to be correct.

In the trial the mesh was given approximately 6 months to settle in. There is no mention in the documentation about whether they will allow the ground to rest after installation. I suggest this should be the case to allow vegetation to regrow in places where it has been lost due to the current access.

If you wish to discuss further when Natural England reply please get back in touch.

Yours sincerely,
Gill Thompson

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

From: DC Consultation

Sent: 18 October 2019 16:27

To: Gill Thompson

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

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Mob:

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Gill Thompson, Ecologist

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