



DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

Application Reference Number	20NP0089
Description / Site Address	Erection of a poly tunnel structure for the purpose of lambing sheep, East Twice Brewed, Causey View, Bardon Mill. Hexham, Northumberland, NE47 7AL
Expiry date of publicity / consultations	8 December 2020
Last date for decision	18 January 2021

Details of Proposal

This application is seeking approval for the erection of a poly tunnel structure for the purpose of lambing sheep. The site is a farm, consisting of a residential property with agricultural sheds. Two neighbouring properties are located to the west of the application site. The site is located to the south of the B6318 Military Road in an open countryside location. The site forms part of the 'Frontiers of the Roman Empire' World Heritage Site. The proposed poly tunnel would be located east of the dwelling.



Figure 1: Site Location Plan



The applicant originally sought permission for two poly tunnels however an amendment to the application was made reducing the proposal to a single poly tunnel.

The applicant seeks permission to install a poly tunnel for the purpose of lambing sheep. The tunnel would be 9m in width, 18m in depth and 4.2m in height. The total area of the poly tunnel would be 162m². The structure consists of a steel framework with a black polythene covering. Concrete anchor points would be located at the foundations where the support meets the ground. The floor area would be made up of hardcore materials which are of a permeable nature to allow for surface drainage.

Planning Policy & Guidance

National Policies

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2019)
National Planning Practice Guidance

Northumberland National Park Local Plan

Policy ST1	<i>Sustainable Development</i>
Policy ST2	<i>General Development Principles</i>
Policy ST4	<i>Spatial Strategy</i>
Policy DM7	<i>Rural Economy and Diversification</i>
Policy DM8	<i>Agricultural Development</i>
Policy DM10	<i>Habitats, Biodiversity and Geodiversity</i>
Policy DM11	<i>Landscape, Tranquillity and Dark Night Skies</i>
Policy DM14	<i>Historic Landscape and Assets and Built Heritage</i>

Supplementary Planning Guidance

NNPA Landscape Supplementary Planning Document (Landscape SPD)

Relevant Planning History

07NP0058 Application for Certificate of Lawfulness in respect of residential use of premises
Complete Approval granted 28 November 2007

95NP0006 Extension to form dwelling *Planning permission granted conditionally 27 March 1995*

79NP0016 Outline application for construction of bungalow on 0.02 ha of land *Planning permission granted conditionally 25 July 1979*



Consultation/Representations

Henshaw Parish Council: No response received

Historic England: No objection: The impact on the setting of the monument will be minimal. Equally, as this is a temporary structure (the manufacturer gives a life-span of up to 10-years), any localised impact will be minimal.

Highways: No Objection: It was noted from the information provided that the proposals are to accommodate the needs of the existing site, and that the implementation of the poly tunnel will not generate any additional vehicle movements. It is therefore considered that the proposals will not have an adverse impact on highway safety, nor will it necessitate any amendments to the means of access to the adopted highway.

NNPA Farming Officer: Raised queries with regards to the proposed location of the poly tunnel, the use of the cattle shed, water supply and drainage. All queries were subsequently addressed

NCC Environmental Protection: No comment. Public protection has decided not to comment on the proposal.

Public response: The application has been advertised by means of 3 no of neighbour notification letters and a site notice displayed on the 24th November 2020. One representation was received in response raising the following concerns;

- The proposed site is visible from Vindolanda and from the south of Smiths Shields
- There is no specification of a demand on the water supply when the poly tunnels are in use. If there is a demand how long will they be in use for? What contingency plan is in place if it so happens to run out?
- No specification of what foundation will be used and what drainage support will be required
- No specification of the removal of manure
- Increased volume of traffic due to lambing
- Existing Cattle shed on site could be used for the purposed of lambing sheep.



Assessment

The key material planning considerations are:

- The principle of the development;
- Design and amenity;
- Impact Upon National Park special qualities;
- Foul drainage and water supply;
- Highways considerations

The principle of the development

Sustainable Development

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) places emphasis on a presumption in favour of sustainable development to guide decision making. Policy ST1 of the Local Plan adopts a similar assumption in favour of sustainable development and defines the qualities and criteria which are deemed to represent 'sustainable development'. The degree to which the proposals accord with these qualities is discussed throughout the report.

Location of Development

The application site is located within the open countryside, whereby Local Plan Policy ST4 paragraph 2 Part b) permits proposals where there is an essential need for the development to meet the needs of farming. The proposed poly tunnel is considered an essential form of infrastructure as it would support the lambing of sheep on the site

Policy DM8 relates to agricultural development. The policy requires new agricultural development to demonstrate a functional need for the building to sustain existing primary agricultural activity and the scale of the development is commensurate with that need. The applicant has confirmed that the proposed poly tunnel would be used in conjunction with the existing cattle shed on-site to improve animal welfare standards. It is considered that the provision of a single poly tunnel within the farm is commensurate to the needs of the site.

Policy DM8 Part 2 states that '*The Authority may impose a condition on appropriate planning permissions requiring the removal of the building or structure if it is no longer needed for agricultural purposes.*' As the proposed poly tunnel is a temporary structure it is considered appropriate to include a condition requiring the removal of the poly tunnel if it has not been in use for 12 months.

Policy DM7 is supportive of proposals for new sustainable rural economic development that are compatible with and subsidiary to an existing farming activity. As the proposals relate to the provision of an agricultural development within an existing farmstead for which there is an identified need, the proposals are considered to be in accord with the requirements of Policy DM7.



In considering Local Plan policies ST4, DM8 and DM7, it is considered that the principle of development is acceptable.

An objection letter was received raising concerns over the location of the poly tunnel and questioned whether it would be more suitable to undertake lambing in the existing cattle shed. While a cattle shed is located on site and has been used previously for lambing sheep, the applicant has confirmed that additional room is required in order to achieve animal welfare standards. The poly tunnel would be used in conjunction with the cattle shed. Policies ST4 and DM8 permit the erection of new buildings to meet the farming needs of the farm enterprise.

Design and Amenity

Design

Local Plan policy ST2 places an emphasis on ensuring new development is of high quality design. Local Plan policy DM8, which relates to agricultural development, states that development will be permitted where *'the form, height and size of the proposed development is appropriate to its setting and will not have an adverse impact on the landscape and special qualities of the National Park.'*

The applicant proposes to construct one poly tunnel in open grassland to the east of the existing cattle shed. This area is considered discrete in nature as it is shielded by a line of trees to both the north and east of the site and by existing agricultural buildings to the west. The tree line will provide a visual buffer when the proposal is considered from the B6318 Military Road.



Figure 2: Design of poly tunnel

Policy DM8 requires buildings designed for the purpose of agriculture to use appropriate materials with subdued colours. The poly tunnel would be constructed in a steel framework with a black polythene cover. These materials would provide a lightweight form of design that would be a typical feature of an agricultural setting.

The site forms part of an existing farmstead and the poly tunnel would be located on an agricultural field. The tunnel would be directly adjacent to existing cattle sheds and agricultural buildings. It is



considered that the proposal would reflect the agricultural character of the landscape it forms part of.

In light of the above assessment it is considered that the proposals would accord with the requirements of Local Plan policies ST1, ST2, DM8 and the NPPF in relation to design.

Amenity

Amongst others, Policy ST2 states that development will be permitted where *'The proposal will not have an unacceptable adverse impact upon the amenities of occupiers'* with Policy DM8 seeking to ensure that new agricultural development *'does not significantly harm local amenity in terms of noise, odours or levels of activity'*.

The poly tunnel would be located in a discrete position to the east of the application site. This site would be located approximately 70m from the nearest neighbouring property. Due to the scale of the poly tunnel and its sensitive location, it is not considered that the proposal would have a material impact on the amenity of neighbouring dwellings.

Impact upon National Park Special Qualities

Biodiversity

Policy DM10 of the Local Plan offers support for proposals which maintain and enhance the biodiversity of the National Park.

The proposed poly tunnel would be located on an existing agricultural field. The area is not considered particularly rich in ecological value. No works are proposed to an existing building or roof. It is considered that the proposals would not have a material impact on the habitats and biodiversity of the surrounding area. As a result of this, it is considered that the proposals satisfy the requirements of policy DM10 of the Local Plan.

Landscape

Policy DM11 states that the natural beauty and heritage of the National Park will be conserved and enhanced whilst being responsive to landscape change. To achieve this, new development will need to ensure that *'the visual impact of the development in its immediate and wider setting is minimised through high quality design that reflects local landscape character with particular regard to scale, siting, materials and colour'* and *'the cumulative and /or sequential landscape and visual effect of development do not detract from the natural beauty of the National Park..'*

The proposals involve the construction of a poly tunnel for the purpose of lambing sheep. Consideration has been made with regards to the location of the poly tunnel to ensure it is discretely placed and shielded from vantage points to the north.



Figure 3: Proposed location of poly tunnel

Given the development's existing situation nearby existing agricultural buildings it is not considered that the proposal would result in an uncharacteristic form of development and would instead reflecting the existing local landscape character.

An objection was received raising concern about being able to view the poly tunnel from Vindolanda and Smith shield. This is not considered a concern as the proposal is situated between existing agricultural buildings. A development of this kind is commonplace within an agricultural setting and would harmonise with its surroundings. As a result of this, its visibility from Vindolanda and Smith Shield would not result in a material impact to the landscape when considered as a whole.

Given the nature of the proposals, it is considered that any impact on landscape or visual amenity would be restricted to the immediate area and limited to those discussed in relation to design (above). It is therefore considered that any impact on wider landscape or visual amenity would not be of a magnitude which would warrant refusal of the application and the proposals are not considered to conflict with the requirements of Local Plan policy DM11 or the NPPF in relation to landscape.



Tranquillity

Local Plan policy DM11 requires amongst others that *‘The level of noise, traffic and light generated as a result of the development during construction and thereafter is minimised and dark night skies maintained’* and *‘All development proposals should avoid external lighting where possible. Where external lighting is necessary its design should avoid all unacceptable adverse impacts, or as a last resort mitigate them to...avoid adverse impacts on tranquillity, dark skies..’*

The site is in a sensitive location within the Northumberland International Dark Sky Park. No specific detail of any external lighting which may be required in connection with the proposed development has been submitted as part of the application. A condition restricting the installation of external lighting is considered appropriate as the proposals relate to a new building detached from any existing dwellings/ buildings.

An objection letter was received raising concerns over an increase in traffic arising from the poly tunnel and its uses. As previously mentioned, the applicant has confirmed that the inclusion of a poly tunnel on site would reduce the volume of traffic along the private access road. The poly tunnel would remove the necessity of completing lambing off site.

It is therefore considered that the proposals are unlikely to generate significant levels of additional vehicle movements / traffic or noise. As such, subject to the imposition of an appropriate condition relating to external lighting, it is considered that the proposals would be in accord with the requirements of Local Plan policy DM11 and the NPPF in relation to tranquillity.

Cultural Heritage

Policy DM14 requires development that affects historic landscape assets of the National Park to conserve and enhance landscape quality and character.

The application site lies within the buffer zone of the Hadrian’s Wall Frontiers of the Roman Empire World Heritage Site. The Vallum, which lies directly north of the application site, is designated as a Scheduled Ancient Monument. As a result of this, Historic England was consulted on the proposals.

The inspector of Ancient Monuments confirmed that the tree line to the north and east of the site, alongside the agricultural buildings to the west would ensure the impact on the setting of the Vallum would be minimal.

In addition, as the structure is temporary, the potential impacts are considered minimal. As a result of this, the proposal would not adversely affect the surrounding heritage assets and satisfies the requirements of policy DM14 of the Local Plan.



Foul Drainage

An objection letter was received raising concerns over the storage and removal of manure that would arise from the use of the poly tunnel. The applicant has since confirmed that only sheep will occupy the poly tunnel and only a limited amount of manure will be produced. This would be cleaned out once lambing season ends and spread on surrounding farmland. As such it is considered the proposal would not raise issues of amenity to neighbouring residents. Furthermore, NCC Public Protection are not concerned about this aspect of the proposal, as they confirm they do not wish to comment on the proposal.

The Authority's farming officer raised the issue of whether the site would provide adequate drainage due to the wet nature of the ground. The applicant has since confirmed that the ground around the farming area is sound free draining. It was not considered necessary to install drainage as it may contaminate watercourses. This is a reasonable consideration and therefore the provision of further drainage to accommodate the poly tunnels has not been deemed necessary.

Water Supply

Policy ST1 of the Local Plan requires proposals to conserve the quality and quantity of natural resources including water.

It is noted that the applicant aims to use their own private supply to provide water for the poly tunnel. An objection was received raising concerns over the demand to the private supply and how long the demand would last.

The applicant has since confirmed that they intend to utilize rainwater collection as a supplement to spring water during the period of lambing and demands of high peak. It is the applicant intention to maintain a sustainable household water supply.

As a result of this, it is not considered that the proposal would have a material impact on the water supply of the immediate area and therefore satisfies the requirements of Policy ST1 of the Local Plan. Furthermore, NCC Public Protection have raised no comments with respect to water supply.

Surface Water Drainage

The poly tunnel would be located on existing agricultural land. An objection was received raising concerns over proposed foundations and potential surface water runoff that would arise as a result of the development.

The applicant has since confirmed that the only foundations are concrete anchor points where the steel supports meet the ground. The internal floor area of the poly tunnel would be made up of hard-core, a permeable material that will allow liquids to perforate down into the natural drainage.



As a result of this, it is not considered that the proposal would have a material impact on the surface water of the surrounding area or cause an increase in flood risk, in accordance with Local Plan policy ST2.

Highways

Northumberland County Council (Highways) was consulted on the proposals. Highways officers confirmed that the implementation of a poly tunnel would not result in any significant increase in traffic to the unclassified road or compromise highways safety.

An objection letter was received raising concerns over a potential increase in the volume of traffic on the private access road that serves the properties on East Twice Brewed. Concerns were raised that the lambing operations would be completed in batches, leading to a high volume of traffic arising from the scheme.

The applicant has subsequently confirmed that the proposal would not lead to an increase in traffic as lambing would fully occur on site which has not occurred in previous seasons.

As a result of this, there would not be an increase in traffic on the private access road serving the site as operations would be able to occur on site, removing the need to transport livestock elsewhere.

It is therefore considered that the proposal satisfies the requirements of policy ST2 of the Local Plan.

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 22 November 2020
- Premier Poly tunnels Sheep Housing Specification received 22 November 2020
- Amended Location Plan Dwg no. JFL3/AMB received 26 November 2020
- Amended Block Plan Dwg no. JFL2/AMB received 26 November 2020



- Amended Elevations Plan Dwg no. JFL1/AMB received 26 November 2020
- Amended Floor Plan Dwg no. JFL4/AMB received 26 November 2020
- Amended Site Plan Dwg no. JFL5/AMB received 26 November 2020
- Revised Design & Access Statement received 26 November 2020
- Causey View Farm photos taken by applicant received 2 December 2020

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 ST1, ST2, ST4, DM8 and DM14 of the Northumberland National Park Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

3. Prior to the fixing of any external lighting associated with the development, full details shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Details of external lighting 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 tranquility and intrinsically dark character of the area, including the Northumberland International Dark Sky Park through excessive light pollution, in accordance with Local Plan policy DM11 and the NPPF.

4. Should the development hereby permitted become disused for a period of twelve consecutive months, it shall be removed in its entirety from the site within the following three months, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of the visual amenity and landscape character of the area and to ensure the development is in accordance with Local Plan policy DM8.

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.

Background Papers

Application File 20NP0089
EIA Screening Report

	Signature	Date
Planning Officer	A Ewart	21/12/2020
Head of Planning and Policy	<i>Susannah Buylła</i>	05/01/2021