DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

Application Reference Number	21NP0039		
Description / Site Address	Proposed change of use from eight-bedroom private		
	dwelling to four guest bedroom bed and breakfast with		
	four-bedroom owners accommodation, Yearle House,		
	Wooler, Northumberland, NE71 6RB		
Expiry date of publicity / consultations	01/07/2021		
Last date for decision	30/07/2021		

Details of Proposal

This application is seeking approval for the proposed change of use from an eight-bedroom private dwelling to part-four guest bedroom bed and breakfast and part-four-bedroom owners accommodation. The property is a detached two-storey dwellinghouse. The building is located within the hamlet of Earle, 2 miles to the south of the gateway settlement of Wooler and sits directly to the west of the National Park Boundary.

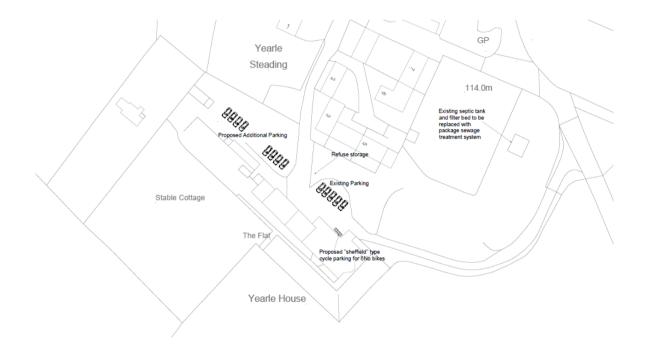


Figure 1: Application site, within the context of its surroundings

The applicant seeks permission to change the use of the private residential dwelling by separating the property between a guest house and the current residential use of the property. The guest house would comprise 4 letting bedroom, en-suite on the first floor and the use of the siting room and dining room at ground floor level. The residential bedrooms would be located on the second floor with two private reception rooms at ground floor level.



No external alterations are proposed but 2 internal bathrooms and a lobby area would be created as a result of the proposals.

Additional car parking spaces would be provided to the north of the property. A package treatment plant would also be constructed to serve the change of use.

Planning Policy & Guidance

National Policies

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

Northumberland National Park Local Plan

Policy ST1	Sustainable Development
Policy ST2	General Development Principles
Policy ST4	Spatial Strategy
Policy DM6	Conversion of Buildings
Policy DM7	Rural Economy and Diversification
Policy DM10	Habitats, Biodiversity and Geodiversity
Policy DM11	Landscape, Tranquillity and Dark Night Skies
Policy DM12	Trees, Woodlands and Forests
Policy DM13	Renewable Energy Generation
Policy DM14	Historic Landscape Assets

Supplementary Planning Guidance

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

Relevant Planning History

21NP0010	Provision of biomass boiler and associated building <i>Planning permission</i> granted conditionally 19 March 2021
91NP0018	Renewal of planning permission 85/B/059 for siting of a static caravan Planning permission granted conditionally 28/01/1992
88NP0025	Construction of a detached double garage Planning Permission Granted Conditionally 28/01/1989

Consultation/Representations

Northumberland County Council Development Management: No Objection



Northumberland County Council Public Protection: No response received.

Northumberland County Council Highways: No Objection: It is considered that this development will not have a severe impact on highways safety, and there are no objections in principle to the proposal. Two conditions have been proposed which will be attached to the final decision notice. These conditions require the car parking area and cycle parking area to be brought into use prior to the B&B being brought into use.

Public response: The application has been advertised by means of a site notice displayed on the 10 June 2021. 12no. neighbours were also notified of the proposals. Three representations were received raising the following observations:

- Acknowledge the proposed development will bring economic benefits to the area and will bring much needed investment to Yearle House.
- Concerns towards use of the back entrance leading from Yearle House through the Old Steading. Potential for additional noise and additional wear and tear to the track.
- The expanded parking area close to the Old Kennels is sited back from the joint wall at the top of the garden. It is currently not screened from view.
- Concerns over the future use of the Old Kennels building due to potential issues overlooking/loss of privacy.
- Concerns over service vehicles utilising track from Old Steading to Yearle House.
- Concerns over safety from the use of access track leading from Yearle House through Old Steading.

Assessment

The key material planning considerations are:

- The principle of the development;
- Design;
- Amenity;
- Impact Upon National Park special qualities
- Highways
- Utilities

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', and parts a), h) & m) are especially relevant to this application in relation to 'making the National Park a high quality place to live and work', 'improve public access to, and enjoyment of the special qualities of the National Park' & 'furthers the statutory duties of the National Parks purposes and duty'.

Location of Development

Policy ST4 of the Northumberland National Park Local Plan seeks to direct development to a series of settlements named within the policy. Earle is not one of the named settlements within the policy and therefore it is considered to fall within the Open Countryside. Paragraph 2 of Policy ST4 lists a number of criteria in which development would be permitted within the open countryside.

Paragraph 2 a) is of specific relevance. This states that development will be permitted in the Open Countryside 'Where development reuses a building in a way that supports an economic use'. As the majority of the building is to be used for tourism purposes, it is considered to accord with the requirements of this part of the policy. The paragraph goes on to state that the development must be in accordance with Policy DM6. The compliance of which is assessed in more detail in the following section.

Conversion of Buildings within the Open Countryside

Policy DM6 of the Local Plan refers to the Conversion of Buildings. Paragraph 2 of the policy lists a set of criteria that proposals for conversions of buildings in the Open Countryside must adhere to in order to comply with the policy.

Paragraph a) of the policy requires the building to 'make a positive contribution to the landscape and special qualities of the National Park'. No external alterations are proposed to the existing building. A modest parking area to accommodate the intensification of the building is proposed alongside a package treatment plant. Both of these external features are not likely to cause a detrimental impact to the landscape. Yearle House is a traditional detached farmhouse with white rendered walls and a slate roof. It is considered that Yearle House currently makes a positive contribution to the landscape it forms part of and the proposal's impact upon this would be negligible.

Paragraph b) requires the building to be 'structurally sound and capable of conversion without substantial rebuilding'. As the building is currently in use as residential accommodation, it is considered that the proposal is structurally sound, and this would not be compromised as a result of the change of use.

Paragraph c) requires the building to 'be of sufficient size to accommodate the proposed use without the need for significant alterations, extensions or other new buildings'. The submitted information indicates that there would be no external alterations as a result of the change of use. The submitted floor plans highlight that the existing dwelling has more than sufficient floor space to accommodate a bed & breakfast use. As a result of this, the proposal complies with Policy DM6.

Paragraph d) states that 'the proposal is of a high quality design which retains existing features which contribute significantly to the character of the building and its setting'. As previously mentioned, there are no external alterations proposed to the original dwelling as part of the change



of use. The provision of additional car parking spaces, alongside a package treatment plant are considered typical external features of a large property and would not raise any material impacts in terms of design. Therefore, the proposal is assessed on the merits of the design of the existing dwelling. Yearle House is considered an attractive property that contributes to the high-quality landscape it forms part of. As a result of this, the proposal complies with paragraph d.

Paragraph e) states that the 'proposed use does not lead to changes in the building's curtilage or the creation of any new vehicular access that would unacceptably affect the character and appearance of the building or the surrounding landscape'. Details of an additional eight car parking spaces on permeable gravel surfaces to the north-west of the site are proposed. The car parking is situated adjacent to the existing parking arrangements. No alterations are to be made to the existing access to the site. As a result of this, it is considered that the external alterations would not unacceptably affect the character and appearance of the host building.

Paragraph f) ensures that 'the requirements of policy DM14 are also met'. Policy DM14 refers to Historic Landscape Assets and Built Heritage. It is considered that the proposal accords with this paragraph. This is described in further detail in the cultural heritage section below.

Paragraph 3 of Policy DM6 lists a number of appropriate uses for the conversion of buildings within the National Park. Holiday Accommodation and tourist facilities are one of the appropriate uses and therefore the proposal complies with paragraph 3 of the policy. It is therefore considered that the proposal accords with the requirements of policy DM6 of the Local Plan.

Tourism Use

As the proposal would constitute tourism and recreational development, the proposal must comply with the requirements of Policy DM7, Rural Economy and Diversification. Part 4 of the policy refers to proposals for tourism and recreational development. Proposals must adhere to the following criteria in order to comply with Policy DM7.

Paragraph a) requires proposals to 'conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife, tranquility and cultural heritage of the National Park'. The consideration of these points will be addressed throughout the remainder of this report.

Paragraph b) states that proposals must 'provide and protect opportunities for people to increase their awareness, understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the National Park'. The submitted Design & Access Statement states that 'the proposal will allow visitors to stay in high quality accommodation within the National Park which will provide opportunities to experience the special qualities of the National Park. By staying in a Bed and Breakfast with owners who live and work in the area, guests will benefit from the knowledge and awareness of the area that the owners will be able to provide them'. This provides a satisfactory justification that the proposal will provide opportunities for people to increase their awareness and understanding of the special qualities of the National Park.



Paragraph c) requires proposals to be 'of a quality, scale and design that takes into account and reflects the sensitivity of the local landscape'. As the proposals offer little in the way of external built development it is not considered that the proposal would result in any significant impacts to the local landscape and would instead retain the same scale and design of the current built form.

Paragraph d) seeks to ensure that proposals 'do not lead to unacceptable harm in terms of noise and activity (including traffic)'. The proposal complies with this requirement and consideration of these points will be addressed further in the amenity and highways section of the report.

Whilst the proposal will result in the loss of some residential accommodation, it is considered the proposal would not result in the loss of a whole residential unit of accommodation as some residential accommodation will be retained. As described in detail above, the proposal satisfies the aims and objectives of strategic policy ST4 and development management policy DM6. As a result of this, the principle of development is considered acceptable.

Design and Amenity

Design

Local Plan policy ST2 places an emphasis on ensuring new development is of a high-quality design that will make a positive contribution to the National Park's special qualities and the local environment incorporating high quality construction materials and design details. Paragraph b) is of specific relevance as developments must demonstrate that 'the proposal is of a high-quality design that will make a positive contribution to the National Park's special qualities and the local environment'.

When considering physical alterations to the building that would cause a material impact in terms of design, the proposal offers little in the form of built development. No external alterations are proposed to the original dwelling. The only external alterations proposed are the inclusion of 8 additional car parking spaces and the provision of a package treatment plant.

The package treatment plant would be located to the east of the existing access to the site. An existing septic tank is located in this position (Figure 2). This area is considered appropriate as it is sufficiently setback from the original dwelling. This ensures it would not detract attention from the high-quality host dwellinghouse.

In addition, the package treatment plant is considered more discrete in terms of design than the current septic tank. The plant would be largely subterranean, projecting 0.65m in height. The plastic cover which is visible would be green. Currently the septic tank is clearly visible and constructed in materials which fail to harmonise with its natural surrounds. The new package treatment plant would harmonise with the woodland setting it would form part of in a more effective way than the current form.



Figure 2: Septic Tank currently in place at Yearle House

The proposed additional parking would be located to the northwest of the existing property. The parking would be in close proximity to the previously approved biomass boiler. This parking area has already been constructed to accommodate for the additional holiday accommodation on site alongside the current proposal (figure 3). This is considered an appropriate location due to its open nature. The parking is also setback from Yearle House to ensure it does not detract attention from the high quality dwellinghouse.



Figure 3: Additional Parking Spaces as constructed

In light of the above assessment, it is considered that the proposals would accord with the requirements of Local Plan policies ST1, ST2 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 DM2 seeking to ensure that new householder development 'does not unacceptably affect the residential amenity of neighbouring occupiers or result in adequate levels of amenity for the existing dwelling'. Part 3 of Policy DM6 requires new uses to be 'compatible in nature, scale and level of activity with the surrounding locality and any neighbouring buildings'.

A number of properties are located directly to the north of the host dwellinghouse which have the potential to be materially affected by the proposals in terms of amenity. This includes Nos. 1-6 Yearle Steading.

As the proposal would result in an intensification of the site from its current use, it is considered necessary to assess the potential increase in noise that would result from the proposal. The applicant has included information on noise management measures which will be undertaken within the Design & Access Statement.

The applicant has confirmed that it is anticipated that the only increase in noise will result from the increased number of cars entering and exiting the site. Given that there would be an increase of



four guest rooms as a result of the development, it is anticipated that no more than 4 additional vehicles would be present as a result of the proposals.

The existing access to the property is located to the east of the site (Figure 4). This would not change as a result of the proposals. This is considered beneficial in terms of amenity as the access is located away from neighbouring properties within the hamlet of Earle.

Check-in arrangements for guests would be from 16:00-19:00pm. It is not anticipated that guests will be arriving late at night during unsociable hours.

The applicant will be a permanent resident of the site. They intend to monitor the noise levels on the site in the interest of their own amenity, alongside the neighbouring properties. As a result of this, it is not considered that the proposal would lead to any detrimental impact in terms of noise.

A letter of representation was received highlighting that the proposed car parking area would not be screened from the view of No.1 Old Steading. The proposed parking area would be located 45m to the south of the rear facing wall of No. 1 Old Steading. The applicant is not inclined to provide screening around the proposed parking area as this is considered a typical feature of a bed and breakfast. The sufficient setback of the property from the car parking area would ensure any amenity impacts would be considered negligible and officers do not consider that screening would be necessary in these circumstances.

As described in detail above, it is considered that any material amenity impacts that the proposal would cause would be considered negligible. As a result of this, the proposal complies with the requirements of Policies ST2 and DM6 of the Local Plan.

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 application site does not fall within or directly adjacent to any ecological sites. The provision of additional car parking spaces has been constructed in a modest area of existing grassland that was not considered rich in ecological value. No works are proposed within the roof space of the original dwellinghouse. As a result of this, it is not considered that the proposals would result in significant harm to any existing ecological habitats within the site or wider area.

It is considered that the proposal would not result in a material impact to wildlife habitats and as a result satisfies 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.

Policy DM12 of the Local Plan states that 'in order to maximise the social, economic and environmental opportunities that trees, woodlands, and forests present, support will be given to development proposals which are not detrimental to other semi-natural habitats'.

The only external alterations proposed include the provision of a car park and a package treatment plant. Both external alterations are relatively modest in scale and would not be clearly visible beyond the immediate vicinity of the site. Any of these impacts will be limited to those discussed in the design section above.

No trees would be removed as a result of the development. This has been confirmed by the applicant.

While Yearle House is clearly visible when considered from the south, in this instance the proposals will result in little in the way of new development as the alterations involved would be largely internal. It is therefore considered that any impact on wider landscape or visual amenity would not be of any concern and the proposals are not considered to conflict with the requirements of Local Plan policies DM11, DM12 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 planning application. As the proposed alterations are largely internal, it is not considered necessary to attach a condition requesting any external lighting details to be submitted to the Local Planning Authority. It is however considered appropriate to attach a condition requiring any external lighting associated with the car parking area and entrance to the property advising the applicant that the site is located in a sensitive location and providing details of lighting suitable for use within the International Dark Sky Park.

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 tranquility.

Cultural Heritage



Policy DM14 of the Local Plan requires 'Development affecting historic landscape assets of the National Park to conserve and enhance landscape quality and character by taking into consideration the elements which contribute to its significance'.

The nearest designated heritage asset to the proposal is the Grade II Listed 'Boundary Stone Circa 20 Yards south of North Yearle Farms' This boundary stone is relatively small in scale and would be located 100m from the application site. It is not considered that the proposed development would affect the setting of the Listed Building.

There are no heritage features within the immediate vicinity of the application site which would be adversely affected by the proposals. As a result of this, the proposal satisfies the requirements of policy DM14 of the Local Plan.

Highways

Eight additional car parking spaces have been proposed to provide for the development to accommodate for the intensification of the use of the site. In addition to this, cycle parking has also been proposed. Northumberland County Council Highways have been consulted on the proposals.

Highways officers considered that the proposal would not have a severe impact on highways safety and there are no objections in principle to the proposals. The proposed development is to be accessed via the 'U1081' onto a private road to the northeast of Yearle House. The application site is located approximately 140m away from the track.

The proposed site plan highlights 13 parking spaces together with adequate manoeuvring space, which is considered acceptable. The occupiers space accommodation will require 3 parking spaces under Northumberland National Park's parking standards and the 4 Bed and Breakfast rooms require 4 spaces in total. This ensures the parking levels on site would be above the minimum parking standards set out in the Local Plan. A suitably worded condition would be attached to the final decision notice to ensure that the additional parking is brought into use prior to the occupation of the Bed and Breakfast.



Figure 4: Proposed Main Access to the site

The proposed site plan also highlights the provision of Sheffield type cycle parking for 6no. bikes. This is considered an acceptable level of cycle parking. A suitably worded condition will be attached to the final decision notice to ensure the cycle parking is brought into use prior to the occupation of the Bed and Breakfast.

The location of a refuse store has been highlighted on the proposed site plan. This would be located directly to the north of the host property. It is noted within the Design & Access Statement that this would accommodate 10 bins. This is considered an acceptable amount considering the use of the site. Details have also been provided regarding the refuse collection strategy which highways officers consider appropriate.

Representations were made to the Authority regarding the proposed use of the back entrance leading from Yearle House through the Old Steading. Concerns were raised regarding the wear and tear of the road which could result due to the intensification of the site. The wear and tear of a private access road would not constitute a material planning consideration and would instead be considered a private matter.

The Design & Access Statement states that 'All guests will be required to use the main drive to the east of the house to ensure that there is no increased traffic using the access to the north which runs close to existing nearby dwellings. This will be achieved by way of discreet signage and information provided to guests prior to arrival.' This is considered an appropriate solution and would



ensure the access road from Yearle House to the Old Steading would not be used by guests of the bed and breakfast.

As described in detail above, it is considered that the proposals would not compromise highways safety and would accord with the requirements of Policy ST2 of the Local Plan.

Utilities

Water Supply

The applicant has confirmed, within the Design & Access Statement, that the water supply serving Yearle House currently comes from a borehole located in the gardens to the north-east of the property. This installation is regularly serviced, and the water supply is more than adequate for the proposals which would occur under the development. This is considered a suitable solution and the proposals would not result in an unacceptable over demand to the existing water supply.

Foul Drainage

The applicant has confirmed that a new package treatment plant would be provided to the southwest of the property to accommodate the intensification of the site as a result of the development. The applicant proposes to install a KEE Nudisc Package Treatment Plant. The plant has been designed to minimise noise and the release of odour. Therefore, the plant would not raise any significant issues in terms of neighbouring amenity. This is considered a suitable solution to accommodate the intensification of the use of the site.

Other issues

A representation was received from a member of the public raising concerns over any future development to The Old Kennels, an outbuilding within the ownership of the applicant. This building does not form part of this application. Should development be proposed in the future for this outbuilding then this will be considered under a separate planning 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 21 May 2021
- Site Plan as existing Dwg No: 403 Received 21 May 2021
- Location Plan and Site Plan as proposed Dwg No: 404 received 21 May 2021
- Floor Plans as Existing Dwg No: 401 Received 21 May 2021
- Floor Plans as Proposed Dwg No: 402 Received 21 May 2021
- Design and Access Statement prepared by Sullivan Associates Chartered Building Surveyors Received 21 May 2021
- Foul Drainage Assessment Form Received 4 June 2021
- Kee NuDisc Brochure Received 4 June 2021
- Kee 07hr-2 Treatment System Elevations received 4 June 2021

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, DM6, DM10 and DM11 of the Northumberland National Park Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

3. The car parking area indicated on the approved plan 404 prior to the Bed & Breakfast rooms being brought into use, shall be retained in accordance with the approved plan and shall not be used for any purpose other than the parking of vehicles associated with the development.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety, in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework and Local plan policy ST2.

4. The cycle parking shown on the approved plan 404 shall be implemented prior to the Bed & Breakfast rooms being brought into use. Thereafter, the cycle parking shall be retained in accordance with the approved plans and shall be kept available for the parking of cycles at all times.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety, residential amenity and sustainable development, in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework and Local Plan policy ST2.

5. No external refuse or refuse containers shall be stored outside of the approved refuse storage area except on the day of refuse collection.

Reason: In the interests of the amenity of the surrounding area and highway safety, in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework and Local Plan Policy ST2.

- 6. Prior to the fixing of any external lighting associated with the proposed car parking area and entrance 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 Northumberland National Park Local Plan Policies ST2 and DM11 and paragraph 180 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. The application site is located within the Northumberland International Dark Sky Park. The 'Good Practice Guide for Outside Lighting in Northumberland International Dark Sky Park' and an additional guide to unacceptable / acceptable lighting is attached. It is recommended that any external lighting required in connection with the domestic extension is undertaken in accordance with the Guidance.

Background Papers

Application File 21NP0039 EIA Screening Report

	Signature	Date
Planning Officer	A Ewart	14.07.2021
Head of Planning and Policy	Susannah Buylla	16/07/2021