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PLANNING DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

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ON BEHALF OF MR AND MRS TURNER T/A HAZELFIELD LODGES LTD
APRIL 2022

CASE: PROPOSED SITING OF 3NO. HOLIDAY CHALETS (RETROSPECTIVE)
WITH ASSOCIATED CAR PARKING SPACES AND LANDSCAPING

LOCATION: LAND TO THE REAR OF HAZELFIELD COTTAGE
ELSTOB LANE
GREAT STANTON
STOCKTON ON TEES
TS21 1HP

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1. INTRODUCTION

Total Planning Solutions (the 'Agent') have prepared this Planning Statement on behalf of Mr and Mrs Turner (the 'Applicant') to support a detailed planning application which is seeking retrospective planning permission for the siting of 3no. holiday chalets with associated access and parking on land within and to the rear of Hazelfield Cottage, Little Stainton, Stockton on Tees, TS21 1HP

As background, the applicants made several attempts to contact the local planning authority with regards to a pre-application process to understand the legislative requirement for the development as proposed. However, due to the impact of COVID on the councils working practice, the applicant made several attempts with no prevail in obtaining the supporting information required to confirm if the development required planning permission.

The applicants unfortunately were advised incorrectly by other parties and on the basis the proposals were permitted development due to their being not built structures but modular units.

My practice was subsequently contacted by the applicant and I advised them that the development required planning permission and a full planning application had to be submitted. The applicants are conscious of their actions and seek to rectify this mistake accordingly.

The application submission proposes a leisure development that has been carefully designed to introduce a small-scale tourist destination in the countryside, associated to an existing built farmstead. The bespoke holiday development which as illustrated within this submission is contemporary in nature and is well suited to its location and will provide a range of social, economic and environmental benefits for the wider area.

This document provides an assessment of the planning policy context and assesses the planning balance. This document should be read in conjunction with other validation documents and plans, outlined in the list below. The purpose of this statement is to support the proposal by setting out the context of the proposed development; outlining the policy framework relevant to the consideration of the planning application; and considering those matters relevant to land use planning and material to the consideration and determination of the subject planning application.

In support of this application are a suite of supporting documents, which comprises the following:

Validation Report	Author	Date
Full Package of Detailed Drawings	Total Planning Solutions	
Planning Design and Access Statement	Total Planning Solutions	
Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage	Total Planning Solutions	

This Statement will set out the context of the weighted planning balance by considering the Development Plan and any material considerations which are relevant to this determination.

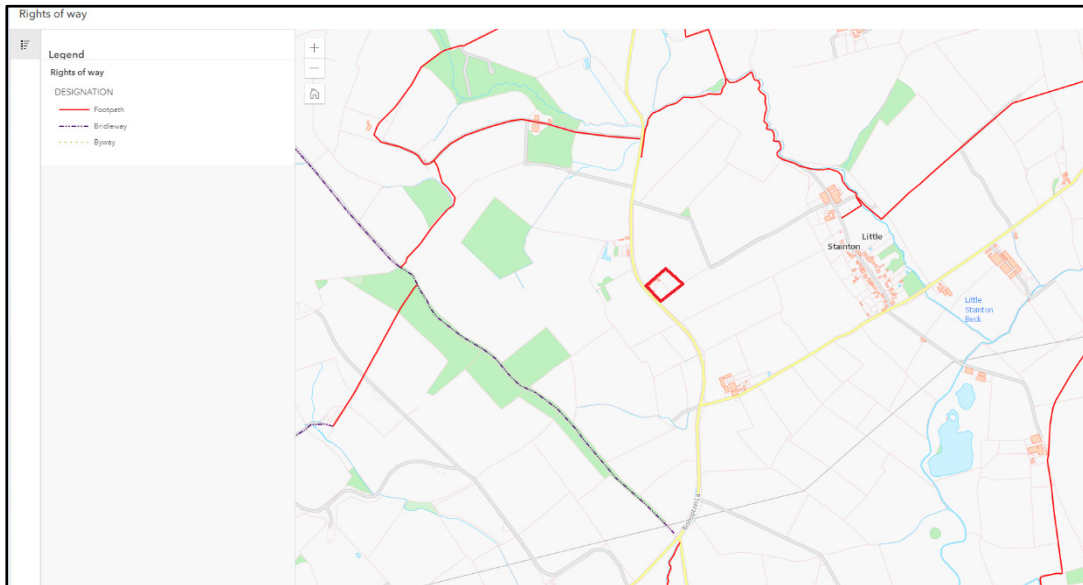
2. SITE DESCRIPTION AND SURROUNDING AREA

The proposed development site comprises a roughly rectangular parcel of grazing land which covers an area of approximately 0.55 acres/0.22Ha. The site is bound to west by Hazelfield Cottage, an existing dwelling, and open fields to the north, east and south.



The host dwelling has associated stables, barns and outbuildings within its curtilage before the access point into the proposed development site. The former grazing land is enclosed by existing laurel hedging/trees set in front of a timber post and rail fence, typical of this rural settings.

Total Planning Solutions (UK)
Planning Design and Access Statement (c)

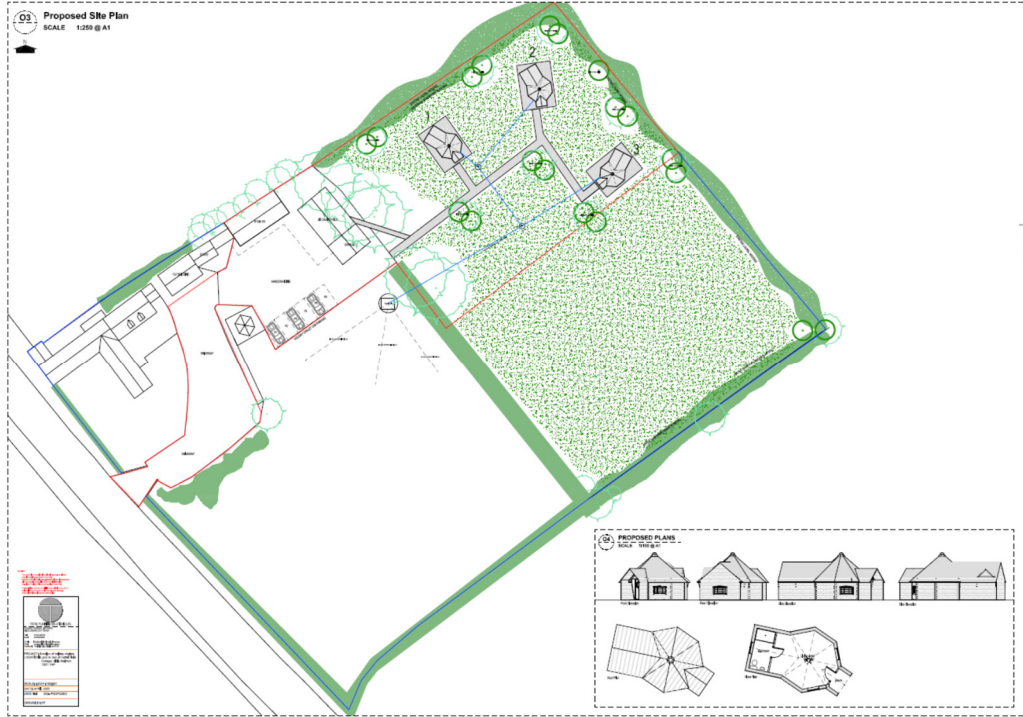


As illustrated by the Councils Public right of way map, there are links to the north and south of the site, along Elstob Lane, which connects to public paths and bridleways to illustrates its connectivity to the public network, creating a ramblers destination and for tourists to walk through the countryside.

The application site currently comprises of an open field and is located to the west of Little Stainton at approximate distance of 0.9 miles and approximately 3 miles from Darlington, making it an ideal rural getaway for local people of Darlington and surroundings authorities.

3. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The proposed development comprises of 3no. contemporary and bespoke holiday chalets on land to the rear of Hazelfield Cottage, Little Stainton, Stockton on Tees, TS21 1HP.



Access will be taken via the existing access from Elstob Lane into Hazelfield Cottage; upon where there is an existing large area of hardstanding in front of existing stables and barn which will accommodate up to 6no. parking spaces associated for the holiday proposal.

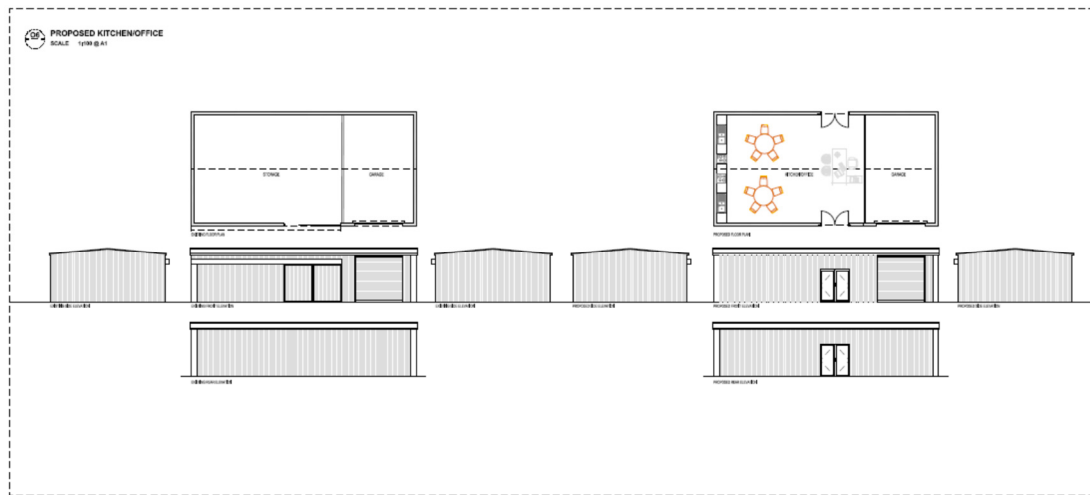
The host dwelling has its own car parking area which will have no impact upon the proposed parking spaces, in terms of access and manoeuvrability.

A gravelled walkway from the proposed parking area will lead into the holiday chalet site, which will be planted with shrubs.

The proposed development of 3no. holiday chalets will occupy the north east portion of the development site, directly behind the existing agricultural barn building.

The proposed chalets will consist of a temporary timber structure in a hexagon shape with a rectangular extension to the rear. Each chalet is built upon Type 1 MOT Limestone hardstanding base. Each proposed holiday chalet will include a lounge area, 1 bedroom and living space.

In conjunction with the overall business model, the existing outbuilding, which at present occupies a garage and storage area, will be part converted into a kitchen and seating area along with a reception/office space, related to the holiday business. The remainder of the building will retain the ancillary garage space for the applicants.



The proposal also includes the bolstering of existing hedgerow to the perimeter edges of the site with native hawthorn hedge (600no.) and planting of trees to soften and assimilate the development into the rural settings.

In addition, the applicant has established contact with local businesses in supplying local services such as directing holiday makers to the local public house Kings Arms, Glebe Road (north), a business in Darlington to supply pre-ordered afternoon teas and also the new donut shop about supplying items for guests along with using Aycliffe dairies for my milk, orange juice etc

Within the southern edge of the site, a Septic tank has been installed (see plans), which will soakaway into the adjoining open fields, which is in the ownership of the applicants.

The proposal will aim to employ approximately 3 local people requiring a receptionist, gardeners, cleaners and an onsite maintenance person to support the applicant's business model.

4. PLANNING HISTORY

In terms of relevant planning history there are two planning applications which relate to land west of the proposed development site which are considered to be of relevance to this planning application:

- App.ref 98/00474/FUL - Extension to existing single storey dwelling house | Hazelfield Cottage Little Stainton Darlington TS21 1HP – Approved September 1998
- App.ref 97/00834/FUL | Two storey extension to property - Hazelfield Cottage Little Stainton Darlington TS21 1HP – Refused March 1998

5. PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT – THE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, is relevant in determining planning applications and states that:

“If regard is to be had to the development plan for the purpose of any determination to be made under the planning Acts the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise”.

The above legal requirement is also reiterated within the National Planning Policy Framework (2021). This section therefore examines the policies contained within the “Development Plan” which comprises the following:

The Statutory Development Plan for this site comprises the policies contained within the Darlington Borough Local Plan (adopted February 2022).

Darlington Borough Local Plan (adopted February 2022)

The following policies contained within the Local Plan are considered to be of relevance to the proposed development:

- Policy SD 1 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development;
- Policy DC 2 – Flood Risk and Water Management;
- Policy DC 3 – Health and Wellbeing;
- Policy DC 4 – Safeguarding Amenity;
- Policy H3 – Development Limits;
- Policy E 4 – Economic Development in the Open Countryside;
- Policy ENV 3 – Local Landscape Character;
- Policy ENV 4 – Green and Blue Infrastructure;
- Policy ENV 8 – Assessing a Development’s Impact on Biodiversity.

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD’s)

Also, of relevance to the proposed development is the Design Of New Development Supplementary Planning Document (adopted 2011).

EXPERIENCE DARLINGTON - A VISITOR ECONOMY STRATEGY 2016 - 2026

6. NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK (2021), PLANNING POLICY GUIDANCE (PPG) AND OTHER MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

The NPPF was revised and published in July 2021 and provides the national planning guidance against which this application will be determined and is a material consideration in the determination of this application. The NPPF is the most significant of material considerations and significant weight is given to this policy document.

The NPPF provides direction for decision making in planning applications stating that the both plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development, meaning for decision makers (paragraph 11):

- *approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or*
- *where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:*
 - i. *the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or*
 - ii. *any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.*

The Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

The NPPF at paragraph 8 reaffirms the presumption in favour of sustainable development, reaffirming the three overarching objectives as follows (paragraph 8):

- a) ***an economic objective*** – *to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;*
- b) ***a social objective*** – *to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being; and*
- c) ***an environmental objective*** – *to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.*

These three objectives are considered to be interdependent and are to be pursued in mutually supportive ways to secure net gains across each of the objectives. We consider that the proposed development represents a sustainable development and accords with paragraph 8 of the NPPF in the following ways:

An Economic Objective

The economic benefits associated with the proposed holiday development would be attracting tourism to the borough (albeit small scale), which in turn would increase the cumulative local expenditure from similar tourism sites within the Darlington and surrounding areas supporting the retention of existing local services and facilities in the area. There would be additional economic benefits in the form of job creation during to these existing local services to cope with the new demand of tourists and visitors to the area.

A Social Objective

The proposed development will provide new tourist accommodation development which will help to meet the demand for staycation options within the UK which due to Covid-19 have seen a significant increase in demand.

An Environmental Objective

It should be noted that the proposed development is for holiday chalet/lodges which are temporary structures which can be removed at any point in the future, therefore, limiting any impact on the environment at this location.

The ecology appraisal recognises the presence of bats and the development will incorporate bat boxes within trees and cabins to preserve the habitat bio diversity.

It is also recognised that environmental sustainability is also applicable to the construction and design of the development itself.

Section 6. Building a strong, competitive economy

Paragraph 81 advises that Planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development. The approach taken should allow each area to build on its strengths, counter any weaknesses and address the challenges of the future.

Under 'Supporting a prosperous rural economy' sub paragraph of the NPPF, Paragraph 84 states planning policies and decisions should enable:

- a) *the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings;*
- b) *the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses;*
- c) *sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments which respect the character of the countryside; and*
- d) *the retention and development of accessible local services and community facilities, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship.*

Paragraph 85 also advises that planning policies and decisions should recognise that sites to meet local business and community needs in rural areas may have to be found adjacent to or beyond existing settlements, and in locations that are not well served by public transport. In these circumstances it will be important to ensure that development is sensitive to its surroundings, does not have an unacceptable impact on local roads and exploits any opportunities to make a location more sustainable (for example by improving the scope for access on foot, by cycling or by public transport). The use of previously developed land, and sites that are physically well-related to existing settlements, should be encouraged where suitable opportunities exist.

Section 9. Promoting sustainable transport

Paragraph 104 states that Transport issues should be considered from the earliest stages of plan-making and development proposals, so that:

- a) the potential impacts of development on transport networks can be addressed;*
- b) opportunities from existing or proposed transport infrastructure, and changing transport technology and usage, are realised – for example in relation to the scale, location or density of development that can be accommodated;*
- c) opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport use are identified and pursued;*
- d) the environmental impacts of traffic and transport infrastructure can be identified, assessed and taken into account – including appropriate opportunities for avoiding and mitigating any adverse effects, and for net environmental gains; and*
- e) patterns of movement, streets, parking and other transport considerations are integral to the design of schemes, and contribute to making high quality places.*

Paragraph 107 of the NPPF states that If setting local parking standards for residential and non-residential development, policies should take into account:

- a) the accessibility of the development;*
- b) the type, mix and use of development;*
- c) the availability of and opportunities for public transport;*
- d) local car ownership levels; and*
- e) the need to ensure an adequate provision of spaces for charging plug-in and other ultra-low emission vehicles.*

Paragraph 111 states that Development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.

Section 11. Making effective use of land

Paragraph 120 states that Planning policies and decisions should:

- a) encourage multiple benefits from both urban and rural land, including through mixed use schemes and taking opportunities to achieve net environmental gains – such as developments that would enable new habitat creation or improve public access to the countryside;*

b) recognise that some undeveloped land can perform many functions, such as for wildlife, recreation, flood risk mitigation, cooling/shading, carbon storage or food production;

c) give substantial weight to the value of using suitable brownfield land within settlements for homes and other identified needs, and support appropriate opportunities to remediate despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated or unstable land;

d) promote and support the development of under-utilised land and buildings, especially if this would help to meet identified needs for housing where land supply is constrained and available sites could be used more effectively (for example converting space above shops, and building on or above service yards, car parks, lock-ups and railway infrastructure)⁴⁸; and

e) support opportunities to use the airspace above existing residential and commercial premises for new homes. In particular, they should allow upward extensions where the development would be consistent with the prevailing height and form of neighbouring properties and the overall street scene, is well-designed (including complying with any local design policies and standards), and can maintain safe access and egress for occupiers.

Section 12. Achieving well-designed places

Paragraph 126 states that the creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities. Being clear about design expectations, and how these will be tested, is essential for achieving this. So too is effective engagement between applicants, communities, local planning authorities and other interests throughout the process.

Paragraph 130 states that Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:

a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;

b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;

c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);

d) establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;

e) optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and

f) create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users⁴⁹; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.

Section 14. Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change

Under sub section Planning and flood risk

Paragraph 159 states that Inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding should be avoided by directing development away from areas at highest risk (whether existing or future). Where development is necessary in such areas, the development should be made safe for its lifetime without increasing flood risk elsewhere.

Paragraph 167. When determining any planning applications, local planning authorities should ensure that flood risk is not increased elsewhere. Where appropriate, applications should be supported by a site-specific flood-risk assessment⁵⁵. Development should only be allowed in areas at risk of flooding where, in the light of this assessment (and the sequential and exception tests, as applicable) it can be demonstrated that:

- a) within the site, the most vulnerable development is located in areas of lowest flood risk, unless there are overriding reasons to prefer a different location;
- b) the development is appropriately flood resistant and resilient such that, in the event of a flood, it could be quickly brought back into use without significant refurbishment;
- c) it incorporates sustainable drainage systems, unless there is clear evidence that this would be inappropriate;
- d) any residual risk can be safely managed; and
- e) safe access and escape routes are included where appropriate, as part of an agreed emergency plan.

Paragraph 169. Major developments should incorporate sustainable drainage systems unless there is clear evidence that this would be inappropriate. The systems used should:

- a) take account of advice from the lead local flood authority;
- b) have appropriate proposed minimum operational standards;
- c) have maintenance arrangements in place to ensure an acceptable standard of operation for the lifetime of the development; and
- d) where possible, provide multifunctional benefits.

Section 15. Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

Paragraph 174 states that Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

- a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);
- b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland;
- c) maintaining the character of the undeveloped coast, while improving public access to it where appropriate;
- d) minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures;
- e) preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air and water quality, taking into account relevant information such as river basin management plans; and

f) remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate

7. DESIGN AND ACCESS

The purpose of this section of the Statement is to assess the proposal in respect of the use and amount of development; its scale, layout and appearance; landscaping; and accessibility. In doing so, it comprises the Design and Access Statement required for major development proposals under the Development Management Procedure Order 2015.

The Development

The proposed development is for the creation of permanent holiday accommodation development in the form of holiday chalets/lodges with associated access arrangements set within a 0.2ha site. The site comprises grazing land with semi- mature landscaping to its perimeters with clearing (See Drawings submitted with the application). The development will introduce a holiday accommodation in the area to boost local tourism, local economic benefits.

Use and Amount

The application proposal is for a change of use for the siting of 3no. dedicated holiday cabin pitches on the site

The amount of accommodation is at far less density for the extent of the site. This reflects the desire of the applicant to provide a degree of exclusivity to the site and equally to devise a scheme that is in keeping with the wider countryside setting. The proposed scheme, therefore, seeks an appropriate amount of development and recognises the landscape setting and highway network that serves the site.

Scale

The proposed accommodation will consist of typical single storey cabin single unit, They will be constructed in timber and the proposed units will not appear unduly large or have an overly dominant upon the local area (individually or cumulatively, or give the impression of are deemed suitable for the context, where they would not comprise an incongruous development.

Layout

The proposed accommodation would be laid out in accordance with the layout plan submitted with the application, with the existing access used to serve the development. The proposed tree/shrub planting and outwith the development site, would be supplemented and retained. The buildings are intended for holiday use and are as a result of a single storey and holiday accommodation only in nature. The layout provides for the orientation to each unit within the application site land along with a proposed landscaping scheme which can be the subject of a suitable worded planning condition will form a cohesive development and high quality layout. It is therefore considered that the development is of an appropriate scale for the site.

Appearance

The appearance of the cabins comprise one bedroom units construction in timber typical of the current design of such buildings (see drawings submitted with the application).

The timber materials will minimise visual impact with the proposed layout including landscaping (subject to a reasonably worded planning condition) to break up any perceived monotony of layout which result in the appearance of the development being wholly appropriate.

Accessibility

Access to the site will be by means of an existing access, where adequate visibility splays will be accommodated for the associated use. The adjacent highway connects to the wider highway network beyond to Darlington, Durham, Stockton on Tees and other Districts.

In terms of capacity, it is considered that the surrounding highway network is capable of accommodating further vehicular movements in the light of its identified characteristics and the likely nature of traffic generated by the scheme. The predominant number of vehicles accessing the site are main are private cars and there is ample on-site parking.

The site is served direct by public transport and cycle links. A public footpath link is also available for safe access to the south connecting with PROW's as illustrated in the site and surrounding section above.

Heritage

The site does not lie within a protected landscape designation nor are any neighbouring buildings listed or the site sit in a context of possible archaeological interest – equally the nature of the development would not be invasive in this respect in any event. As a consequence, there would be no impact upon any perceived 'heritage asset'.

Design and Access Conclusions

The submitted scheme has evolved from an initial assessment of the wider site context which considers the cumulative impact of the development on the site to an appropriate level of detail. The design and access aspects are considered to not raise any fundamental issues. The proposed accommodation (scale, nature and layout etc) is entirely suitable within the prevailing context and will give rise to a positive addition to the local economy. It is considered that there will limited impact on the local highway network and other users.

8. KEY ISSUES AND PLANNING BALANCE

Based upon the assessment of planning policy and the supporting documentation this section will consider the key issues identified by this and assess the planning balance. The following issues are considered:

- Principle of Development;
- Scale, Layout and Design;
- Highways and Access;
- Landscape; and
- Drainage Detail.

Principle of Development

Paragraph 83 of the NPPF states that it supports the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas and supports new tourism developments which respect the character of the countryside.

Policy H3 of the Local Plan states that development within the limits identified on the Policies Map will be acceptable in principle subject to compliance with other relevant national and local policies.

Whilst we acknowledge that the proposed development site is located outside defined development limits we consider that this type of tourist accommodation would be typically found in rural locations and would therefore be appropriate in this setting.

Policy E 4 states that proposals for the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of businesses located in the open countryside including the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses will be supported where:

- a. They enable the conversion or re-use of existing building(s), providing the buildings are:
 - i. sympathetic to their surroundings or can be made so, without significant demolition or rebuilding, and;
 - ii. remain in keeping with their surroundings and make use of retained features that contribute to local distinctiveness and historic interest if appropriate;
 - iii. Capable and large enough for conversion without significant alteration and the need for additional buildings. Substantial extensions will not be permitted and any extensions that are required must be subordinate in scale and proportion to the original building.
- b. New buildings are well designed and wherever possible are located physically well-related to existing rural settlements and/or existing buildings and building groups. The character, scale and design of all proposed new buildings must be appropriate to its open countryside surroundings.

Tourist accommodation in itself is a widely accepted form of development which offers a contribution to the rural economy. The proposal would make provision for tourist accommodation and as visitors using the proposed accommodation would be likely to visit other places to eat, drink and utilise leisure and recreation facilities, the proposal would make a positive contribution to the local economy. The application is supported by the Councils '**A Visitor Economy Strategy 2016 – 2026**', which within the executive summary states the following key extract in relation to supporting tourism in the borough;

Over recent years important building blocks have been put in place to grow Darlington through the development of core economic, town centre and place making strategies including the Ingenious Darlington brand, Invest in Darlington promotions and Creative Darlington partnership.

Experience Darlington is a visitor economy strategy focused on improving Darlington's tourism offer. It is not a new initiative but rather an overarching strategy which ties together the boroughs ambitions and plans linked to Arts, Culture and Heritage, Town Centre, Place Making and Regeneration and Connectivity. The Experience Darlington strategy outlines the huge potential the visitor economy has for the borough and identifies priority actions to develop Darlington's tourism offer to encourage visitors to the town thus supporting our local economy.

The strategy is made up of three priorities which will be central to developing our visitor offer.

- A railway town - building on our reputation as the birthplace of the modern railway, enhancing and promoting our historic assets
- A theatre town - where arts and culture happen
- A town to visit - incorporating town centre, events, connectivity and how we promote our offer to visitors

In 2025 Darlington has ambitions to be a globally significant visitor attraction which celebrates the birthplace of the modern railway in 1825. As the starting point of this journey it is hoped Darlington can attract funders, investors and visitors to build an experience that will reveal and celebrate the importance of the Stockton and Darlington railway to a local and global audience. While also feeding into the Tees Valley Combined Authority's plans to bid for the 2025 City of Culture which will bring increased visitors and make a huge economic contribution to the local area.

It is broadly recognised that additional overnight tourist accommodation would contribute to the wider local economy as a base for visiting both local and regional services, facilities and attractions, such as Historical and Heritage sites, Museums and Galleries, Parks and Gardens, Outdoor Pursuits, Arts and Culture and Landmarks and Viewpoints, which this location provides.

The proposed development comprises the erection of three new holiday chalets which would be of a temporary structure adjacent to an existing dwelling house (Hazelfield Cottage), therefore, the proposed development will be physically well related to existing buildings/building groups and would not appear standalone within this context. Moreover, the proposed development is relatively small scale comprising only three tourist chalets which are of a material/design and scale which is appropriate to the open countryside surroundings, in accordance with policy E 4.

Furthermore, policy E 4 states that if the proposals are for tourist accommodation, then, in addition:

i. New static and touring caravan sites, camping sites and chalet type accommodation or extensions to existing sites of this nature should be sited and screened through topography and/or vegetation in order to minimise visual impact. The materials and colours of the chalets or static caravans and associated site services and infrastructure should blend with its surroundings. All sites should have good access to the road and

footpath network and will be subject to conditions to prevent the permanent occupancy of the site.

ii. Other tourist accommodation should be located within development limits unless it can be demonstrated that the need is not met by existing facilities in Service Villages and villages with settlement limits.

In accordance with policy E 4 the proposed holiday chalets are sited as such to ensure that they will have minimal impact on existing adjacent development and the proposed development will include additional screening/landscaping to minimise the overall visual impact of the development, ensuring that it appears discreet within the landscape and assimilates well within the existing built form. Moreover, the proposed chalets will use timber materials to ensure that they will blend with the surroundings and have been designed to ensure good access to the road and footpath network.

It should be noted that the applicant would be willing to accept a condition to any future planning permission, wording of such to be agreed, which will prevent any of the three holiday chalets from being permanently occupied.

Economic Benefit

The development will provide a range of financial support to local services, which has been proven with other similar developments within the authority and UK, in that the financial income from the holiday lodges, is a strong case to support economic generation significant numbers of jobs on and around the site and in turn to the local visitor economy supply chain.

The supporting evidence by way of research in tourism reports confirms that the developments make a positive and significant contribution to the local economy, which is a core aim of local and national planning policies.

A number of local businesses will benefit from the scheme, most notably the various local public houses, restaurants and retail outlets located within the vicinity of the site such as Darlington, Bishopton, Sadberge and other serviced villages.

This represents a need to diversify the economy, with tourism/visitor economy being an area of potential growth. It is anticipated that a minimum of 3 full time working staff will be required employed to oversee the management/ maintenance of the site on a day-to-day basis.

It is clear that the current proposals will result in a significant economic benefit for the rural community, as encouraged and actively sought under the policies of the Development Plan and the Framework and in comparison, to the sole agricultural use of the site.

To conclude, we consider that the proposed three holiday chalets would be appropriate in this rural setting as this is befitting of tourist accommodation business model and will sit adjacent to existing built development and would, therefore, not appear standalone. In addition, the proposed development would assist in developing and diversifying the visitor economy in this locality by establishing a small-scale development that is sympathetic to the location, in accordance with local and national planning policy.

Scale, Layout and Design

Para 85 of the NPPF sets out that planning policies and decisions should recognise that sites to meet local business and community needs in rural areas may have to be found adjacent to or beyond existing settlements, and in locations that are not well served by public transport. In these circumstances it will be important to ensure that development is sensitive to its surroundings, does not have an unacceptable impact on local roads and exploits any opportunities to make a location more sustainable.

Chapter 12 of the NPPF is concerned with 'Achieving well-designed places', stating in paragraph 124 that the '*Creation of high quality buildings and places is fundamental to what planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development creates better places in which to live and work and helps to make development acceptable to communities*'

Policy DC 4 of the Local Plan states that new development should be sited, designed and laid out to protect the amenity of existing users of neighbouring land and buildings and the amenity of the intended users of the new development. New development will be supported where it is suitably located and is acceptable in terms of:

Form of built development

- a. Privacy and overlooking;
- b. Access to sunlight and daylight;
- c. Visual dominance and overbearing effects of a development;
- d. The relationship of proposed and existing habitable rooms, windows and outdoor living spaces . Guidance on separation distances between residential developments is provided in the adopted Design of New Development SPD.

Use of land and buildings, including traffic movements and hours of operation

- e. Noise and disturbance;
- f. Artificial lighting;
- g. Vibration;
- h. Emissions from odour, fumes, smoke, dust, etc; and
- i. Commercial waste.

The proposed development is for 3 holiday lodges which will all be temporary in nature and of a small scale to ensure that they are in keeping with the local character and rural setting in which the development sites to ensure the highest standard of design which respects and enhances the local context and special qualities of this area, in accordance with national and local policy.

In addition, the proposed development has incorporated the use of existing and proposed trees and hedges to ensure that the development is well screened to prevent any issues of overbearing or loss of privacy to the existing residential property to the west of the application site. It is also considered that the use of planting will ensure the site still appears rural in nature and will provide an attractive place for people to stay which is in keeping with the local character and setting.

To conclude, we consider that the proposed development has been designed to the highest standard to ensure that there will be no detrimental impact on the rural character at this location and that the development will assimilate well within the open countryside location to ensure it respects and enhances this area, in accordance with adopted local, emerging and national planning policy. Please see submitted plans for further detail of the proposed layout.

Highway and Access consideration

The proposed holiday chalets will be accessed via an existing access way utilised by the existing property at the site and a walkway will then service each chalet. It is considered that given the small-scale nature this access will be appropriate for the expected vehicles entering/leaving the site. In regard to parking, 6 car parking spaces have been proposed located adjacent to the existing barn at the site. See the proposed site plan for further details regarding access and parking.

The proposed development provides access by a number of transport modes which accords with paragraph 104 of the new NPPF. The report has shown that a safe means of access to and from the site for all road users is achievable and the traffic impact is negligible (paragraph 111 refers). The highway proposals are considered to be safe and do not result in any severe residual cumulative highway impacts, and therefore comply with paragraph 112. Access for pedestrians and cyclists and all motor vehicles is shown to be safely achieved (paragraph 112) and adequate parking is provided on site,

In conclusion, we consider that by virtue of the small-scale nature of the proposed development that it would not have - any significant negative impact and there are therefore no highway capacity or safety reasons why this development should not be granted planning approval.

Landscape

Policy ENV 4 of the Local Plan states that green and blue infrastructure will be protected, and where appropriate, improved and extended to provide a quality, safe and accessible network of well connected, multi-functional open spaces for recreation and play and to enhance visual amenity, biodiversity, landscape and productivity. This will be achieved by:

g. Refusing planning permission for development that would result in the loss of existing green space(42) unless it can be demonstrated that the loss of the space would not cause significant harm to the character and appearance of the area or to local biodiversity (in line with Policy ENV 7), and one or more of the following criteria are met:

- i. there is an identified surplus of that type of green space in the area and that its loss would not adversely affect the recreational needs of residents;
- ii. satisfactory replacement green space is provided in a suitable location, accessible to current users and at least equivalent in terms of size, usefulness, attractiveness and quality;
- iii. the proposal involves the development of an alternative sports and recreational provision, the benefits of which clearly outweigh the loss of the current or former use.

Whilst we note that the proposed development would result in a small loss of grazing land we consider that the wider benefits of the development in terms of provision of new tourist accommodation and diversification of rural economy outweigh this loss. Additionally, the proposed development is of a small-scale nature comprising of temporary structures that have been designed to assimilate well within the site and will include additional landscaping/planting to ensure that the overall green feel nature of the site is retained, in accordance with policy ENV 4.

It is be noted that 600no. additional hawthorn plants to bolster up the hedgerow to the south east corner of the site.

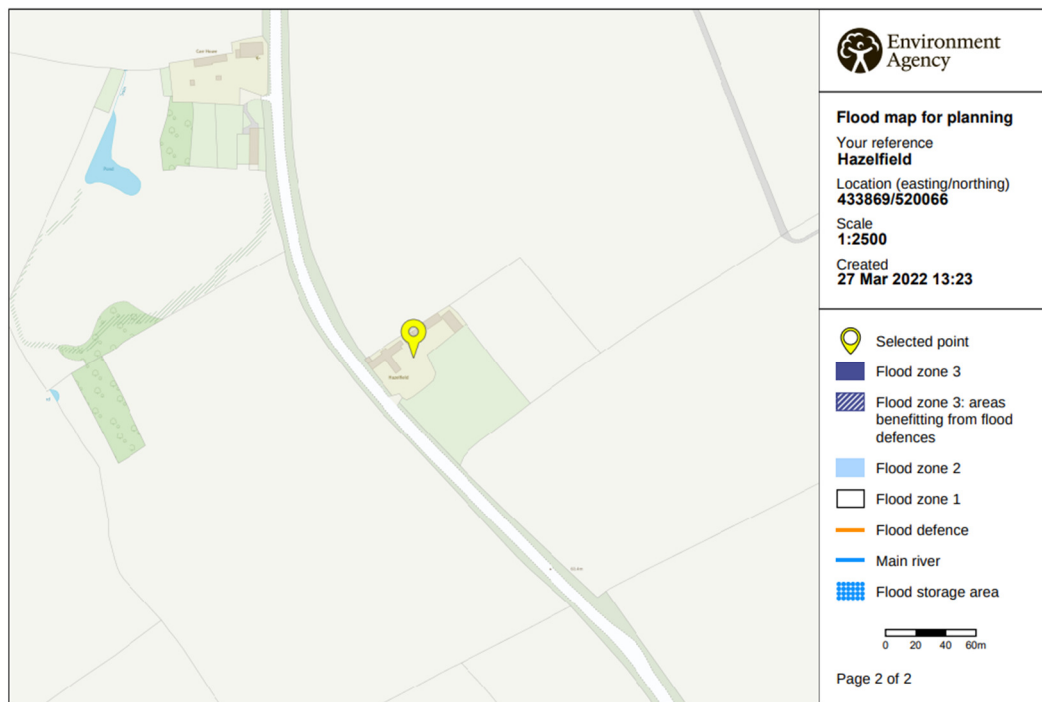
Any perception of detrimental impact on landscape character or visual amenity has and will be successfully mitigated within the site, subject to a reasonably worded planning condition.

Overall, when the site is observed in its entirety and is partially screened by existing farm buildings associated to the host site of Hazelfield Cottage, it is considered that the proposed development will not result in significant detrimental harm to the landscape character or the visual amenity of receptors in the surrounding area and that the proposals are not contrary to NPPF or the Darlington Council Local Plan policies.

Flood Risk and Drainage

Paragraph 159 of the NPPF states that inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding should be avoided by directing development away from areas at highest risk

The proposed site is largely located in flood zone 1 and therefore at low risk from flooding and negates the requirement for a full Flood Risk assessment due to the being under 1ha.



Drainage Strategy (Surface Water)

The surface water will be made up of multiple components, this includes the following:

- Permeable limestone hardstanding and gravelled paving will be used on each plots with a pervious finish to maximise the use of infiltration techniques for control and treatment of runoff. For the use of the hydraulic mode, permeable paving will be modelled at 100% PIMP rate to demonstrate 100% run-off. It is

anticipated that the ground beneath is impervious, the subgrade will be sloped towards a perforated collector pipe to allow for a positive connection

- Water Butts will be used to the rear of the chalets to reduce flows into the system (providing they are regularly used), rain water butts promote good non-potable water management and will reduce the need to use mains water for garden irrigation, washing of chalets, etc. Traditional overflow gullies will be installed and positively connected onto the system in the event of overflowing.
- The associated field was used as a soakaway for the former use as grazing land

Foul Water Drainage

It is proposed that the foul water will discharge into Septic tank Septic tank (<https://marshindustries.co.uk/products/euro-septic-tank/>) for basic treatment to off-mains wastewater with a capacity of up to 4500 litres which is more than sufficient for flows and loads for 3no. holiday chalets

This is the most economical means of treating wastewater from small developments such as this proposal. The septic tank holds sewage and allows solids to settle into sludge at the bottom of the tank. It is naturally broken down by a process known as anaerobic digestion, which provides settlement and some biological treatment. The effluent is not fully treated and must receive additional treatment before discharge to the water environment – the most common method being to spread the effluent to land via an underground drainage field, which the septic is sited within to meet this requisite.

Overall, it can be concluded that due to the chalets being lifted above surrounding ground level with permeable limestone bases along permeable paving around, the risk from surface water is negligible, it is anticipated that any unidentified surface water will be picked up by the proposed drainage or channelled around the proposed units. There will, therefore, be no risk of flooding as a result of the proposed development in local and national planning policy.

Waste and Refuse collection

Given the scale of development proposed, the applicants will provide a euro bin 1100litre capacity to be arranged to be collected from a private waste refuse company to address this waste management issue. This can be controlled by way of planning condition to ensure conformity.

Ecology

Section 15 of the NPPF 'Conserving and enhancing the natural environment' under Paragraphs 179 to 182 of the NPPF are concerned with the conservation and protection of the natural environment. In particular, paragraph 180 of the NPPF relates to ecology and biodiversity considerations when determining planning applications. In addition, Policy ENV 8 – Assessing a Development's Impact on Biodiversity of the adopted local plan states that:

Development proposals will be required to provide net gains in biodiversity (prevailing in national policy) and demonstrate achievement of this using the Defra Biodiversity Metric.

'OS Ecology' ecological consultants were appointed to undertake a preliminary ecological assessment of the site and this report is included with the application.

The assessment has recommended the following Mitigation Strategy to be carried out

- External lighting that may affect the site's suitability for bats will be avoided, and lighting should be avoided close to the hedgerow and line of trees. If required this will be limited to low level, avoiding use of high intensity security lighting.
- The hawthorn hedgerow should be planted up with native woody species to improve its value.
- The grassland should be seeded with a species rich seed mix of local provenance, avoiding the use of a seed mix dominated by perennial rye grass to achieve g3c – other neutral grassland.
- The installation of two bat and bird boxes on trees or buildings within the site land holding as a biodiversity enhancement.

In view of the above, the applicant will agree to mitigation measures to be controlled by reasonably worded condition without having any significant ecological impact.

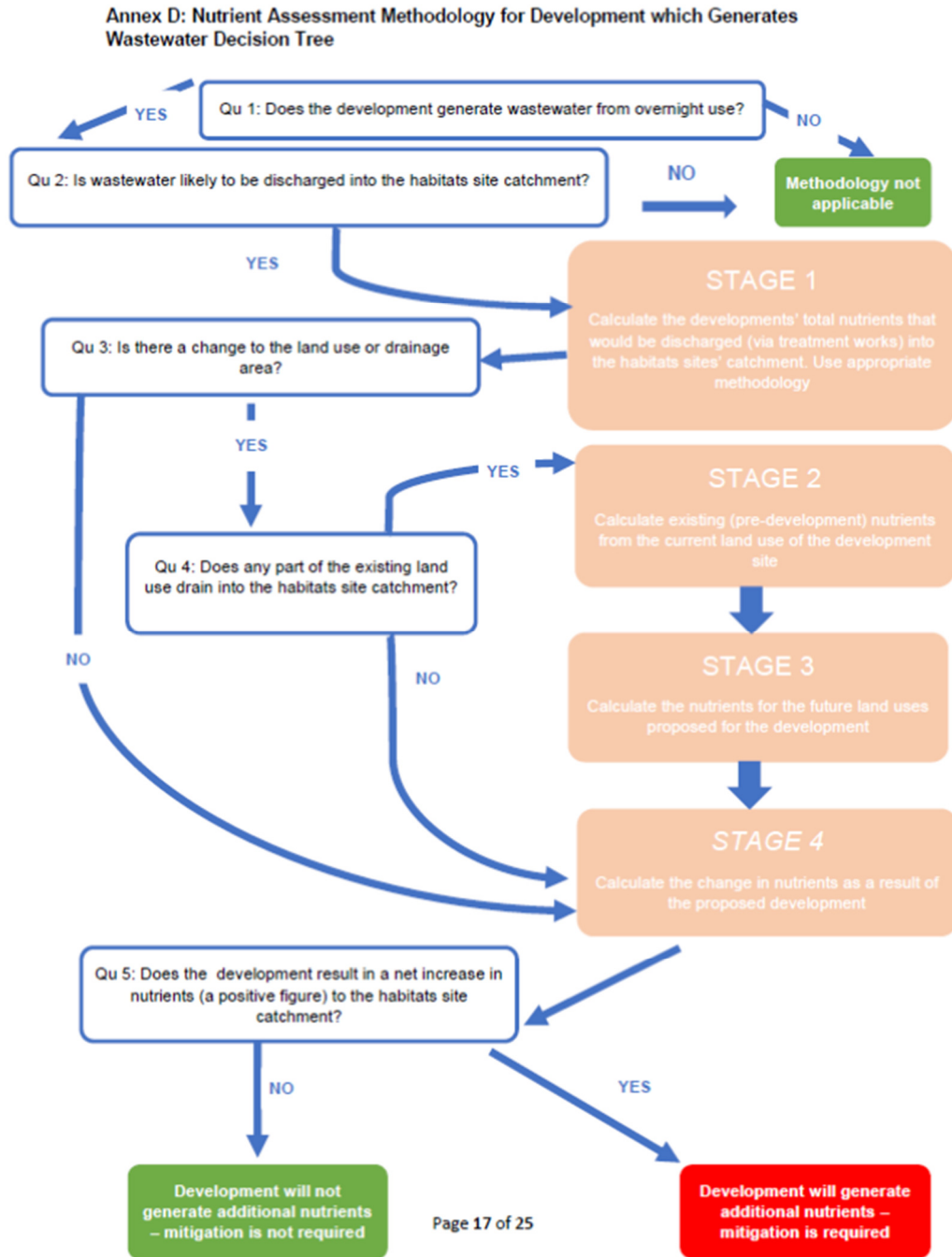
With regards to the recent nutrient neutrality matter, Consultation should be undertaken with the LPA regarding this.

It is understood that the Council as the Competent Authority (under the Habitats Regulations) must carefully consider the nutrient impacts of any development proposals on the Special Protection Area of the River Tees as a designated habitat site and whether mitigation, including through nutrient neutrality is required.

Nutrient neutrality is an approach which enables decision makers to assess and quantify mitigation requirements of new developments. It allows new developments to be approved with no net increase in nutrient loading within the catchments of the affected habitats site.

Natural England considers that nutrient neutrality is an acceptable means of counterbalancing nutrient impacts from development to demonstrate no adverse effect on the integrity of habitats sites and we have provided guidance and tools to enable

you to do this under Annex D: Nutrient Assessment Methodology for Development which Generates Wastewater Decision Tree



Natural England have confirmed that all types of overnight accommodation including new homes, student accommodation, care homes, tourism attractions and tourist accommodation and permitted development (which gives rise to new overnight accommodation) under the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 require a Nutrient Neutrality Methodology.

This application proposes a Tourism attractions and tourism accommodation which is included in the methodology as these land uses attract people into the catchment and generate additional wastewater and consequential nutrient loading on the designated sites. This includes self-service and serviced tourist accommodation such as hotels, guest houses, bed and breakfasts, self-catering holiday chalets and static caravan sites. Other types of proposal should be considered on their individual merits, for example conference facilities that generate overnight stays.

Given the premature nature of this habitat assessment requirement put onto the Council, with no guidance to assess each application exemption. We seek the Council to consider the applicants individual merit factor such as the building beings in situ prior to the nitrate issue was raised and they being connected to an existing septic tank drainage system.

The applicant seeks full clarification on what is required during the application process, prior to instructing a competent ecologist to carry out any necessary habitat assessment, as would be prudent for the applicant to pay additional costs, when it is known local ecologists do not have any guidance on mitigating Natural England's requisite.

This matter could be controlled by way of condition prior to use, which would be a reasonable request given the present lawful use being a residential unit at present.

9. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This planning application seeks planning permission for proposed siting of 3no. holiday chalets with associated access, parking and landscaping on land to the rear of Hazelfield Cottage, Little Stainton, Stockton on Tees, TS21 1HP

With regard to the principle of development we consider the proposed development for tourist accommodation would be appropriate within the rural setting given the small-scale nature of the development and would provide a contribution to the tourism sector within Darlington according specifically with policies E 4 and national planning policy.

This supporting planning statement has demonstrated that the proposal accords with the Development Plan and the NPPF and the applicant seeks the Local Planning Authority will look favourably upon this planning application and grant planning permission subject to appropriate conditions. Notwithstanding, we remain willing to discuss any aspect of the proposed development with the Local Planning Authority, should this be necessary and/or desirable.