

Land NE of Chathill Station, Chathill

Change of use of railway land to storage facility to be used for containers, boat and caravan storage

Statement to be read at Planning Committee meeting in absence of public representations.

The area is very special to us as a family and we value the surroundings greatly, it is our intention to make this business as unobtrusive as possible. We would hate to be seen as the people who created an eyesore or a let down to the area.

The site was recognised as a brownfield site by Northumberland County Council in the 2013 application for 6 houses and has sat as derelict railway siding since.

Our intention is to bring the site back from disrepair into a benefit to local business' that required space for storage. This proposal is in alignment with NPPF section 11: Making Effective Use of Land.

The site is outside the AONB. We have considered the responses from Mr Ian McCaffery the building conservation officer with regards to the listed building and amongst other measures, we have moved the front boundary fence back at least 6 metres from its original position. This will put the fence approximately 20 meters from the roadside and retain the view of the heritage assets associated with Chathill Station. We would also ensure that any container placed in plot 1 will be located at the furthest Boundary fence away from the station. This will further ensure that the view of the station will be unobstructed to people driving towards the station. Although we do understand that Mr McCaffery must categorise the application as 'some risk to the listed buildings', we feel that the potential benefits to local area far outweigh the low risk assessment he has given it.

Paragraph 83 and 196 of the NPPF supports this stance and is a view that is also supported by the Planning Case officer who has recommended the proposal for approval.

The Parish council have raised several points that I would like to address:

- The view of the station being blocked which we have already addressed above.
- Throughout the application we have engaged with Nadine Rolls from the councils' Ecology Department and have agreed a to put in a hedge using 5 different native species. This will screen the site from the highway and enhance the biodiversity of the site and thus has gained support from NCC ecology department.
- Concerns over road management have been raised. The speed limit past the site and railway crossing is set at 30mph which is virtually impossible to reach, due to the unevenness of the crossing. I have travelled to Beadnell via this route for over forty five years and have never known drivers risk travelling in excess of 30mph. The crossing according to the Parish Council operates at least 6 times an hour, which in itself must slow traffic. The recent accident was caused by a someone driving too fast around the corner and losing control, nothing to do with the actual traffic flow.

The consultations with the highways department have resulted in the requirement of a new access to the site which will formalise entry to and from the site and ensure that visibility is maintained for all users and passing vehicles. Highways are in support of the application.

- The locality of the business has been brought into question. The parish council state that *"This would not be a local business, it is of benefit to those who live elsewhere"*.

This business will be a local business operating in their Parish and it will be supporting a wide range of local businesses in the area where there is a desperate need for storage capability due to the ever-expanding residential developments in the area and no infrastructure to support this. Please regard the number of letters of support from small local businesses desperate for such a service in the area. Many of whom upon speaking to them had the same quandary of there being no available storage in Seahouses, and the next nearest being Belford all at which comes at a price for small local companies in travel time and fuel. This change of use application will not be anything but a huge benefit to the area providing local businesses and local private users access to something that there is a clear and undeniable need for. As such this presumably also falls into Objective 2 of Ellingham Neighbourhood plan *"Our objective in relation to the local economy is to support businesses, increase the number of permanent jobs in the Parish and improve opportunities of home working."*

Because of the objections by the Parish council this has meant the decision has been taken out of the hands of the Planning officers. This has caused great financial strain on our new business in lost revenue and loan payments and in a time when things are hard enough for small businesses none the less.

We hope to be able to gain approval today to finally begin with our new business, as will others.

Many thanks

Mike Worthington Applicant