

20/03155/FUL: 6no. tourism units with associated access, parking and amenity space.

Land North of North Farm Embleton, Alnwick, Northumberland NE66 3DX

Embleton Parish Council (EPC) wishes to reiterate its objection to the above application as it conflicts with the relevant policies in our Neighbourhood Plan (NP), which successfully passed its examination in April last year. The public consultation of the plan at the Regulation 14 stage demonstrated overwhelming support for the plan amongst our Parishioners and it is highly likely that the plan would have been 'made' by now if it had not been for the current pandemic. Nevertheless, it still carries significant weight when determining planning applications.

North Farm is approximately 400 metres north of the village and has been the subject of successive developments and now consists of the farmhouse, 13 holiday lets with a capacity for 65 guests, a swimming pool and a recreational area. There is a further holiday let just to the north of the site, which has the capacity for 4 guests, and this would become part of the main development if this application were permitted. There is also current planning permission for the siting of 9 static caravans which has the capacity to increase the number of guests to 109.

The proposed development is well outside the settlement boundary stipulated within Policy 1 of our NP. This says that land outside settlement boundary will be treated as countryside whose intrinsic character and beauty must be recognised in all decision making on development proposals. Whilst this policy allows for certain types of development outside the settlement boundary, to be considered these must comply with the limitations created by the rest of the policy and all other relevant policies within the plan.

Policy ECN 15 in the Northumberland Local Plan presumes against the development of new buildings for holiday accommodation within the countryside.

The site of the proposed development lies within both the AONB and the Northumberland Heritage Coast and therefore the section of Policy 1 which covers development in these two sensitive areas is applicable. This states that any major development within these areas will only be supported where it is compatible with its special character and can be demonstrated to be in the public interest. We note that the AONB have also objected to the proposed development citing the negative impact on the special qualities of the landscape, historic environment and the tranquillity of the AONB.

This application will increase the current road frontage of the holiday complex by more than 40% and therefore represents development creep, which our NP is intended to prevent. It will increase the number dwellings on the site by over 40% and the capacity of guests by over 20% and together with the existing complex and caravans would create a development that is larger than some villages having, as it would, to over 130 'residents'. This is contrary to Policy 4(a) of our NP which says any new development must demonstrate how local context and character are respected in terms of scale, massing and density. Policy 4(e) also says that measures have been incorporated that limit the impact of light pollution on intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation. The North Farm complex is already a major source of light pollution in the area and there is nothing in the planning statement to indicate how this

will be minimised. EPC is currently working with the AONB to obtain dark skies status for the Embleton Wildlife Site (the former quarry transferred from NCC to EPC in 2017).

The proposed development also conflicts with Policy 8 of our NP which states that all new dwellings will only be supported where each dwelling is occupied only as a Principal Residence. A survey by the AONB in early 2020 identified that 38% of residential property in Embleton was either a holiday or second home. This policy is designed to ensure that any new development does not cause this number to increase further.

What was formerly a modest sized traditional farm steading is threatening to become an overlarge holiday village complex, which is wholly inappropriate for this sensitive and visible site.

However, if the application is approved, we would ask that the offer by the applicant to withdraw the existing planning permission for 9 static caravans (19/00510/COU) is made a condition of the granting of this application. We would also ask that conditions are applied to minimise the impact of light pollution.