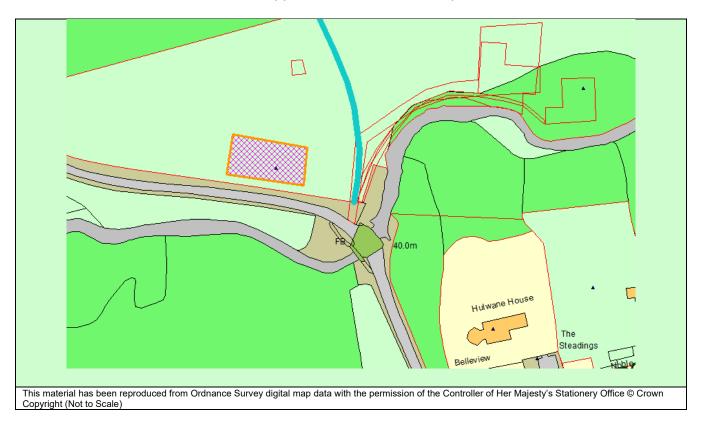


Castle Morpeth Local Area Council Meeting 8th November 2021

Application No:	20/03851/COU				
Proposal:	Change of use from field to construct a riding arena 22 metres x 40				
	metres for	metres for private use			
Site Address	Land North West of Hulwane, U6003 Ulgham to Ulgham Park Junction,				
	Ulgham, Northumberland				
Applicant:	Mrs Linda Rudd		Agent:	None	
	Warren Cottage, Longh				
	Morpeth, NE61 3LX				
Ward	Pegswood		Parish	Ulgham	
Valid Date:	23 February 2021		Expiry	31 May 2021	
			Date:		
Case Officer	Name:	Mr Will Laing			
Details:	Job Title:	Planning Officer			
		_			
	Email:	nail: will.laing@north		.gov.uk	

Recommendation: That this application be GRANTED permission



1. Introduction

1.1 This application has received an objection from the Parish Council and under the provisions of the Council's current Scheme of Delegation, this application is being reported to the Castle Morpeth Local Area Council for decision as it raises significant planning issues.

2. Description of the Site

- 2.2 This application refers to a field and access track to the northwest of Ulgham and north of the U6003 Ulgham to Ulgham Park Junction. The site has an access and hardstanding to the southwest, with a public right of way along the west boundary.
- 2.3 This application seeks full planning permission to install a riding arena 22 metres by 40 metres for private use. The proposed riding area would have a chopped rubber surface, enclosed by a 1.35m high wooden posts and rails and would utilise the existing access.
- 2.4 The applicant has confirmed that the proposal would be for private use in conjunction with the stable approximately 90m to the northeast. There are other structures or lighting proposed as part of the proposal.

3. Planning History

Nearby sites include:

17/00205/ROAD - Prior notification for road to provide all-weather vehicular access for the management and inspection of a property entering production phase. Land at Ulgham.

Status: Prior approval not required

19/03415/FUL - Prior notification for road to provide all-weather vehicular access for the management and inspection of a property entering production phase. Land north east of Hulwane House.

Status: Application returned

19/03885/FUL - Construction of agricultural building to provide shelter for sheep and horses, access road, small animal shelter and associated fencing (as amended 23.12.2019). Land north east of Hulwane House.

Status: Permitted

20/00987/FUL - Minor amendment to planning application 19/03885/FUL - to alter roof pitch.

Status: Permitted

21/01020/FUL - Proposed extension to provide store. Land north east of Hulwane

House.

Status: Permitted

4. Consultee Responses

Ulgham Parish	The Parish Council wish to object to the application as the	
Council	proposed arena /ménage is well away from the existing stable	
	block and will be a stand-alone development in an open field	
	which is in the green belt. Also the line of the right of way has	

	been redirected which is now to the west of a newly erected fence, it seems, without any consultation. This means that walkers must walk through a field potentially containing up to 12 horses which could be intimidating to members of the public, particularly in view of recent fatal incidents involving the public and livestock.
Public Protection	No objection.
Environment Agency	No objection.
Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA)	No comment.
Highways	No objection subject to conditions.
Public Rights of Way Officer	No objection to the proposed development on the condition that Public Footpath No 1 is protected throughout. No action should be taken to disturb the path surface, without prior consent from ourselves as Highway Authority, obstruct the path or in any way prevent or deter public use without the necessary temporary closure or Diversion Order having been made, confirmed and an acceptable alternative route provided.

5. Public Responses

Neighbour Notification

Number of Neighbours Notified	0
Number of Objections	5
Number of Support	0
Number of General Comments	1

Notices

General site notice, 3rd March 2021 No Press Notice Required.

Summary of Responses:

Five letters of objection have been received on the following grounds:

- Inappropriate development for Green Belt;
- Detrimental impact on Green Belt;
- Contrary to NPPF;
- Impact on landscape and local character;
- The proposal would be an isolated and alien feature;
- Man-made surface would be intrusive to the surrounding area;
- Unacceptable urbanisation of the area;
- Intrusive development outside of the settlement boundary (contrary to policyC1 of the Local Plan)
- The site is a local beauty spot;
- Previous alterations to the public footpath adjacent to the site;

- Impact of fencing installed through previous application;
- Conflict between previous approval for 17/00205/ROAD, which would jeopardise the previous approval and risk the safety of the footpath users;
- Adjoining land users have additional gates to operate forestry business;
- Overuse of signage (from previous application);
- Previous comments from the Public Right of Way Officer have not been adhered to;
- The applicant has created an area of hardstanding to the west which attracts people to park where there is no right to park.
- Potential conflict between users of the area and people using the trail, if it was hired out:
- Dispute the applicants claim of personal use;
- Contrary to the Human Rights Act "an individual's peaceful enjoyment of their property shall not be interfered with save as is necessary in the public interest.", due to conflict between the users of the proposal and people accessing their property via the public footpath.
- Access to woods/public footpath during construction;
- Previous issues with access due to a previous approval;
- If permission is granted lighting should be prohibited to prevent light pollution to the woods and surrounding area;
- No objection to the principle of the arena, but it should be sited in the curitilage of the existing buildings; and
- Cumulative development resulting in urban sprawl in the Green Belt.

The above is a summary of the comments. The full written text is available on our website at: http://publicaccess.northumberland.gov.uk/online-applications//applicationDetails.do?activeTab=summary&keyVal=QJVQGOQSK4S0

6. Planning Policy

6.1 Development Plan Policy

Morpeth Neighbourhood Plan 2011-2031 (Made 10th May 2016)

Policy Set1- Settlement Boundaries

Castle Morpeth District Local Plan

C1 - Settlement boundaries;

C15 - Landscaping;

C16 - The Green Belt:

C17 - The Green Belt; and

R7 - Low Impact Countryside Activities.

Saved Policy S5 of the Northumberland County and National Park Joint Structure Plan First Alteration (February 2005)

6.2 National Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework 2021 National Planning Practice Guidance (2019)

6.3 Emerging Planning Policy

Northumberland Local Plan - Publication Draft Plan (Regulation 19) (January 2019)

STP1 - Spatial strategy:

STP 2 - Presumption in favour of sustainable development;

STP 3 - Sustainable development;

STP 7 - Strategic approach to the Green Belt (Strategic Policy);

STP 8 - Development in the Green Belt (Strategic Policy);

QOP2 - Good design and amenity;

QOP4 - Landscaping and trees; and

TRA4 - Parking provision in new development.

7. Appraisal

- 7.1 The main issues for consideration in the determination of this application are as follows:
- Principle of Development;
- Open countryside
- Green Belt;
- Impact on residential amenity;
- Design and visual impact;
- Rights of way, parking and highway safety; and
- Other issues.
- 7.2 In accordance with Section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, planning applications should be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In this case the development comprises policies in the Blyth Valley District Local Development Framework: Development Control Policies Development Plan Document (DPD)(2007) as identified above. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2021) and Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) are material considerations in determining this application.
- 7.3 Paragraph 48 of the NPPF states that weight can be given to policies contained in emerging plans dependent upon three criteria: the stage of preparation of the plan; the extent to which there are unresolved objections to policies within the plan; and the degree of consistency with the NPPF. The Northumberland Local Plan Publication Draft Plan (Regulation 19) (NLP) was submitted to the Secretary of State for Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government on 29 May 2019, and is currently going through the examination process.
- 7.4 On 9 June 2021, the Council published for consultation, a Schedule of proposed Main Modifications to the draft Local Plan which the independent Inspectors examining the plan consider are necessary to make the plan 'sound'. As such the plan is at an advanced stage of preparation, and the policies in the NLP Publication Draft Plan (Regulation 19) (Jan 2019) as amended by proposed Main Modifications (June 2021), are considered to be consistent with the NPPF. The NLP is a material consideration in determining this application, with the amount of weight that can be given to specific policies (and parts thereof) is dependent upon whether Main Modifications are proposed, and the extent and significance of unresolved objections.

Principle of Development

7.5 The proposal is not within a settlement boundary as is identified within the Proposals Map of the Castle Morpeth District Local Plan. Policy C1 of the Castle Morpeth Local Plan establishes settlement boundaries and states that development in the open countryside beyond settlement boundaries will not be permitted unless the proposals can be justified as being essential to the needs of agriculture or forestry or are permitted by alternative policies in the development plan. The report will examine this in greater detail.

Open Countryside

- 7.6 Policy C1 of the Castle Morpeth District Local Plan defines settlement boundaries around towns and villages, it identifies the proposed site as falling within open countryside. Although limited weight can be attached, Policy STP 1 of the Draft Northumberland Local Plan similarly does not identify the site as located within a settlement boundary and places the site in open countryside.
- 7.7 Policy Set1 of the Morpeth Neighbourhood Plan defines the settlement boundary for Morpeth; divided by the Morpeth Northern Bypass the site is located outside of the boundary. Policy Set1 states areas outside settlement boundaries will be treated as open countryside.
- 7.8 In accordance with Policy C1 of the Castle Morpeth District Local Plan, proposals can only be justified as essential to the needs of agriculture or forestry, or are permitted by other policies within the plan. The supporting text to Policy C1 advises that development within the open countryside should maintain the rural character of the open countryside in accordance with the Council's objectives and that certain forms of development are acceptable in principle in the open countryside in terms of supporting sport and recreation.
- 7.9 Given the openness and nature of the proposal and the small-scale degree of development, it is considered that the development is in a suitable location in accordance with Policy C1 of the Development Plan, and that it conforms in principle to the criteria for development in the open countryside. The proposal is therefore considered to be acceptable in this regard.

Green Belt

- 7.10 The application site falls within the Green Belt as identified within policy S5 of the Northumberland and National Park Joint Structure Plan First Alteration (February 2005). Emerging Green Belt Policy (STP 7) defines the proposed Green Belt boundaries around Morpeth, the site is located within the Green Belt in proximity to the inset boundary.
- 7.11 The draft boundaries support the position that the site should be regarded as Green Belt; however, the emerging plan can only be given limited weight at this time. As saved Policy S5 only describes the general extent of the Green Belt and the emerging plan is still at examination stage, further consideration will need to be given as to whether Green Belt policies should apply to the site.

7.12 Recent case law has established that unless a policy clearly designates all land within the general extent of the Green Belt, the decision-maker should apply a planning judgement to determine whether to apply Green Belt policy to a site. A recent appeal asserts that a lack of defined boundary is insufficient justification to arbitrarily exclude any site contained within the general extent of the Green Belt. The Secretary of State took a precautionary approach to land in the general extent at York, stating that Green Belt policies should be applied unless there is a 'good reason not to'. Appeals APP/P2935/W/17/3167263 and APP/P2935/W/17/3167852 both involve the general extent of the Green Belt in Northumberland and use the approach taken at Avon Drive, York. In both cases the inspectors test the sites against the purposes of the Green Belt to determine if Green Belt policies should be applied.

7.13 Paragraph 138 of the NPPF sets out the purposes of the Green Belt:

- a) to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
- b) to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
- c) to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
- d) to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
- e) to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.
- 7.14 Paragraph 149 of the NPPF sets out several exemptions for development within the green belt, including the provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of land or a change of use) for outdoor sport and outdoor recreation, as long as the facilities preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it. Policy C17 criterion c) of Castle Morpeth District Local Plan broadly complies with paragraph 149 of the NPPF but does not make specific reference to outdoor recreational uses. The Castle Morpeth Local Plan is not considered out of date but is considered to be aged from being adopted in 2002, in comparison to the recent 2021 NPPF and as such greater weight is to be given to the NPPF. Furthermore, policy STP 8 of the Draft Northumberland Local Plan (2019) supports appropriate Green Belt Development as identified in national planning policy (NPPF).
- 7.15 The proposed development would be supporting an existing private stable and would have a relatively small amount of physical development. The development would form an outdoor recreational facility which complies with the exemption of paragraph 149 of the NPPF. It is noted that a submitted objection states that they have no objection to the principle of the development but would want the proposed riding arena to be sited closer to the existing stable to the west. While this is noted, the planning application must be assessed on the details provided. The application site is within the ownership of the applicant, in proximity to the stables in which they would serve and would not require vehicular transportation. Furthermore, the development would not require any form of sequential test to justify its siting.
- 7.16 While it is noted in the supporting text of policy R7 that equine uses can cause conflict with road and traffic users, particularly at large events, the proposal is for a private use and as such, there would be no large gatherings such as competitions or public training classes. The applicant has clarified that the proposal is for private use only. It is noted that objectors have raised issues with potential dangers between people using the bridleway and potential forestry traffic from application 17/000205/ROAD, however it should be noted that the site is currently used for grazing, and therefore the animals of the existing field are left unsupervised to graze.

Should approval be granted, horses using the site would be supervised moving to and from the site, and during the use not only would the horse be supervised, they would be enclosed by the proposed arena, further separating them from traffic and users of the bridleway.

- 7.17 The proposed riding arena would have limited physical development, restricted to surfacing and fencing as the proposal would support an existing private stable approximately 80m to the east of the site. The applicant has submitted a Flood Risk Analysis and neither the Environment Agency nor Lead Local Flood Authority have any objections to the application. As such, the proposal is not considered to be a flood risk.
- 7.18 Having regard to the above, the use and scale of the proposal, it is considered that it would not conflict with point B of paragraph 149 of the NPPF, as it would not have a significant impact on the openness of the countryside or the spatial or visual openness of the Green Belt. Similarly, point C of paragraph 138 of the NPPF would not be compromised.
- 7.19 Having regard to the above, by virtue of the limited physical development, proximity and use in conjunction with an existing private stable, it is the view of officers that the proposal is acceptable in principle and would comply with policies C1, C16, C17 and R7 of the Castle Morpeth District Plan and STP 8 of the Emerging Northumberland Local Plan

Impact on Residential Amenity

- 7.20 It is noted that objections have been received on the grounds of potential light disturbance and that the proposal would prevent peaceful enjoyment of their property.
- 7.21 The proposal does not propose any lights or lighting systems and a condition shall be imposed to ensure that no lighting is installed in future in the interest of visual and residential amenity.
- 7.22 The application site is located approximately 105m to the nearest dwelling (75m to the boundary) which is separated by a strip of woodland and the topography site ensures that the application site is set at a significantly lower ground level. The proposal is not for public use and as such would not generate public traffic, and the proposal does not include the installation of any plant. As such, the proposal would not create any noise generating uses that would impact on the residential amenity of the nearest residential properties.
- 7.23 Having regard to the above, it is officer opinion that the proposal would not have a detrimental impact on residential amenity and as such would comply with policies C1 and R7 of the Castle Morpeth District Local Plan 2003 and QOP 2 of the Emerging Northumberland Local Plan 2019.

Design and Visual Impact

7.24 The proposal would consist of a 1.35m timber fencing with an artificial surface. The proposal would be within an existing enclosed field which is enclosed by a timber fence along the eastern and northern boundary and a hedge along the

southern boundary. Other from the public right of way along the eastern boundary of the site, public views of the site are extremely limited.

- 7.25 The application site is for the use of the stables to the north. The siting of a horse-riding arena on a rural field on the periphery of a settlement, such as the application site, is not unusual in terms of location. Furthermore. The low timber fencing would remain in keeping with existing means of enclosure.
- 7.26 Having regard to the above, the proposal is considered to be acceptable in terms of character and appearance. It is officer opinion that the proposed visual impact on the development would not be as significant as to warrant refusal of the application. As such, the proposal is deemed to comply with policies R7 and C15 of the Castle Morpeth District Local Plan (2003) and policies QOP 2 and QOP4 of the Emerging Northumberland Local Plan 2019.

Rights of Way, Parking and Highway Safety

- 7.27 Objections have been received on the grounds that the proposal would prevent the use of the public right of way, and that the existing right of way has been altered.
- 7.28 The right of way was discussed between the applicant and the Right of Way Officer, and whilst there was some initial confusion over a diversion, the right of way is remains unchanged. The proposal does not seek to amend the right of way and proposal would not impact on enclose the right of way. At the time of the case officers last site visit (24.09.2021) the public right of way matched the existing maps.
- 7.29 Objections have been raised regarding the impact on access of previous approvals, including access during construction. Each application must be assessed on its own merits, previous issues are not reasonable grounds for refusal and the application cannot be forced address existing issues. At the time of the officers site visit, there were no obstructions to the public right of way.
- 7.30 An objector states that the applicant has created an area of hardstanding to the west which attracts people to park where there is no right to park. This is an existing hard-standing and not subject to this application, as such this application cannot be reasonably used to impose controls on an existing issue.
- 7.31 further objection raises the issue of potential conflict between users of the area and people using the trail, if it was hired out. The application is for private use only which shall be enforced by means of planning condition. Therefore, there shall be no hiring out of the area, and as such this is not reasonable grounds for refusal.
- 7.32 Concerns have been raised by an objection regarding access to woods/public footpath during construction. The site has ample room for the storage of materials during construction, and while there will inevitably be some construction traffic during the construction process a condition shall be imposed to ensure that the public right of way remains.
- 7.33 The applicant has submitted details to ensure that a Type-C access is installed, which has been agreed by the Highways Network Manager. The Highways Network Manager has no objection to the proposal subject to the imposition of a condition to ensure that the proposed access is installed prior to first use of the development.

- 7.34 An objection has been submitted raising issues with access for approved under application 17/00205/ROAD. It should noted that this was a prior notification for an access road related to silvicultural operations, extraction of (tree) thinnings and other forest products. This application relates solely to access and is not a planning consent for the silvicultural operations. Officers would make it clear, that this application for the arena only and not propose and alterations to the access road within the site or the bridleway. The proposed works would therefore not prevent or hinder any access rights of the public or existing operations. As such, the objectors concerns with access or a civil matter and not a planning matter.
- 7.35 It is further noted that the proposed condition ensuring the upgrading of the entrance to the highway would ultimately benefit the access for all users, however, access during the implementation of the Type-C access is a civil matter and not reasonable grounds to refuse the application.
- 7.36 An objection alleges that the applicant has installed a fence next to the track causing an obstruction, that has been discussed with the By-Way Officer. This application does not propose any fencing outside of the proposed enclosure of the proposed area, and this referred to fencing is not part of this application. As such, it is not reasonable to refuse the application on this information. Should the fence be a breach of planning controls, then it would be necessary to investigated the matter through Planning Enforcement and not this application.
- 7.37 Subject to the requested condition regarding access, the proposal is considered to be acceptable in terms of public rights of way, parking and highway safety. As such it is officer opinion the proposal complies with the Castle Morpeth District Local Plan 2003 and policy TRA 4 of the Emerging Northumberland Local Plan 2019.

Other Issues

- 7.38 Objections have been received on the grounds that the site is a local beauty spot; and the overuse of signage (from previous application).
- 7.39 The impact of proposal on visual amenity have been assessed above, and the site is privately owned with no planning policy designation as a local beauty spot, as such this is not reasonable grounds for refusal.
- 7.40 There was no signage on site at the time of the officers site visit, and no signage is proposed as part of the proposal.

Equality Duty

7.41 The County Council has a duty to have regard to the impact of any proposal on those people with characteristics protected by the Equality Act. Officers have had due regard to Sec 149(1) (a) and (b) of the Equality Act 2010 and considered the information provided by the applicant, together with the responses from consultees and other parties, and determined that the proposal would have no material impact on individuals or identifiable groups with protected characteristics. Accordingly, no changes to the proposal were required to make it acceptable in this regard.

Crime and Disorder Act Implications

7.42 These proposals have no implications in relation to crime and disorder.

Human Rights Act Implications

- 7. 41 The Human Rights Act requires the County Council to take into account the rights of the public under the European Convention on Human Rights and prevents the Council from acting in a manner which is incompatible with those rights. Article 8 of the Convention provides that there shall be respect for an individual's private life and home save for that interference which is in accordance with the law and necessary in a democratic society in the interests of (inter alia) public safety and the economic wellbeing of the country. Article 1 of protocol 1 provides that an individual's peaceful enjoyment of their property shall not be interfered with save as is necessary in the public interest.
- 7.42 For an interference with these rights to be justifiable the interference (and the means employed) needs to be proportionate to the aims sought to be realised. The main body of this report identifies the extent to which there is any identifiable interference with these rights. The Planning Considerations identified are also relevant in deciding whether any interference is proportionate. Case law has been decided which indicates that certain development does interfere with an individual's rights under Human Rights legislation. This application has been considered in the light of statute and case law and the interference is not considered to be disproportionate.
- 7.43 Officers are also aware of Article 6, the focus of which (for the purpose of this decision) is the determination of an individual's civil rights and obligations. Article 6 provides that in the determination of these rights, an individual is entitled to a fair and public hearing within a reasonable time by an independent and impartial tribunal. Article 6 has been subject to a great deal of case law. It has been decided that for planning matters the decision making process as a whole, which includes the right of review by the High Court, complied with Article 6.

8. Conclusion

- 8.1 The main planning considerations in determining this application have been set out and considered above stating accordance with the relevant Development Plan Policy. The application has also been considered against the relevant sections within the NPPF and there is not considered to be any conflict between the local policies and the NPPF on the matters of relevance in this case.
- 8.2 The proposal has addressed the main considerations and would accord with relevant policy and is considered acceptable. The proposal is therefore recommended for approval.

9. Recommendation

That this application be GRANTED permission subject to the following:

Conditions/Reason

01. The development hereby permitted shall not be carried out otherwise than in complete accordance with the approved document and plans.

The approved document for this development is:-

- Application Form (dated 15.11.2020)
- Flood Risk Analysis (received 11.01.2021)
- Planning Statement (received 02.02.2021)

The approved plans for this development are:-

- Arena Plan 1 Not Scaled (received 16.11.2020);
- Arena Plan 2 Not Scaled (received 16.11.2020);
- Arena Plan 3 Not Scaled (received 16.11.2020);
- Proposed Horse Shelter Land North of Ulgham River Lyne, Ulgham, Morpeth (dated Dec 2020);
- Block Plan Proposed Rev A (dated 02.02.2021);
- HDM/SD/1100/12: 1100 Series Heavy Vehicle Use Type C Commercial/HGV Use Access (dated 18.09.18)

Reason: To ensure that the approved development is carried out in complete accordance with the approved document and plans.

02. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)

03. Prior to the first use of the hereby approved development, the approved access shall be fully implemented in accordance with plan "HDM/SD/1100/12: 1100 - Series Heavy Vehicle Use - Type C - Commercial/HGV Use Access (dated 18.09.18)". The access shall be retained and maintained thereafter/

Reason: In the interests of highway safety, in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework.

04. Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (or any other re-enacting or revoking Order with or without modification), the premises shall only be used as a private arena for horses owned by the applicant. The hereby approved development shall not be used for any business purposes or no other purpose other than that included in the application description.

Reason: In the interests of highways safety and amenity policies C1 and R7 of the Castle Morpeth District Local Plan 2003 in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework.

05. There shall be no lighting permanent, temporary or mobile lighting installed at the site at any time.

Reason: In the interests of highways safety and amenity having regard to policies C1 and R7 of the Castle Morpeth District Local Plan 2003 in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework.

06. Notwithstanding the submitted details, safe and clear public access to the public right of way shall be maintained at all times, with construction materials or

waste storage and no construction vehicles parked on, or blocking the access or public right of way.

Reason: In the interests of highways safety, and amenity policies C1 and R7 of the Castle Morpeth District Local Plan 2003 in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework.

<u>Informatives</u>

- 01. Building materials or equipment shall not be stored on the highway unless otherwise agreed. You are advised to contact the Streetworks team on 0345 600 6400 for Skips and Containers licences.
- 02. In accordance with the Highways Act 1980 mud, debris or rubbish shall not be deposited on the highway.

Date of Report: 26th October 2021

Background Papers: Planning application file(s) 20/03851/COU