

## LAKE DISTRICT NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY PLANNING CONSULTATIONS

Lead Officer: T Pomfret - Principal Planning Officer

### To Agree a New Protocol for Responding to Lake District National Park Authority Planning Consultations.

- Recommendation**
- i. That the Council ceases to provide consultation responses in relation to minor development in the Lake District National Park.
  - ii. That the Council provides a detailed response in respect of the most significant Lake District National Park applications within Copeland.
  - iii. That the arrangements be reviewed in 12 months.

**Resource Implications:** A saving in Officer time and associated costs which will be redirected towards the Council's own development control caseload.

## 1.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.1 The Council receives copies of all planning applications submitted to the Lake District National Park Authority (L.D.N.P.A.) relating to the Copeland area. The purpose of this arrangement is threefold:

- i. To satisfy a statutory duty to enter the applications and decisions on the Local Land Charges Register. This information is then revealed in searches to homebuyers etc.
- ii. To enable members of the public to view copies of the applications within the Borough as part of the public consultation procedures. A further copy of each application is available at Bootle Stores to serve the south of the Borough.
- iii. The Council is not a statutory consultee as defined in The Town and Country Planning (General Development Procedure) Order 1995. However, the Council has always commented in respect of each L.D.N.P.A. application as a matter of routine.

1.2 In the previous five years the Council has received the following number of LDNPA applications:-

2004 - 118  
2003 - 118  
2002 - 99  
2001 - 89

The majority of these applications (approximately 90%) relate to minor forms of development. These typically include domestic extensions, agricultural buildings and individual dwellings within settlements.

- 1.3 To provide a meaningful comment it has been considered necessary to visit a significant proportion of the application sites. Due to the geographical location of many sites this is relatively time consuming and expensive in terms of travelling expenses. An option to provide a desk top only response has been considered but this is likely to lead to poorly informed comments being submitted to the L.D.N.P.A.
- 1.4 A letter received from the L.D.N.P.A's Principal Planner is attached to this report. In order to improve the quality and speed of decision making the L.D.N.P.A. is encouraging more detailed comments in relation to applications where the Council is either actively in support or firmly opposed. It is considered mutually beneficial to assist the L.D.N.P.A. in its performance objectives.

## **2.0 THE PROPOSAL**

- 2.1 It is proposed that the L.D.N.P.A. should be informed that the Council will no longer routinely comment in respect of all applications. This should enable officer time to be concentrated on the Council's own development control caseload, particularly in the light of current shortfalls in our own staff resources. The risk of delaying decision making by the L.D.N.P.A. should also be reduced. It should be noted that one of the L.D.N.P.A.'s own Planning Officers will visit each site and Parish Councils will continue to provide local views.
- 2.2. The Council will continue to comment in respect of the most significant proposals. These are likely to include applications which raise economic, tourism, social and environmental issues of importance to the locality. For example the Council would always wish to comment in respect of significant proposals at Eskmeals. It is proposed that more detailed written comments will be submitted to the L.D.N.P.A. in respect of significant proposals. A full response will also be provided when requested by an elected Member.
- 2.3 The Council will continue to discharge its statutory duties in relation to the planning register. Also, the public will continue to have access to the L.D.N.P.A. applications at The Copeland Centre.

## **3.0 CONCLUSION**

- 3.1 These revised proposals should enhance the quality of consultation responses provided to the L.D.N.P.A. in relation to the most significant proposals. Furthermore, the proposal not to comment in respect of minor developments should yield the twin benefits of redirecting resources to the Council's own development control caseload whilst also helping the L.D.N.P.A. to improve their performance.

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**Background Papers: Letter from L.D.N.P.A. on file P/13**