Flood & Development Management
Parkhouse Building
Carlisle
CA6 4SJ

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Copeland area Planning Department, Cumberland Council

For the attention of Christie M Burns

Date: 16 October 2023
Your reference: 4/23/2249/0F1

Dear Christie M Burns

CONSULTATION ON PLANNING APPLICATION

Appn:	**4/23/2249/0F1**
Site Address:	**LAND AT HODBARROW NATURE RESERVE, MILLOM**
Proposal:	**ERECTION OF WELCOME BUILDING WITH CAFÉ, RETAIL SPACE, STAFF FACILITIES AND CAR PARK, INSTALLATION OF AIR SOURCE HEAT PUMPS, REPAIR AND STABILISATION WORKS AND INSTALLATION OF SUSPENDED PERISCOPE MIRRORS AT HODBARROW BEACON, REPAIR AND STABILISATION WORKS AND INSTALLATION OF CAMERA OBSCURA STRUCTURE AT TOWSEY HOLE WINDMILL, INSTALLATION OF CLADDING AND NEW LIVING ROOF TO EXISTING BIRD HIDE, ERECTION OF NEW BIRD HIDES AND VIEWING PLATFORMS, CREATION OF NEW MULTI-USE PATHWAYS WITH SIGNAGE, GATEWAY FEATURES AND STREET FURNITURE, MAKING GOOD OF EXISTING BYWAY (BOAT) ALONG SEA WALL, ENHANCEMENT OF WILDLIFE HABITATS, AND ASSOCIATED ACCESS, LANDSCAPING AND DRAINAGE INFRASTRUCTURE.**

Thank you for your consultation on 21 September 2023 regarding the above Planning Application.

Cumberland Council as the Local Highway Authority (LHA) and Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) has reviewed the above planning reference and our findings are detailed below.

Local Highway Authority response:

1. Review of the Transport Assessment:

It is noted that the nature of this site is not a regular trip generator in terms of understanding and estimating trip generation. There is no direct comparison so I accept the methodology used (various data sources) to estimate the likely split between local and non-local visitors and the trip rate generation. I note the use of empirical local data from

traffic counts and a visitor survey as well to better understand and estimate the modal split and I consider it a fair representation to base the local trips on the existing transport modal split and the vast majority of non-local visitors by private car journeys (although this assumption and reliance should be targeted in the travel plan).

The cycling and walking route provision (and cycle parking) in the proposal is good and should make these trips even more attractive. The access control proposals and quality of the surfacing for walking and cycling is very important to strike the right balance between low maintenance, appearance, ease of use / access, an all-weather surface (minimise mud / inconvenience for wheeled transport / buggies) and width. The advice and recommendations for the Infrastructure Planning (IP) and Countryside Access teams should be taken into account.

Based on the existing provision, predicted visitor numbers and modal split I am satisfied with car parking and cycle stand provision throughout the development. Based on the forecasted peak use, I am satisfied with the proposed 76 car parking spaces. This appears to be a robust provision, accommodating a peak within the peak season which would account for special events or exceptional weather on a Bank Holiday in August for example. See the IP comments below regarding possible additional cycle parking at the Welcome Building.

The forecasted increase in vehicle trips on Mainsgate Road (between 21 and 31 2-way trips in the peak hour) represents an increase of approximately 50% on the existing flows (from the traffic counts). Whilst this increase is significant in relative terms and may be noticeable by locals / roadside residents, it is not in itself a significant or material absolute level of traffic that would warrant any recommendation of refusal.

However, I do note the proposal to introduce parking charges for all car parks. This may well encourage people to park for free nearby on the public highway, probably on the lower (southern) section of Mainsgate Road near the junction. This may or may not be problematic and the road is wide enough to accommodate parked cars, and it is difficult to estimate how many vehicles would do this but it seems a likely scenario .

Therefore to provide some future safeguarding to introduce localised waiting restrictions if necessary in the future, we will be seeking a S106 financial contribution (a total of £8,000) for the making of the TRO and double yellow lines for waiting restrictions. We believe that within the usual five year S106 Contribution limit, it will become apparent whether waiting restrictions are needed and can be introduced as and when necessary.

2. Review of the Travel Plan

The Travel Plan is well written and very comprehensive. I note the initial targets for modal shift but also the action plan which shows that these targets will be reviewed in conjunction with the Council. I would hope that more ambitious targets could be set on

reducing single private car trips. I welcome and support the Action Plan which shows a minimum monitoring period of five years will be adopted.

On that basis, the LHA would be seeking a financial contribution of £6,600 towards monitoring over the five year period as set out in the interim travel plan.

3. Countryside Access (also see Infrastructure Planning comments below)

We are fully supportive of the proposed Iron Line development. The application will improve the access opportunities within and to the development site by upgrading the surfacing and infrastructure along the public right of way network, the King Charles III England Coast Path and the informal network of desire lines within the site.

Management Strategy:
We welcome the proposal in the Visitor Management Strategy to develop an access strategy to encourage walking, cycling and horse riding and build a maintenance management plan into the overall long-term strategy for the Iron Line.

Design and Access Statement:
We would ask for more information on the proposed design and use of boardwalks, metal grating with timber edge upstand outlined in "6 -'Landmark and Key Spaces' - Lagoon View 8" to assess its suitability.

We would ask to be consulted on the design and content of any new signage and waymarking for the site to ensure that this is consistent with our needs for the Public Right of Way Network and the King Charles III England Coast Path.

We would advise that:

- The granting of planning permission would not give the applicant the right to block or obstruct the Public Right of Ways shown on the attached plan.

- The Public Rights of Way as shown on the definitive map and statement must be kept open and unaltered for public use until an order is made to temporarily close them has been confirmed.

- Managing access by gating the start and end of the BOAT – Under the Highways Act gates cannot legally be placed on the BOAT to control access to it. These would represent an obstruction.

Path Surfacing

We are in favour of having a British Horse Society approved macadam surface on the BOAT rather than a self-binding gravel. We feel that macadam on the BOAT would be

more cost effective to maintain and in the long term be a more sustainable option than self-binding gravel.

We are satisfied with self-binding gravel being used elsewhere on the ECP and primary and secondary footpaths within Hodbarrow, but we would ask for a technical data specification for the material to be provided and subject to our approval.

A sealed-surface path may be more suitable than self-binding gravel for most wheeled users, but I realise the most suitable material can depend on many variables including path type / designation, intended use, gradients etc. Further consideration should be given to the surfacing of the main routes for wheeled users.

4. Infrastructure Planning Comments

Based on the Local Plan Transport Improvement Studies and other evidence, there is no request for a financial contribution to any transport infrastructure schemes in the area of Millom and Haverigg however, the following observations are made to help steer design particularly from an active travel perspective:

Relationships with other projects

- Millom and Haverigg Connected Town: -

  The planning application directly relates to one of four Millom Town Deal projects known as 'The Iron Line'. Active travel concept designs have been developed for the Connected Town project, which aim to improve connectivity between Millom and Haverigg, including with the Iron Line project. The relevant Connected Town route sections to the Iron Line project are: -

  - Section 3: Mainsgate Road to RSPB Hodbarrow
  - Section 5: Main Street Haverigg to Iron Line Project.

  The proposal should demonstrate close alignment with the Connected Town project to ensure connectivity and continuation of travel corridors. This should be through acknowledging Connected Town in proposals and through wayfinding and signage.

- Hadrian's Wall Cycling and Walking Corridor: -

  The project has identified a potential active travel route alignment within the corridor. For the Millom to Haverigg section, without any existing NCN or local cycle routes, this project start/end point would see improvements made to a 7.5km section between Millom and Haverigg broadly following the alignment of the coast.

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The improvement consists of a new shared use path constructed on Lancastrian Road to connect to a new sealed path on existing footpaths and adjacent to the access track to Slacks, Millom. The newly surfaced paths would follow the coast and the Iron Line to Haverigg, where 4m wide shared-use paths would complete the project. This project would connect to Millom and Haverigg Town Centre and link to key destinations including Millom Station, Beaches and the Iron Line project.

The development proposal should acknowledge the Hadrian's Way Cycling and Walking Corridor and active travel route highlighted above.

Internal Active Travel Connectivity

- Access for cyclists to The Welcome Building – lack of segregated access for cyclists.

  The proposals have vehicular access to The Welcome Building from the southern limit of Mainsgate Road via the Byway Open to All Traffic (BOAT) and internal access to the road serving the Recycling Centre. Whilst walkers and wheelers would have access to The Welcome Building via one of the primary paths, cyclists would need to access via the main vehicular access road. Cyclists would be sharing this road with private and commercial vehicles.

  Mixing of the different user types creates a risk to the cyclist. The forecasted visitor numbers mean it is highly likely a cyclist would encounter not only vehicles coming in the opposing direction but also encounter vehicles passing each other along the route. Less confident cyclists can find this situation intimidating and a deterrent / barrier to cycling. For younger and vulnerable cyclists this creates a safety issue.

  It is recommended that provision of segregated cycle lane from Mainsgate Road to the Welcome Building and Southern limit of Hodbarrow Car Park is introduced.

- Tramper type mobility access

  It is recommended that suitable gradients are adopted on paths and sufficient widths at strategic points to ensure that turning circles will accommodate tramper type mobility scooters (particularly with the proximity of paths to edges and slopes) and that adequate turning areas are provided on cul-de-sac paths to features of interest.

- Primary path from Hodbarrow car park to the The Welcome Centre

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This is a key access route for the site. It is recommended that the width is appropriate for usage e.g. 3m wide and that a re-design of the access is considered to make the ramp the primary and most direct route with the steps as a secondary route. The current access route has a presumption of wheeling being the secondary access.

- Desire line / primary path from the Welcome Centre to the Iron Line (Board walk section - 1.8m design width proposed).

  It is suggested that adequate path width (3m) is provided for people to pass easily and comfortably when wheeling. i.e. Cyclists and trampers / wheelers heading from the Welcome Centre to the BOAT will be tempted / attracted to the boardwalk going over the smaller ponds as it is a direct and scenic route. This will create conflict and potential accidents as board-walks can be unforgiving for cyclists especially if too narrow as they need to stay away from the edges and the surfaces can be slippery when wet.

- Iron Line – lack of segregated provision for cyclists.

  The Iron Line is currently a BOAT with a legal right of access for walking, cycling, horse riding and carriage driving as well as motor vehicles. It is currently approximately 8m wide. The proposals are to reduce the width of the BOAT to 3m and provide a separate 1.5m footway. The plans are to retain vehicular rights and manage access by gating the start and end of the BOAT. Passing places will be provided along the route.

  Whilst the gate is proposed as a deterrent to motor vehicles it also acts as a barrier to cycling. Also, under the Highways Act gates cannot legally be placed on the BOAT to control access to it. These would represent an obstruction.

  The reduction in width whilst retaining the vehicle access increases the conflict risk between vehicles and cyclists with limited space for passing. Moreover, there is a risk that passing places become occupied by parked vehicles. This will create further issues for cyclists as they could encounter vehicles trying to pass or reverse. It is suggested that: -

  - provision of a 3m segregated cycle lane along the Iron line is introduced in addition to the 3m wide BOAT.

    or

- Increase the width of the BOAT to provide a shared surface. Widening the surfaced area on the BOAT would enable it to be managed and operate as an inclusive people-prioritised space without the need for any segregation.

The Welcome Building

- There is no clear route for cyclists to The Welcome Building cycle parking.

  It is suggested that access to The Welcome Building is revised in conjunction with the creation of a segregated cycling provision from the BOAT.

  Cycle access should be separate from the main pedestrian crossing and follow the route into the heart of the building along the coach / service access with clear signage to cycle parking and guidance to dismount when walking into the The Welcome Building area. This access point would connect into the segregated cycling provision. Relocating the cycle parking to the west side of the building would both increase visibility of the parking from the café area and also have people walking or wheeling through the body of the building.

Design Risks to cyclists

- Iron Line – tramway detailing in road surface rails present a risk to cyclists. LTN 1/20 makes recommendations in relation to crossing tram tracks as, cyclists wheels can slip on the rail surface and can become trapped in the rail channels. Whilst the proposals for the tramway details state they are to be flush to the surface which would remove the trapping issue, slipping remains a risk.

  The proposed designs cross at angles of less than 45% and have complex 'points' sections which have multiple lines on multiple alignments. This would make it very challenging for a cyclist to use the width of the BOAT to achieve an angle of greater than 60 degrees.

  The proposed designs also include sections where the rail detail runs parallel to the direction of travel along the BOAT. This presents a significant risk of front wheel skidding by either being caught off guard by the change in surface or having to cross the rail infrastructure to move around another BOAT user. The surface of which the rail infrastructure is inset into can also impact on cycling, as stone sets and concrete can be slippery in some conditions.

  It is suggested that the rail detail is removed from the BOAT / other routes used by cyclists.

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Accessibility – for wheeling

- There is a lack of accessible parking provision serving key locations on the BOAT.

  There are no accessible parking serving locations such as the Lighthouse, Hides and Windmill.

- It is recommended that options are reviewed to providing a tramper or equivalent type of rugged mobility scooter to be 'hired' from the welcome building.

- Also see comment below on surfacing finishes to paths for wheeled users

Cycle parking

- Visitor cycle parking – provision is 22 Sheffield Stands distributed across six locations on site. Whilst provision at The Welcome Building meets LTN 1/20 requirements for leisure provision there is a risk it may be under capacity. As the café may become a cycling destination in its own right consideration should be given to means of increasing provision of lockable bike parking; which may be as simple as locking rings along the retaining wall.

- A Sheffield Stand approach to cycle parking across site would be considered appropriate for visitor use.

- The e-bike charging is not clearly identified in the plans provided as part of the planning application.

- Staff cycle parking is not clearly defined at The Welcome Building. Cycle parking for staff is longer term and as such. It is suggested that staff cycle parking facilities should be covered / within a secure structure.

The LHA considers that whilst many of the more minor observations and recommendations listed above could be accommodated or addressed at the detailed design stage (i.e. by way of conditions), there are too many issues related to the design and layout of the active travel routes and facilities around the welcome building but more significantly associated with the BOAT itself.

We suggest that these elements are considered in more detail at this stage and welcome further discussion with the applicant on the design and layout of the various paths to deliver the best quality, convenience and appearance for the various users, whilst managing conflict and access as best as possible.

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Lead Local Flood Authority response:

Flood Risk

I note that the Welcome Building and associated car park are in Flood Zone 1 and are not at risk of flooding except possibly from surface water. However, I accept , as stated in the FRA, that a new surface water drainage system for the site, including filter drains to the road and permeable car park surfacing will address this.

The only flood risk categorised as HIGH is the tidal flood risk to the access road and car park beside the lagoon. These areas are naturally low lying and are shown to be in Flood Zone 3 (i.e. has a 1:00 yr risk of flooding). However, these areas as classified as Less Vulnerable and therefore it is not necessary or appropriate to defend these.

The LLFA has no objection to the flood risk aspects of the proposal but suggest that the Environment Agency's views are sought as well.

Surface Water Strategy

I am satisfied with the proposed drainage discharge destinations (i.e. into the two water bodies) SUBJECT to further ground investigation and infiltration testing. It is most unlikely that the ground is suitable for infiltration as a sole solution for the surface water drainage based on the desk-top study but it could play a part as a hybrid system or provide infiltration in some areas. It is therefore recommended that , as proposed in the FRA, a Stage 2 GI exercise is carried out to fully test for infiltration potential.

If it is shown that the proposed strategy is required (i.e. no infiltration) then I am satisfied with the proposed parameters adopted for the discharge rates. These are equivalent to the existing Greenfield run-off rates as required by the NSTS.

The proposed treatment consisting of permeable paving, filter drains and swales is also suitable for the nature of surface - i.e. access road / car park.

I note that the drainage for the eastern catchment area has been designed to be as small as possible to reduce the existing run-off draining to the quarry and therefore reducing the volume required to be pumped from the quarry. I am satisfied with this arrangement as it represents a minor betterment over the existing (surface water combined with foul discharge from the package treatment plant)

The outline design is satisfactory to demonstrate that a compliant strategy can be delivered. It is lacking in detail and further information on ground investigations (infiltration testing), exceedance flow diagram and a maintenance plan as well as a full detailed design is required in due course. These can be provided by way of a condition.

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However, there appears to be a discrepancy in the design description where it states that the system to the north (onto the quarry) is pumped via a rising main. However, the drawing does not reflect this and shows a gravity system for both surface water systems and the foul.

The LLFA / would not support a surface water pumped solution, this appears to be unnecessary and would lead to significant additional operational and whole-life costs, introduces increased risk of failure and localised flooding if the pump fails.

This matter therefore needs to be clarified before we can issue a final response.

Yours sincerely

Shamus Giles
Lead Officer - Flood & Development Management