

SUPPLEMENTARY STATEMENT

19/01256/FUL

Erection of 15 No huts with associated access and car parking
Land at North Cloich Wood, East Of Wester Deans, West Linton, Scottish Borders

1. Introduction

1.1. This Supplementary Statement has been provided following discussions with the application Case Officer, Ranald Dodds. It clarifies a number of matters relating to the proposals and the site, to enable planning permission to be concluded.

1.2 In summary, it highlights that:

- Active travel options for walking and cycling meet Scottish Government Guidelines
- External storage of materials can be controlled by a typical SBC planning condition
- Woodland and screen planting will exceed standards applied by SBC to other developments
- Drinking water will be brought to site by hutters in the same way that Scotland's bothies operate

1.3. Scottish Borders Council does not have a policy directly relating to hutting developments. However, as a use 'directly for leisure, recreation or tourism appropriate to a countryside location', it complies in principle with the most relevant LDP Policy ED7.

2. Points of Clarification

2.1. Four matters requiring clarification have been identified:

a. Public Transport and Active Travel

2.2 There are two established public rights of way providing safe access to North Cloich Wood and the hutting site. Both are indicated on the Council's Core Paths Map. Both provide connections from main Scottish Borders bus routes.

2.3 Regular X62/X70 bus services run on the A703 to the north and east of the site. Borders Buses has confirmed that the regular X62 route is a 'Hail and Ride' service enabling passengers to request a stop or pick up at any location outwith 30mph speed limit areas. Hutters can embark or disembark adjacent to the right of way at the A703 junction a short distance to the north of Cowieslinn Quarry, on the eastern side of the site.

2.4 The second right of way can also be directly accessed from X62 services, from the lay-by at the Leadburn Community Woodland, to the north of the site. The walking distance to the North Cloich Wood is approximately 2.9km

2.5 The shorter path connection is from the eastern right of way, a walking distance of approximately 2.1km to the North Cloich Wood. The Scottish Government's 'Transport Assessment Guidance' (para 5.21) states that journey times of up to 20-30 minutes are appropriate for walking to new developments. The CIHT's 'Guidelines for Providing Journeys On Foot' adopts a widely used standard of 1.4m/sec walking speed for calculating trip time. At 1.4m/sec, the walk from the eastern bus halt would take a little under 26 minutes, well within the Scottish Government's Guidance standard.

2.6 Borders Buses has confirmed that four bicycle bays are available on regular double decker X62 bus services. Cyclists making use of bike bays on the X62 bus service would reach the North

Cloich Wood in less than eight and a half minutes, using the eastern right of way. The Scottish Government Guidance states that journey times of up to 30-40 minutes are appropriate for cycling to new developments. At the CIHT's 16km/hour standard cycling speed, Eddleston,

Penicuik, West Linton and Peebles can all be reached within the Scottish Government Guidance 40 minute cycle time.

2.7 The X62/X70 bus routes runs from central Edinburgh through the Scottish Borders to Melrose, ensuring wide and regular services close to the site. Reforesting Scotland notes that Hutters generally live within relatively short travel distance of their hut.

2.8 The trip time figures and calculations used here are consistent with those used in support of other planning applications approved by Scottish Borders Council in the local area.

2.9 Research undertaken in Norway by Prognosesenteret suggests huts are typically used on average for 60 days per year (as noted in the Design Statement for the planning application, Norway has a long-established and very extensive hutting culture). Use occurs predominantly over the April-October period, when weather conditions, temperature and daylight are most conducive to active travel. 15 huts each used for 60 days generates 900 days of use across the year. Stays may vary in length: being off-grid, long stays would be atypical.

2.10 One day visits would generally result in a same-day return journey (ratio 1 return trip/stay). Overnight stays would typically also result in one return journey, with arrival one day and return the following day (ratio 0.5 return trips/stay). Two night stays will generate a return journey on days one and three and may include one further local journey (eg. to a grocery shop or other service) during the stay (ratio 0.65 return trips/stay). It is anticipated that most visits will include an over night stay, whilst some will be same day trips and others two or more nights.

2.11 The following total return trip numbers can be anticipated:

| Total days use | Visit length | % trips | Days | Trip ratio | Trips |
|-----------------------|--------------|---------|------|------------|------------|
| 900 | Same day | 20% | 180 | 1 | 180 |
| | Overnight | 50% | 450 | 0.5 | 225 |
| | Two nights + | 30% | 270 | 0.65 | 175 |
| Total Journeys | | | | | 580 |

2.12 Assuming 15% active travel/bus trips, the total number of return car journeys annually would be in the region of **490-500**. Industry-standard trip ratios for private houses range from 2.5-3.0 return car journeys per day. Rural houses would generate trips at the top of this range. At the lower end of the scale, annual return car journeys from a rural family house would amount to:

$$2.5 \text{ trips per day} \times 365 \text{ days} = \mathbf{912.5} \text{ return car journeys p.a.}$$

2.13 Even allowing for significantly more regular use of the huts than is anticipated, the total number of car journeys for the 15 huts combined would be much lower than those generated by a single rural house. In recent times, Scottish Borders Council has approved numerous single family houses in the surrounding countryside.

2.14 The most recent houses approved locally are at Cowdenburn Cottages approximately 1.5km to the north west of the hutting site. Application 18/01469/PPP was granted Planning Permission in Principle in July 2019 by the Local Review Body for two houses. The Report of Handling and LRB Decision Notice show that neither the Planning Officer nor the LRB gave any specific

consideration to the accessibility of these houses by public transport or off-road paths. Each of the houses will generate significantly more car journeys than the hutting development. Both will lie outwith the Scottish Government's recommended walking times of 20-30 minutes.

2.15 The Council's Transportation Officer has raised no concerns regarding accessibility, road capacity, active travel or public transport services relating to the application.

b. External Storage of Materials

2.16 One comment has been submitted in response to the application by a resident of Eddleston, concerned that there is some external storage of materials at the traditional hutting site to the south of the village.

2.17 External storage of materials can be controlled by planning condition. This type of condition is frequently used in the Scottish Borders and throughout the country. Locally, this has been done with a recently approved vehicle body repair workshop located a short distance to the north west of the hutting site (16/01174/FUL and 19/00272/AMC)

2.18 The likelihood and potential impact of external storage at a hutting site is considered to be low. Furthermore, much of the site is already well screened by trees and the remainder will be equally well screened within a short period of time.

c. Woodland and Screen Planting

2.19 Following clear felling of a commercial timber crop by Forestry and Land Scotland some years ago, regeneration of the northern part of the North Cloich Wood as a mixed woodland is well established. Over the south of the site, regeneration has been slower. A planting plan to support woodland regeneration at the south of the site has been agreed with the Council's Landscape Officer Siobhan McDermott. As the new planting establishes, the huts will no longer be visible from outwith the site. Some new planting (willow) has already been provided in the last two weeks making use of the current planting season.

2.20 The landscape surrounding the site has no protective designations. The site is distant from the few residential properties in the area. The nearest road running some distance to the east and south of the site carries very little traffic. Views into the site are distant and are limited in many places by existing trees, woodland and field/ditch embankments.

2.21 A review of developments recently granted planning permission in the area indicates that most have proposals for new planting, controlled by planning conditions. ***None of these conditions requires the development to be fully screened before the building can be constructed.*** This includes the vehicle body repair workshop to the north west.

2.22 To the north of the site, a large number of industrial-scale egg production sheds have been erected over a number of years. Some of these buildings are clearly visible in the local landscape, including one located less than 200 metres from the North Cloich Wood. Many are clearly visible from the northern right of way and a significant part of the development is visible from the A703. Some have had bunding and planting in place for several years but are still clearly visible in the landscape due to their large size.

2.23 To the north west of the site, the local landscape also features a number of free-standing older buildings dating to the mid-20th century. These formed part of a string of approximately 65 buildings located along a former rail corridor stretching from Mitchell Hill in the north to Whim Farm in the south. They were used as wartime ammunition stores.

2.24 The Cowieslinn Quarry occupies a site of perhaps 85 hectares to the south east of the hutting site. Parts of that development are visible from the A703. Planning permission has also previously been granted for an 18 turbine wind farm at Cloich Hill (12/01283/s36) and an amended wind farm proposal is the subject of a current scoping exercise with the Council (19/01489/SCO).

2.25 The hutting development will have a minor impact in the landscape over a short period. With implementation of the agreed landscaping plan, controlled by a standard planning condition used in most other developments in the Scottish Borders, it will soon be entirely screened from surrounding views. Other local developments and existing buildings at all scales will remain partially or largely visible locally and in some cases more widely.

d. Water Supply

2.26 No on-site water supply is proposed. Hutterers will typically bring bottled water to the site for drinking and may make use of 'grey' water collected on site for other requirements. Drinking water can be brought to site by foot, in bicycle panniers or by car (and could be stored in the hut for future use).

2.27 Modern hutting is typically 'off-grid'. A lack of mains water and other services or wet drainage ensures low impact and enables the development to be easily removed from site should the hutting use cease. The lack of services ensures the hut is not suitable for residential or long term overnight use.

2.28 Wild campers and walkers using bothies would expect to enjoy these well-established outdoor pursuits without a local water supply.

3. Conclusions

3.1 The proposed development requires a rural site. Numerous other developments have been approved locally in recent times, with appropriate planning conditions controlling the visibility of buildings and operational aspects of site use. There are no apparent features of the proposed hutting development which merit a stricter level of control than these other developments which also require a rural location.

3.2 The hutting use will generate less travel than other uses deemed appropriate for rural sites, including single houses. There are active travel options available, meeting Scottish Government recommended journey times.

3.3 It is requested that planning permission is now granted for the development as proposed, including the landscape planting proposals agreed with the Council's Landscape Architects.

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