

# Addendum 2

## LA01/2016/1514/F

### Update

A Briefing Note, Viewpoints document, Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Technical Report, amended Landscaping Plan and additional letters of support was submitted on 14<sup>th</sup> December 2018. Further letters of support were received on the 17<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> December 2018.

The Briefing note states that the facilities included in the development attract a range of customers within the vicinity of the area and beyond and the Planning Authority accepts this. A number of letters of support from local businesses to include Dalriada Rural Sure Start and the Boys Brigade and visitors to the fun farm has been provided. It is stated within these letters that the farm offers educational benefits for both children and adults. It was also stated that the fun farm makes a small but valuable contribution to tourism and employment by local people in this area. In total there has been a total of 136 letters of support received as part of the application.

Within the Briefing Note it is argued that the proposed development is now acceptable in landscape terms given the proposed use of hedgerow planting and the use of grasscrete. It is also stated that Park Hood concluded that the proposed landscape works will ensure there is a slight improvement in visual quality.

Having regard to Policy COU 4 it was stated that policy makers can't foresee and provide for every possible development within this designated area. It was argued that the intent of this policy was to safeguard the landscape setting of the Giant's Causeway and Causeway Coast World Heritage Site. It was stated that this development achieves this. In the briefing note it was stated that within Policy COU 4 buildings can be extended by up to 20%. It was argued that no extensions to buildings are proposed, only a small area of screened grasscrete which is only 6% of the area of the existing farm complex. This is considered a misapplication of the policy.

As part of the submission a comprehensive visual landscape assessment was submitted and a consultation was sent to DAERA Protected Landscapes team to consider. This landscape visual assessment argues that the proposed development will have visual containment with the effects of the development on the landscape being slight or negligible.

### **Consideration**

DAERA Protected Landscapes team was consulted in regard to the amended plans, additional information and Landscape Visual Assessment. Within its response, no objection was raised in regard to the revised landscape proposals to include hedging, mounding and grasscrete. However, concerns were raised in regard to the impact of parked cars and coaches within the site, both in terms of their impact on visual amenity from Causeway Road, and the landscape character of the area. A site visit was completed by Protected Landscapes team on the 7<sup>th</sup> January and it was found that the site would be very open to views across Causeway Road from where the land rises up from Whitepark Road to where the land dips after Ballylinney Cottages. It was also identified that no photomontages of cars/coaches parked at the site had been provided, and DAERA is unconvinced that the proposal would be effectively screened. Reference was also made to the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 3<sup>rd</sup> edition which refers to;

1. The impact on the physical landscape and
2. The impact on the character which includes the perceptual qualities of the landscape.

DAERA stated that it is therefore not just the visibility of the parking which is questionable but the general intensification and impact of additional vehicular movement which is of concern. In conclusion the site is located on a main approach road to the World Heritage Site and DAERA Protected Landscapes Team still has concerns.

Having regard to the information provided, and the response from DAERA Protected Landscapes, there is still concern in regard to the impact of the proposed car park on the rural character of the site. Although the proposed grasscrete will reduce the visual impact of the site when no cars are parked, concern must be raised in regard to the impact of parked cars on the site and additional vehicle movements.

Additionally, there have been further letters of support. Regard has been had to the benefits outlined within these letters, including the tourism and educational benefits. The significant number of support letters submitted has also been taken into account. That said, it is considered that the matters raised and numbers submitted do not outweigh policy, and that planning policy should not be set aside in this instance. It is considered that the proposed development does not meet the exceptions to development as set out in Policy COU 4 of The Northern Area Plan.

### **Recommendation**

That the Committee note the contents of this Addendum and agree with the recommendation to refuse, as set out in paragraph 9.1 of the Planning Committee Report.