

Implementation Date: 01 September 2023

Template for Requesting Speaking Rights at the Planning Committee

The Protocol for the Operation of the Planning Committee provides for interested person(s) to register to speak on a planning application that is scheduled to be determined at the next meeting of the Planning Committee. This request must be received by the Planning Department no later than 10am on the Monday before the Planning Committee meeting via email account planning@causewaycoastandglens.gov.uk.

Planning Reference	LA01/2023/1165/F
Name	Ciaran Smyth
Contact Details	Tel: Email:
Support or Objection – please tick relevant box	Support <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Objection <input type="checkbox"/>

Mr. Grieve made contact with our team in the summer of last year 2023 – to discuss his already meticulously thought out idea for the promotion of tourism in this area of CCGC, specifically via the delivery of 3no. holiday pods at his site at the foot of the Benradagh mountain / set centrally between Limavady & Dungiven – to assist in the lack of / under represented level of Tourist accommodation in this area of CCGC

We are familiar with the area of CCGC but not the specific site – so a site visit followed shortly after our initial contact which revealed immediately the astounding natural beauty of this area, this specific site, and the clear appeal that it would have for tourists to invest in this area of CCGC / facilitate a modest addition as to what is known as glamping in the countryside.

The uniqueness of this site – set between the historical towns of Limavady and Dungiven – connected by the River Roe, one of our famous trout and salmon rivers – which in itself attracts scores of fishermen, visitors and tourists, add to what is a very unique and relaxing overnight stay(s) for any visitor or tourist.

During as part of our Site Visit & Analysis, Mr Grieve had discussed with us in detail his Business plan for Glamping in this area of CCGC, which was prepared in conjunction with Invest NI, who have supported and endorsed this proposal to promote local tourism and increase revenue for the Council, importantly, by benefiting from the widely recognized overnight stay – which maximizes the tourism benefit to the locality – specifically the tourist amenities and indeed the small business in both Limavady and Dungiven.

We had reviewed in length the requirements of PPS 16 & TSM 5 – we have reviewed existing precedents located throughout the Sperrins, e.g. Park and Plumbridge, that were almost unanimously approved by Planning Committee representatives – and indeed the close tourist amenities of this site – including the very popular Roe Valley Country Park.

There have been no objections to & indeed all consultees have approved the Application – including DFI Road Service who have acknowledged fully the Rural aspect of this Glamping Pod application – and that we have proposed to provide parking facilities for the tourist visitors within the curtilage of this 1-acre site – which has been recognized by the department / that this proposal does not detract in any way from the established mature family home, on this site.

The specific reason we make reference to this is that all visitors attending this Glamping site, as with the majority of the existing Glamping pods in the CCGC Countryside, including this one at Peters Road, it is very reasonable to expect that tourist / visitor will almost certainly arrive by car / van.

From the Peters Road – All of the various existing Tourist amenities in – both Limavady and Dungiven can be accessed in less than 10 minutes. These amenities, as noted, will directly benefit from financially from this investment that Mr Grieve is paying with personal finances, as will CCGC in respect of the investment they have made to date, with the promotion of Glamping in the Countryside.

Glamping in the Countryside is a commissioned document by CCGC & Invest NI – which promote Glamping in the CCGC – Our team have reviewed the examples within this document, many of which draw extremely strong similarities to our own proposals – and indeed we would welcome the opportunity to be advertised in this manner by CCGC. Within the detailed document reference is made multiple times to the term close. I.e. with Bushmills close to Giants Causeway & etc. Our modest proposals meet the test of what CCGC deem as close, in the Glamping in the Countryside promotion of the same user type.

The site is in walking distance to Benbradagh mountain – which currently attracts scores of walkers / walking tours / tourists every year – who would greatly benefit from and indeed numbers would increase to – with the introduction of our client's proposals, to keep them in the area / to spend more revenue in CCGC.

A specific example is the Walking Tour that passed Peters Road towards Benbradagh last Summer (August 2023) – while our client was cutting the grass he was approached by one of the walkers who had made inquiries about the possibility / options of staying overnight locally / in proximity to Benbradagh – where they could enjoy the late sunset / early sunrise that is so unique in this part of the world.

The walking tour in question were an organized collection of German Tourists, who had travelled to this part of the Province, to experience Benbradagh, specifically, the World War 2 Infrastructure, which remains on the summit of Benbradagh to this day.

The same walking tour were staying at the City Hotel, in Derry City.

A formal hotel setting is not the preferred accommodation type for walking tours & similar due to the gear that they are travelling with, and the experience that they seek connected to the beauty of outdoors nature / that only Glamping in the Countryside can provide.

We have demonstrated beyond any reasonable doubt, like many other approved examples throughout the Rural Coleraine consistency, that our client meets the criteria of PPS 16, which states that

Planning approval will be granted for self-catering units of tourist accommodation in any of the following circumstances:

(b) a cluster of 3 or more new units are to be provided at or close to an existing or approved tourist amenity that is / will be a significant visitor attraction in its own right;

With the proximity to the multiple tourist amenities that surround this unique site, along with the sites unique setting close to the River Roe what joins the towns of Limavady & Dungiven, we have a site that was tailor made for this purpose – i.e. a modest, inoffensive and well managed Glamping pod precedent, that can only be positive for a long list of people, including the local council, and that would genuinely enhance tourism in this area of Causeway Coast and Glens.

We would respectfully request that the Planning Committee consider the context of the various points that we have made, take the same into account in the Planning Committees decision to vote on this proposal today. We genuinely believe that Mr Grieves idea is right and proper, compliant with PPS16, and he should be given a fighting chance to realize this excellent Tourism investment opportunity, for our, himself, his family, and this Council area generally.

Thank you for giving us the chance to say our piece in what is a very personal & meaningful matter for our client.

