

**AGENDA ITEM No. 9**

PEAK DISTRICT NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY MEETING

9 FEBRUARY 2007

HEAD OF PLANNING SERVICE

PART A

1. **PLANNING APPLICATION**  
**FULL APPLICATION – CONVERSION OF YOUTH HOSTEL & CARETAKERS/WARDENS BUNGALOW TO 3 TERRACED HOUSES AND 1 DETACHED BUNGALOW AT CROWDEN YOUTH HOSTEL, CROWDEN. (NP/HPK/0806/0776, P2734, 16.08.06, 407360/399333/JK)**

**Proposal**

1. This report relates to the above planning application which was referred to this meeting following consideration by the Planning Committee on the 15 December 2006. This application is referred on the basis of standing orders that in certain respects it could be interpreted as not being in accordance with the development plan and the Committee were minded to grant the application.

2. **RECOMMENDATION:**

The application be approved subject to the prior completion of a legal agreement and planning conditions referred to below covering:

**LEGAL AGREEMENT as follows:**

1. The £100,000 from the development of the hostel helps fund the new hostel/outdoor centre.
2. Dwellings not to be occupied until all conservation work is complete and thereafter these works are retained.

**PLANNING CONDITIONS as follows:**

1. Withdraw permitted development rights for external alterations and extensions.
2. Agree landscape details.
3. Protected species mitigation.
4. Minor design/details.
5. Maintain garage spaces, parking and turning area.
6. Implement bat mitigation measures.
7. Highway requirements.
8. Submit and agree sustainability proposals.

## **Background**

The previous report to the Planning Committee on 15 December is attached as Appendix A. This explains the detailed basis of the proposal and the recommendation

The Hostel was until recently sub-let to the Youth Hostel Association on a yearly basis but has been suffering for several years from declining visitor numbers. The Hostel has until recently been used during the week by Rotherham MBC as a base for outdoor activities by community groups, following a fire at its Outdoor Centre, which lies to the north of the hostel. This benefited the viability of the Hostel, which tended to be empty during the week but busy with the public at weekends.

Rotherham MBC is now in the process of rebuilding their Outdoor Centre which is nearing completion. Following the experience of shared use of the hostel, the two parties are now proposing to amalgamate their operations and base these in the new outdoor centre where there is room to expand and offer improved facilities. More importantly for both, however, is that such an arrangement will save costs and allow each to function on a more viable financial footing to maintain their operations at Crowden. This site is also away from the busy main road and ought to prove more attractive as a hostel than the original building, the subject of this application.

The conversion of the former Youth Hostel and warden's bungalow to open market dwellings will help cross subsidise the work to the Outdoor Centre.

## **Key Issues**

The site lies in the open countryside well outside the confines of the nearest designated local plan settlement where the Authorities Conservation (C2) and Housing policies (HC1) in the Structure Plan do not allow most new residential development. In the open countryside these policies restrict residential conversions to agricultural workers, holiday accommodation or exceptionally to provide affordable housing to meet local needs, the aim being to protect the open countryside from non-essential development which would be more appropriately and sustainably located within or on the edge of a settlement.

A key issue is, therefore, whether there are sufficient grounds to make an exception to policies HC1 and C2

Policy C14 seeks to take opportunities to enhance the National Park by treatment or removal of undesirable features or buildings. The Hostel building is of some architectural and historic merit and it is important to consider whether there is justification for this proposal on account of its improvement to the appearance of the building.

In addition the proposal needs to be considered in relation to policies LR1 and LR2 concerned to promote recreation and tourism

## **Justification for Policy Exemption**

The scheme presents an opportunity to enhance the appearance of the buildings which are in relatively poor condition. New windows and doors and improved hard landscaping together with removal of unsightly extensions will enhance the appearance of the properties considerably and conform to policy C14.

The open market residential development of the properties is the only realistic manner in which their refurbishment will be achieved. The current bunk house style of use has proved unviable and such a use would now have to compete with the Outdoor Centre.

A holiday cottage conversion scheme would require similar conversion costs and given its poor location, adjacent to highway there is uncertainty regarding the ability of the property to generate an income as holiday cottages.

The applicants have submitted a business case which has been accepted by officers. This business case justifies the need for open market housing as the only means to achieve refurbishment and enhancement of the Hostel. The introduction of a local needs affordable housing element would make the scheme unviable in addition to being an inappropriate location in which to house local people on low or moderate incomes being sited well away from essential service in the nearest settlement.

The scheme will allow for the cross subsidisation of works to the Outdoor Centre. This will help to promote recreation and tourism in accordance with policies LR1 and LR2 and meet National Park purposes to promote "understanding" of the special qualities of the park.

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**APPENDIX**

**Resources**

None

**Risk Management**

None

**Human Rights, Equalities, Health & Safety**

None

**Enclosures**

Annex A - Report to Planning Committee on the 15 December 2006

**List of Background Papers** (not previously published)

None

**Report Author**

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1 February 2007