

Clawford Lakes

DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT – Planning



INTRODUCTION

This Design and Access Statement is part of the planning submission for the expansion of the existing holiday use at Clawford Fisheries.

The proposals will deliver a well designed, high quality, sustainable holiday destination in a carefully managed nature conservation setting. The overarching goal of the proposed development is the seamless and sustainable integration of holiday accommodation within an ecologically enhanced landscape; creating a high quality benchmark for new tourism development in Torridge. The application seeks to support and enhance the existing holiday use of the site and also to continue to provide access to some of the best course fishing in the region.

The proposals seek to achieve an experience led, year-round holiday destination with a range of high quality accommodation and first class facilities.

The applicant is a medium size firm currently with no debt and with the ability to support the project through to conclusion. They have so far invested over £3m into the acquisition and improvements to the existing site using local suppliers and tradesmen. The expansion of the site is key to providing continued investment and upgrading of existing facilities and to allow the site to provide key new facilities.

The proposals will undoubtedly bring a positive economic benefit to the area with ongoing investment, provision of employment and bringing affluent holidaymakers and owners to the area who will spend locally (refer to economic report by Dominic Houston). The applicant will be employing locally, paying living wage for all, providing development pathways for team members as well as training and apprenticeship programmes.

The proposals have evolved through detailed coordination with highways engineers, drainage engineers, architects and landscape architects to ensure that detailed mitigation is integrated into the proposals as the scheme has developed. The proposal has also been developed with consultation with the local authority planners through a pre app and with on-site meetings with the local ward member.

The description of the development for the purposes of the planning application is:

The siting of 140 lodges, 22 bespoke fishing / camping pods, 7 eco - glamping tents and 9 floating lodges, utility building and swimming pool with spa treatment rooms, together with infrastructure / services including access tracks, porous hard surface pitches, electricity, ground contouring, water and foul drainage, additional parking areas and soft landscaping.

SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

The application site covers an area of some 30 hectares consisting of existing self-catering holiday units, Bed and Breakfast accommodation, leisure facilities, a restaurant and 17no fishing lakes.

The Application Site is located to the north east of Clawton, and 4 miles south east of Holsworthy. Launceston is located 12 miles to the south, along the A388, with access to the A30. The site is accessed from an unclassified road via an existing private access road leading to Clawford.

To the north of the site are the main holiday complex buildings including the self-catering units and leisure facilities. The remaining land comprises of a number of large fishing lakes, interconnecting hedgerows and extensive tree planting. The site is bounded by well-established hedgerows and clusters of mature trees. The surrounding land is agricultural. There are a number of residential properties adjacent to the site access.

CONSTRAINTS & DESIGNATIONS

The site is not within a conservation area, or within the AONB.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT REQUIREMENTS

The development is not Schedule 1 Development and therefore does not automatically require an Environmental Impact Assessment [EIA].

Schedule 2 sets out those developments which might require an EIA and includes a series of thresholds for each type / form of development. For tourist accommodation development (12 – Tourism and Leisure), the thresholds state that developments for permanent camp sites and caravan sites on a site exceeding 1 hectares may require an EIA and should be considered against the criteria set out in Schedule 3.

The development comprises the siting of 140 lodges, 22 bespoke fishing / camping pods, 7eco - glamping tents and 9 floating lodges within a site extending to 31 hectares. The application therefore exceeds the site area threshold and can be considered as Schedule 2 development.

It therefore falls to consider whether the proposed development will have a significant effect having regard to the characteristics of the development, its location and the potential effects, as set out in Schedule 3. The site is not located within or adjacent to a sensitive area and there are no protected species present. Whilst the proposed development falls within "Schedule 2" of the EIA Regulations the development is not considered likely to have significant effects on the environment by virtue of factors such as its nature, size or location. An Environmental Statement is therefore not required to accompany the application.

ACTIVITIES

The site will promote experience led holidays within the site. This will include a new swimming pool with spa treatment rooms positioned to overlook the lake edge. The design of the pool seeks to set the tone of the overall experience and will be a key part of the site entrance. The existing farmhouse will provide a bar & restaurant, provisions shop and fishing tackle shop. Within the site course fishing, bushcrafts, nature walks, outdoor experiences, paddle boarding and leisure lakes will all form part of the visitor experience.

LANDSCAPE PROPOSALS

The Masterplan of the 31 hectare site demonstrates the retention of the lakes to create an extensive area of wetland, woodland, scrub and grassland which encircles the proposed holiday accommodation and links to surrounding countryside of the Claw Valley.

The scheme seeks where possible to retain existing mature trees, hedge banks and vegetation. These boundaries help to break up the lodge proposals into individual sites that will feel self-contained. In addition to this, new hedges and tree planting will be provided to offer biodiversity gain. Please refer to mitigation planting plan by Rathbone Partnership. Water, grasslands and woodland will tie areas together to give a natural environment celebrating positive on site features and providing visual screening between rows of lodges for amenity and privacy of residents and to reduce the visual impact from views into site. Refer to LVIA by Rathbone.

HIGHWAYS

The main vehicular access will be from the unclassified highway to the east the site. The existing access junction appears to have been designed with adequate visibility splays. The roads connecting the site to the A388 appear to have low traffic flows and there is adequate road capacity within the local highway network. The lightly trafficked rural lanes in the vicinity of site are suitable for walking and cycling, giving access to a network of public footpaths and bridleways with links to nearby forestry woodland accessible to the public. Refer to report by AWP.

The main vehicular access will be from the unclassified highway to the east of the site. The existing access junction appears to have been designed with adequate visibility splays and set back. Refer to report by AWP

The use of the site as a farm prior to becoming a holiday complex has historically included the movement of a significant number of large vehicles along the rural highway network, which was adopted to be suitable for this use. Once construction is complete, vehicular access will predominantly be for smaller cars and vans rather than the large lorries required for construction or aggregate movement.

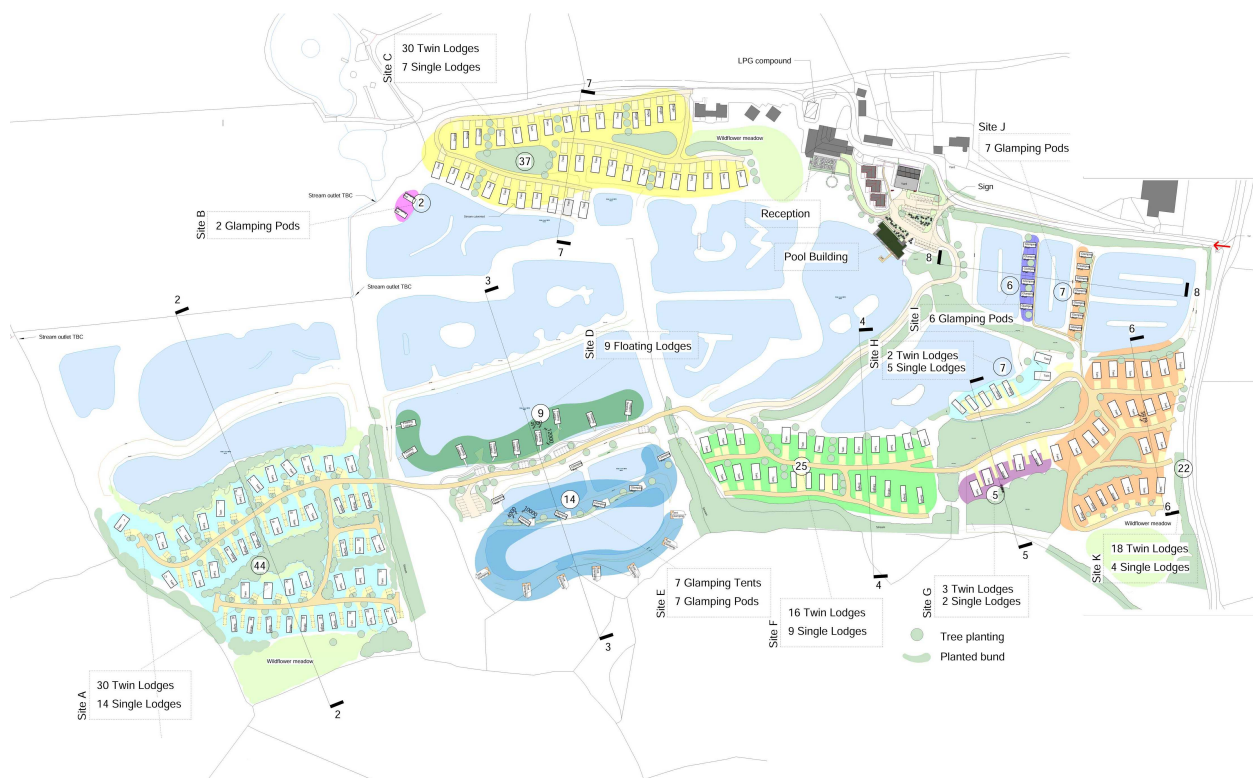
Additional passing places and priority signs will ensure the safety of the roads within the site. Walking routes within the site have been designed to enhance the recreational experience. Generally, the self-contained development would provide for some of the needs of visitors without the requirement to travel further afield.

LAYOUT

The lodges and eco-glamping pod accommodation units are clustered around the lakes and set within the existing open spaces within the site. The orientation of the lodges allows them to have a view of the lakes and by utilising the sloping topography, rows set back from the lakes will enjoy views over and between the lodges in front.

The existing farmhouse remains at heart of the complex providing reception, staff accommodation, a shop and dining and recreation areas. The proposed swimming pool / spa building will provide an impressive sense of arrival to the lakes and is a key attraction with the pool and treatment rooms overlooking the lakes.

Care has been taken to ensure that the form, height, layout and use of materials of the proposed swimming pool / spa and utility buildings respects and visually integrates into the immediate surroundings. An appropriately sensitive approach has been taken by ensuring the existing vegetation surrounding the lodge sites is retained, creating an intimate and peaceful environment.



APPEARANCE

The lodges will be timber clad and recessive in colour to reduce their impact when seen from long distance views.

The floating lodges feature standing seam metal cladding in visually recessive colours and dark grey / black windows and doors.



Cut away floor plan and perspective image of the floating lodges

Eco-glamping tents will be off white tensile skins over a ridged frame with timber windows and doors at the entrance.



Internal and external photograph of the glamping tent lodges

The swimming pool building / spa building features natural and black stained timber cladding and a green roof. The design sits low in the landscape and the windows and doors will be grey/black in colour.



Perspective images of the swimming pool building

The fishing / camping pods are timber clad with grey single ply / metal roofs

The utility building will have timber cladding and a grey metal roof.

SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainability principles will include the following provisions for building design, construction, choice of materials and mode of future operation.

Sustainable construction including:

- sustainable materials
- permeable roads and hard surfaces
- local labour force
- construction waste minimisation and management
- resilient and flexible design
- natural ventilation
- healthy buildings
- high levels of insulation and energy efficiency
- water efficiency and management
- adequate water supply available
- recycling of domestic waste (recyclable materials / greenwaste / food waste).

DRAINAGE

The site is located outside any Flood Zones. Given that the site area exceeds 1 hectare, the NPPF requires that a Flood Risk Assessment be carried out. The FRA assess the likely impact of the proposed development and determine risk of flooding or increase flooding elsewhere. The proposals provide surface water attenuation below greenfield run-off rates (about 25% below), so helping to reduce flood flows in the River Claw. On-site water treatment measures would also protect and secure water quality in the River Claw. Refer to FRA by Cole Easdon.

The lakes will form an integral part of the water management scheme. The proposed sustainable surface water features ensure that run-off rates are maintained and nitrate levels reduced. The proposed sustainable drainage systems integrates permeable tanked hardstanding with attenuation into the existing lakes.

Connection to an adopted sewer is unfeasible. It is therefore proposed to install an on-site treatment system. A series of gravity sewers would serve each development area, along with a pumping station to direct waste water to the treatment plant with effluent levels controlled to secure water quality in the River Claw.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT

The nearest bus stops are located some 2.3 miles to the west of the site and are situated at Clawton on the junction to the A388, Launceston to Holsworthy road. The principal buses serving this stop is the no. 638 with services to Okehampton - Halwill - Ashwater - Clawton – Holsworthy and 646, which provides services between Halwill - Holsworthy - Bideford – Barnstaple.

In addition, bus service by Stagecoach operates in Holsworthy some 4 miles to the north of the site, providing bus services to/from Bude (with access to beaches and tourism activities), Exeter, Barnstaple with access to the national rail network and national bus routes. These stops are accessible via the network of lightly trafficked and slow speed rural lanes in the vicinity of the site, and therefore have the potential to be used by some visitors and employees travelling to/from the site.

PARKING

The masterplan layout incorporates appropriate levels of parking, with a two dedicated car parking spaces for each lodge, and a single space for each fishing / camping pod and eco – glamping tent. The entrance also features a landscaped car parking area for new arrivals, visitors and anglers. The scheme will incorporate appropriate tracking for HGV deliveries and fire tender. Arriving visitors will be directed to the reception at the farmhouse where they will be informed as to the location of their accommodation.

RESIDENTIAL AMENITY

Clawford is relatively distant from sensitive receptors which could unduly be affected by the proposed development. During construction of the development, standard construction practices would be employed which are suitable to ensure that the amenities of neighbours are not significantly affected by noise or vibration: a Construction Environment Management Plan (CEMP) would be adopted to secure control. Once operational, noise would be minimal and further softened by the proposed planting. If deemed necessary, noise from the operational site could be further controlled by virtue of noise limits applied as conditions on the planning permission. The nature of the site, recessed into the surrounding landscape, would inherently minimise light intrusion from the site upon sensitive neighbouring uses, and again the proposed planting will help to further soften any light egress from the site. Given this, and the distance from sensitive receptors, it is considered that there would not be any harm to neighbours or the surrounding area.

INVOLVEMENT

Meeting on site with the local ward member Peter Watson on the 9th December.

PRE APPLICATION ADVICE

REF FPEM/0009/2020

5.3 The site is currently in use as a recreational fishing business of substantial scale. The proposed tourism accommodation would relate directly to this existing use and is considered to be compatible in scale with this use.

5.4 The proposal involves the reuse of a number of existing buildings that currently provide tourism accommodation at the site. It was evident at our site visit that the majority of these buildings are in need of modernisation and / or refurbishment to bring them back into use. The proposed development would deliver such improvements.

5.5 The proposed development includes various forms of tourism accommodation that are currently not provided at the site. It is clear therefore that the proposal would diversify the range and improve the quality of the existing tourism accommodation. In addition, the ancillary buildings proposed, such as the pool building, would improve the facilities at the site.

5.6 Taking account of the above, it is considered that the proposal satisfies parts a, b and c of Policy DM18. It is therefore considered that the principle of development is acceptable.

CRIME & DISORDER STATEMENT

- Sense of ownership to each area surrounding lodges.
- Lodges will have a good level of overlooking between access tracks and lodges creating natural surveillance. There is only a single point of access for the whole site and this assists the site safety and reduces the sites permeability for crime.
- Bin stores will be lockable.
- Low level lighting is required to avoid light spill and maintain the natural dark skies of the site. This can be positioned to ensure that residents feel safe.

RELEVANT NPPF PLANNING COMPLIANCE:

ACHIEVING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Paragraph 7 explains that there are three dimensions to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental, which give rise to the need for the planning system to perform several roles. The economic role includes ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth and innovation.

At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Paragraph 14 explains that for decision-taking, this means: ‘approving development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay; and where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out-of-date, granting permission unless: – any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole; or – specific policies in this Framework indicate development should be restricted.’

- The Clawford Lakes proposal responds positively to the Government’s drive towards sustainable development. A comprehensive approach to economic, social and environmental sustainability has underpinned the evolution of the proposals. The Applicant’s approach is one of building a sustainable holiday community located within a managed nature conservation and biodiverse setting, delivering a range of environmental and economic benefits. Clawford Lakes will generate benefits for the local community and will enable the long-term management of the environment delivering increased biodiversity. The site offers access to existing cycling and walking routes, and bus services; its high level of self-containment also means that travel patterns would be managed and sustainable.

BUILDING A STRONG AND COMPETITIVE ECONOMY

“18. The government is committed to securing economic growth in order to create jobs and prosperity, building on the country’s inherent strengths, and to meeting the twin challenges of global competition and of a low carbon future.” (NPPF 2012, p6)

“19. The government is committed to ensuring that the planning system does everything it can to support sustainable economic growth. Planning should operate to encourage and not act as an impediment to sustainable growth. Therefore, significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth through the planning system.” (NPPF 2012, p6)

- Clawford Lakes will deliver major economic benefits to the area. These comprise very substantial inward investment in the construction of the project, substantial job creation during both the construction and future operation stages (a high proportion of these being jobs for local people), with major expenditure injected into the local economy by those using the Clawford Lakes development, thereby supporting additional jobs, local companies and businesses. Please refer to economic report Prepared by Dominic Houston.

SUPPORTING A PROSPEROUS RURAL ECONOMY

“28. Planning policies should support economic growth in rural areas in order to create jobs and prosperity by taking a positive approach to sustainable new development. To promote a strong rural economy, local and neighbourhood plans should:

- support sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments that benefit businesses in rural areas, communities and visitors, and which respect the character of the countryside. This should include supporting the provision and expansion of tourist and visitor facilities in appropriate locations where identified needs are not met by existing facilities in rural service centres;
- promote the retention and development of local services and community facilities in villages, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship.” (NPPF 2012, p9)
- The NPPF supports the rural economy and recognises that tourism is a key economic component in rural areas. This is particularly the case in North Devon, as fully recognised in planning policy objectives. Clawford Lakes will deliver major benefits to local people and local communities and to the local economy by adding a high quality offering to the current tourism options. The site has been considered most suitable given its location outside the AONB, and in accordance with the adopted Local Plan. The site is proposed to be developed in a manner which protects and enhances nature conservation, landscape and biodiversity interests.
- The proposal introduces high quality tourism into an area where this is not currently present. It will diversify the tourism economy, creating a layer of ‘additionality’ in the Torridge holiday sector and will generate significant economic benefits to the area. In relation to local services and community facilities in villages, Clawford Lakes will assist in this regard because it will support Holsworthy and its facilities and provide jobs for local people.

PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT

“36. A key tool to facilitate this will be a Travel Plan. All developments which generate significant amounts of movement should be required to provide a Travel Plan.” (NPPF 2012, p10)

- Clawford Lakes provides a wide range of activities on site. Options exist to travel to Clawford Lakes via the strategic highway network (M5/A388 & A3072 / A3079), or some may choose the more sustainable rail option (Bristol / London / Exeter / Barnstaple). It is acknowledged that this is not a direct route, but is available and supported by the site's close proximity local bus services are available for one-off shopping or sight-seeing trips to Holsworthy, Bude and Barnstaple, the bus services would provide a sustainable option.
- There is a significant emphasis on the use of cycling and walking throughout the development with footpaths and cycle links into the local area; including connections to Holsworthy and Bude. All recreational activities within the provide opportunities for people to enjoy the countryside and the waterscape without the use of a motor car.

MEETING THE CHALLENGE OF CLIMATE CHANGE FLOODING AND COASTAL CHANGE

“93. Planning plays a key role in helping shape places to secure radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, minimising vulnerability and providing resilience to the impacts of climate change, and supporting the delivery of renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure. This is central to the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development.” (NPPF 2012, p21)

- The site is outside of any flood zones or designated catchment areas, The FRA and surface water drainage strategy ensures that water management across the site is satisfactory and not detrimental to any interests of importance. The proposal seeks to omit the risk of flooding from the development, which would advance local catchment management objectives and make a small contribution to reducing the rates of surface water run-off into the River Claw.
- In relation to climate change issues all lodges will be energy efficient and constructed using the sustainability principles set out on p6.

CONSERVING AND ENHANCING THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

“109. The planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

- protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, geological conservation interests and soils;
- recognising the wider benefits of ecosystem services;
- minimising impacts on biodiversity and providing net gains in biodiversity where possible, contributing to the government's commitment to halt the overall decline in biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures;
- preventing both new and existing development from contributing to or being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability; and
- remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate.” (NPPF 2012, p25)

“118. When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should aim to conserve and enhance biodiversity by applying the following principles: development proposals where the primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be permitted; opportunities to incorporate biodiversity in and around developments should be encouraged.” (NPPF 2012, p27)

- Clawford Lakes will conserve and enhance the natural environment by increasing the biodiversity of circa 31 hectares (78 acres) of existing holiday accommodation and fishing lakes. Clawford Lakes seeks to positively enhance nature, conservation and biodiversity to deliver a holiday community embedded within, and forming part of, a sustainable integrated habitat-rich environment. The Clawford Lakes proposal is, therefore, fully compliant with this NPPF objectives.

NORTH DEVON AND TORRIDGE LOCAL PLAN LOCAL PLAN

POLICY ST14: ENHANCING ENVIRONMENTAL ASSETS

- The proposed development allows for extensive landscape planting which is integral to the proposals. The landscape planting strategy is outlined on the LVIA mitigation plan and has been developed to provide landscape screening of the development, providing a rich ecological habitat and reflecting local landscape characteristics. This is considered to offer a rich and diverse landscape cover that provides a variety of habitats. Implementation could be secured via planning condition as appropriate.
- The emerging Local Plan supports high quality sustainable tourism development that promotes year-round activity, provided the environment isn't harmed. Economic or tourism related industries are supported provided adverse impacts are avoided. Claford Lakes promotes these policy objectives.
- High quality buildings and landscape design
- A consent geared towards all season use
- Sustainable off-site construction techniques with high insulation standards and sustainable use of materials
- A design that offers positive benefits to the environment

The emerging Local Plan sets out the vision for the Northern Devon economy as:

"A diverse and resilient economy that can adapt to challenges and maximise opportunities, underpinned by an appropriately skilled workforce and effective infrastructure. The economy will be rejuvenated in both urban and rural areas through delivery of improved skill levels, enhanced infrastructure and opportunities for sustainable growth in key sectors."

5.29 'During 2015/2016 the economy of northern Devon benefitted from £477 million tourist spend, which supported 11,086 related jobs (37). The facilities supporting tourism, including visitor accommodation and recreation facilities represent a major resource. The components are diverse and wide ranging in respect of resultant economic, social and environmental impacts. The challenge for the Local Plan is to ensure that the needs of the visitor, the tourism industry and the community can be met within environmental limits.' P55

5.30 The Local Plan seeks to maximise the benefits to be obtained from tourism, especially in respect of income and improved employment opportunities. At the same time resultant environmental disadvantage must be minimised. The tourism sector in northern Devon is based on and sustained by its natural and built environment. Key to increasing tourism derived benefits is the continued protection and enhancement of the area's environmental assets.

5.31 In order to achieve the objective of sustainable tourism, the area's tourism "offer" must be enhanced. Sustainable tourism development in northern Devon will be focused on qualitative improvements, which could include expansion of existing facilities. Delivery of a quality product, not only through environmental safeguards but also through improved standards in the quality and range of accommodation and attractions, is an important element in achieving sustainable development. A quality rather than quantity approach is required if the sector is to keep pace with continually evolving requirements and expectations. Proposals that result in the enhancement of existing attractions and destinations will be supported.

- The Clawford Lakes development would provide an important contribution to the economy and tourism offer in Torridge, and importantly do this with inherent respect for the environmental assets of the area. The improvements to existing habitats and creation of new rich habitat areas will enhance the local environment. The proposals therefore strongly align with the Local Plan vision for the North Devon economy.

POLICY ST01: PRINCIPLES OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

- The proposals have been developed to maximise benefits to the economy, local communities, sustainability and the environment. The proposed development fully complies with all of the emerging local plan objectives, the sustainability criteria set out in the NPPF and relevant policy framework within the emerging Local Plan.

POLICY ST02: MITIGATING THE IMPACT ON CLIMATE CHANGE

- The Clawford Lakes proposals incorporate sustainable construction practices and high levels of energy efficiency, together with the integration of the development into its landscape and topographical setting. It will also use high energy-efficient materials in construction, together with off-site fabrication, which improves construction efficiency and minimises waste. Sustainable water management and recycling measures are included in the scheme such as water harvesting. The on-going management at Clawford Lakes enables the development to be managed sustainably in the future.

Policy ST03: Adapting to Climate Change and Strengthening Resilience

- Clawford Lakes is not located in an area known to be at risk of flooding. The proposals would provide surface water attenuation below greenfield run-off rates (about 25% below), so helping to reduce flood flows in the River Claw. On-site water treatment measures would also protect and secure water quality in the River Claw. The proposed landscape and habitat networks across the site would also align with the Policy objectives. The Clawford Lakes development therefore fully complies with all of the criteria laid out in Policy ST03.

POLICY ST05: SUSTAINABLE CONSTRUCTION AND BUILDINGS

- Sustainability is fundamental and integral to the design of this project. The scheme at Clawford will adopt the same approach. The buildings would be designed to minimise energy demand and as far as possible, materials and the construction workforce would be sourced locally to increase the sustainability of the construction process. The sustainability of the buildings would be further enhanced through the use of water efficiency management measures and grey water recycling.

POLICY ST11: DELIVERING EMPLOYMENT AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Claford Lakes would be a key employer in the area once construction is complete, with the majority of jobs created expected to come from the local area. The development would contribute to the north Devon tourism economy providing a unique high-quality destination for tourists. The proposals would also deliver an increase in expenditure into the local North Devon economy. The benefits would be spread throughout the year given the year-round use which would occur at the site.

The benefits would be;

- Claford Lakes development will generate significant GVA per annum into the North Devon economy and;
- Annual ecosystems enhancement value
- The local economy would benefit from the purchase of goods and services
- Off-site spend elsewhere in North Devon.

POLICY ST13: SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

- The scheme responds positively to the need to diversify and improve the quality of tourism accommodation in Torridge. The Claford Lake proposals would attract visitors on a year-round basis, unlike many other tourism activities which are seasonal and therefore only provide benefits in the summer months. The hotel accommodation and facilities would be of high quality in terms of design, materials and fit out; incorporating many sustainable features. The site is not located within a sensitive ecological or historic setting where tourism development could cause harm. It is well located and accessible site in a sustainable inland location.
- The development fits the aspirations of those seeking a rural retreat, countryside experience, walking and outdoor recreation and hence is in harmony with the rural environment and perfectly located in this regard.
- Far from causing harm to the natural or historic environment, it would benefit the environment and significantly enhance biodiversity and the visitor experience.

POLICY ST14: ENHANCING ENVIRONMENTAL ASSETS

- As described previously, the Applicant's ethos is the enhancement of the natural environment. Environmental enhancement measures are inherent to the scheme which would meet with, and exceed, the objectives of Policy ST14. These would include increased biodiversity and a rich landscape framework reflecting North Devon landscapes.
- Claford Lakes is in a location generally distant from designated heritage assets and as such is unlikely to harm their settings. There are no designated heritage or non-designated heritage assets within the site.

POLICY ST16: DELIVERING RENEWABLE ENERGY AND HEAT

- Sustainable construction practices, high levels of energy efficiency will all be comprehensively applied. Clawford Lakes would exceed the Council's expectations in this regard. It would achieve all of objectives 1 and 2 of Policy ST16. It would go further than this by encompassing high energy efficient materials in construction, together with off-site fabrication, which improves construction efficiency and minimises waste. Clawford Lakes would utilise advanced energy efficient technology throughout the construction process and future operation.

POLICY DM05: HIGHWAYS

- On-going management of holiday traffic from the site through a Transport Plan, would manage and reduce car use, and ensure operational efficiency of the network.
- Clawford Lakes would provide significant facilities for cycling and walking for all users of the site. Cycling and walking coupled with other outdoor activities are fundamental to the philosophy of the development strategy. On site facilities will help to reduce the number of short external trips taken by residents.

POLICY DM06: PARKING PROVISION

- The scheme has been designed to include suitable parking in accordance with Council standards, and taking account of known usage levels.

POLICY DM08: BIODIVERSITY AND GEODIVERSITY

- The proposals for Clawford Lakes offer significant biodiversity, landscape, and community gains, Policy DM08 would be significantly advanced.

POLICY DM10: GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE PROVISION

- Clawford Lakes would provide significant levels of green infrastructure which not only meets the requirements of this policy, but exceed the minimum provision required.

POLICY DM17: TOURISM AND LEISURE ATTRACTIONS

- The Local Plan acknowledges the support for the expansion of existing tourism, visitor or leisure sites. The local road network can accommodate the additional traffic in an efficient and safe manner. The proposals will include a landscape framework that reflects local character types, so enhancing the landscape characteristics of a wide area. Landscape features would be conserved and protected species would be supported through the provision of a range of new and enhanced habitats.

PLANNING BENEFITS

As comprehensively indicated in the preceding section, Clawford Lakes will very effectively deliver a number of the key objectives in the government's NPPF and North Devon District Council's existing and emerging local planning strategy.

The NPPF is focussed on sustainable development which boosts the economy, protects and manages the environment and benefits local people.

The adopted Local Plan seeks to focus holiday accommodation outside of the Heritage Coast, Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and National Park, in or near to existing settlements. More specifically, it seeks to locate large-scale innovative tourism accommodation proposals. Clawford Lakes would align with these spatial policy and innovation objectives for holiday accommodation.

Local Plan policies seek to sustain the tourist economy that is so valuable to North Devon, balanced with protecting the environment. Clawford Lakes will deliver high quality holiday accommodation on an existing tourist site located outside of sensitive areas, in line with policy.

It would therefore deliver the Council's Vision and Objectives in the Local Plan. Specifically, Clawford Lakes would deliver sustainable development, and high quality tourism development in a location that is acknowledged as suitable in the Priority Area for Rural Regeneration.

Clawford Lakes supports a prosperous economy; bolstering and diversifying tourism, extending the tourism season, assisting the rural economy, promoting energy efficiency, complying with landscape, archaeology, ecology and nature conservation policies and delivering biodiversity objectives. The scheme delivers the high quality design and amenity objectives, and delivers sustainable construction.

Clawford Lakes is therefore closely aligned with the NPPF and matches Local Plan objectives. It will generate an exceptionally well managed environment for people, nature conservation and recreation, delivering increased access and facilities for local people.

This project would deliver a strong mix of key benefits including those related to environmental, economic, tourism, recreation, leisure, landscape and transport; comprehensively embodied in a sustainable, economically sound and well managed development.

ECONOMIC BENEFITS

Clawford Lakes will:

- be an important economic driver in the future of the North Devon economy through inward investment, local spend and employment generation;
- raise the tourism bar – delivering a level of quality holiday accommodation and facilities not currently present in this region of Devon;
- help to extend the holiday season through off-season use with the associated spread of economic benefits through the year; and
- be a highly sustainable exemplar project.

COMMUNITY BENEFITS

The applicant is also exploring the option to offer annual short-term membership options giving local residents and hotel guests the opportunity to use the spa, pool and fishing at the site. Local residents would benefit from reduced membership rates.

LOCAL JOB OPPORTUNITIES

The construction phase will generate new jobs. A significant number of long term jobs will be created to manage the leisure facilities and to manage and maintain the wider Clawford Lakes development.

ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS

The vision and design philosophy is to integrate holiday accommodation and recreation facilities into a habitat-rich biodiverse environment.

The Clawford Lakes proposals will deliver a number of the key objectives in the Government's National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and North Devon Council's adopted Local Plans. The NPPF is focussed on sustainable development which boosts the rural economy, protects and manages the environment and benefits local people.

Clawford Lakes will deliver high quality holiday accommodation on an existing holiday complex. Policies seek to sustain and enhance the tourist economy of North Devon, balanced with protecting the environment. Clawford Lakes is perfectly aligned with the NPPF and Local Plan objectives. It will generate a well managed environment for people, nature conservation and recreation. This project will deliver a strong mix of key benefits including environmental, economic, tourism, recreation, leisure, landscape and transport, comprehensively embodied in a sustainable, economically sound and well managed development.

Planning decisions must be made in accordance with the adopted development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The NPPF and the adopted Local Plan are the principal considerations for planning applications. The weight attributed to the adopted local plan policies will depend upon the degree to which they are consistent with the NPPF. The relevant policies are considered to be consistent with the NPPF, so should be afforded significant weight in the decision on the application.

SUMMARY & CONCLUSIONS

The vision for Clawford Lakes is to create a sustainable and inclusive vacation community centred on holiday lodge accommodation, where visitors can relax in a natural biodiverse environment.

This would be achieved within a carefully managed landscape and nature conservation framework, combining the needs of people and wildlife by integrating the built and natural environment in a managed setting. In this way, the lodges will integrate with a network of connected habitats.

Overall, the Clawford Lakes proposals represent a highly sustainable development as an exemplar within the Torridge at a site suitable for the expansion of tourist related development. The proposals are considered to be consistent with adopted and emerging local plan policy and would advance a range of key policy objectives relating to sustainability and the environment.

The proposals are also consistent with the national planning policy contained in the NPPF. In particular, they would further the NPPF policy towards the rural economy and the need for all development to be sustainable and respect the natural environments.