



Appeal Decision

Hearing held on 18 November 2025

Site visit made on 18 November 2025

by L Clark BA(Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 13th January 2026

Appeal Ref: APP/P2935/W/25/3371630

West View, Haydon Bridge, Hexham, Northumberland NE47 6NA

Grid References Easting: 383290, Northing: 564617

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Graeme Scantlebury against the decision of Northumberland County Council.
 - The application Ref is 25/02370/FUL.
 - The development proposed is siting of a caravan on a temporary basis (5 years) for use as a rural workers' dwelling.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Applications for costs

2. An application for costs was made by Northumberland County Council against Mr Scantlebury. This application is the subject of a separate Decision.

Preliminary Matters

3. The address and grid reference within the banner heading above have been taken from the appellant's appeal form, as the address differs from that on the planning application form. These locate the site as shown on the submitted drawings.
4. I recognise that the development has already occurred; however, I have altered the description of development in the banner heading above to remove the word 'retrospective' as this, itself, is not an act of development having regard to s55 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. I am satisfied that neither party is prejudiced by this course of action.
5. The Council referred to the Hexham Neighbourhood Plan, specifically policies H6 and H8, in the decision notice; however, this was in error. Reference to these policies should have been to the Haydon Parish Neighbourhood Plan (NP). I have dealt with the appeal on this basis.
6. An Enforcement Notice (EN) was served on the appellant. During the proceedings, the Council informed me that the EN has since been withdrawn. Notwithstanding this, any enforcement process is a separate matter which falls outside the scope of my assessment.
7. An updated location plan was provided prior to the Hearing following my request. The intention of this drawing was to provide a visual interpretation of all land under the appellant's control. I am satisfied that my acceptance of this did not evolve the scheme or prejudice anyone with an interest in the outcome of the appeal.

8. The appellant contends that he intends to expand his enterprise into poultry breeding for meat production. The potential expansion, however, was not raised during the application and was not before the Council at the time of its decision. This would evolve the proposal, and I have assessed the appeal based on what was before the Council and upon which it consulted upon at the time of its assessment.
9. During the Hearing, the appellant submitted photographs showing additional pages of his Herd Register in response to my questions. Neither the Council nor the Parish Council objected to their submission at the event, and consequently, the additional pages were accepted. As the Parish Council did not want a copy, the Council was provided with a set prior to the closing of the Hearing. I am satisfied that my acceptance of these did not evolve the scheme or prejudice anyone with an interest in the outcome of the appeal.
10. During proceedings, the Council clarified which parts of the Northumberland Local Plan 2016-2036 (Local Plan) Policies QOP1, QOP2, QOP4, and NP Policies H6 and H8 it relied upon in its assessment. The Parish Council added that, in addition to the Council's comments, he also considered Criterion e. of NP Policy H8 was relevant. As there was no dispute from the appellant, I have assessed the appeal on this basis.
11. The Council do not dispute that the application seeks temporary permission; however, it contends that five-years is not short-term. I note the Council stipulates three years would typically be temporary; however, I have not been directed to any adopted guidance which sets out what time period would be temporary. As there is no dispute that temporary permission is being sought, and in the absence of any formal definition, I refer to the ordinary meaning, that being, it is for a limited period. In this case, I have assessed the period on the basis of five years.

Main Issues

12. The main issues of this appeal are:

- whether there is an essential need for a dwelling to accommodate a rural worker to live at the site and, if not, whether there is sufficient evidence to demonstrate no suitable or available accommodation at, or near, their place of work; and,
- the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the site and the surrounding landscape.

Reasons

Essential Need

13. It is common ground that the appeal site lies within the open countryside. Local Plan Policy STP1 sets out the spatial strategy for the county and the circumstances under which development in the open countryside is supported, including where it provides for residential development in accordance with, amongst other matters, Policy HOU8.
14. Policy HOU8 supports isolated residential development in the open countryside where there is an essential and clearly established need for a full-time rural worker, necessary to meet the operational needs of a rural business, to live permanently at or near their place of work in the countryside, subject to certain criteria. Namely that the

business is financially sound and viable with a clear prospect of remaining so, and that the functional need could not be fulfilled by other existing accommodation on the landholding unit or any other existing accommodation in the immediate area, which is suitable and potentially available for occupation by the worker.

15. Local Plan Policy HOU8 reflects paragraph 84 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), which states that the development of isolated homes in the countryside should be avoided unless one or more circumstances apply. This includes where there is an essential need for a rural worker, including those taking majority control of a farm business, to live permanently at or near their place of work in the countryside.

Functional need

16. There is no dispute that the caravan has been on the appeal site (West View) since approximately 2022 or that the appellant moved into it sometime in early 2023. At the event, the appellant stated verbally that since moving to West View and until approximately June 2025, he had been living off his savings, income from rearing the calves and income from working as a delivery driver for Tesco's between the hours of 19:00 and 23:00. However, since the pending enforcement action and the last batch of calves having moved off-site, he has stopped rearing and has been working full time as a salesman selling solar panels.
17. The appellant gave an account of his day-to-day activities when he was operating his enterprise at West View and also described how, prior to the EN being served, he had kept at any one-time batches of up to 5 bull calves.
18. There was no dispute that the images of the Herd Register submitted with the planning application and subsequent appeal were incomplete. The photographs excluded, amongst other matters, page numbers and also failed to display the full record.
19. The appellant did, however, provide the missing pages during the Hearing. He confirmed that record No 31 (page 6) was the start of his enterprise at West View, with previous records covering the enterprise he operated at his former address. He also confirmed that he has had two batches of calves since starting his enterprise, these being records No 31 to 36 and No 37 to 40.
20. I heard that the calves would be bought and then moved on to West View, aged approximately 2 to 3 days old. It was apparent during the Hearing, and upon closer examination of the Herd Register, that the time between the recorded Date of Births (column 2) and the Date of Movement (column 7) contained a number of inaccuracies, namely with regard to the ages of the calves, which ranged between approximately 15 days old to approximately 2 months and not 2 to 3 days as stated.
21. Furthermore, as noted above, I was informed verbally by the appellant that he stopped his enterprise in approximately June 2025; however, later in the proceedings, it was confirmed verbally that he stopped when the last calves moved off-site. The appellant's Herd Registrar has this date documented as 11 August 2025. Notwithstanding this, the appellant did not dispute that his Herd Register contained inaccuracies with dates that he recorded. It was confirmed verbally by the appellant that the date of movement was typically the date that the farmer who sold him the calves told him to input into the register, rather than the date the animals actually moved.

22. At the event, the appellant explained that he usually undertook the first feed at 07:00 and then the next at 15:00 with milk made up in the caravan. He also confirmed that he checked the calves intermittently throughout the day. However, between the hours of 19:00 and 23:00, when he was undertaking deliveries, the calves were unchecked but were typically asleep.
23. During the proceedings, I also saw video evidence of the appellant feeding one calf from a batch. There was no dispute between the main parties that this was being undertaken from within the barn and not from within the caravan, which was stated in the appellant's appeal statement.
24. Despite the differences in the Herd Register, it is clear that there have been two cycles of calf rearing since the appellant moved onto West View and that all calves in each batch were moved off-site at the same time. This being 12 March 2025 for batch one (records Nos 31 to 36), and 18 August 2025 for batch two (records Nos 37 to 40).
25. I was informed that each batch is kept for approximately three months. Taking the dates when the calves moved off-site and when the next batch moved on, the evidence shows that there was an approximately two-month gap between each batch. While I accept the reasoning as to why there are currently no calves on site, I have nothing before me to quantify why there was an approximately two-month gap between each batch being brought to West View.
26. The appellant provided verbal clarification that the calves always stayed inside the barn and did not go into the field. During this time, he explained that while weaning the calves, he also castrates and dehornes them. From the evidence before me, I have no reason to take a different view.
27. I acknowledge that the barn and caravan currently do not have access to main electricity, and any power generated is via either solar panels, a gas boiler or a generator. However, I have been told that the barn does have power sockets, which provide light and power. Therefore, from the evidence before me, whilst formulated milk for the calves may have been made up in the caravan, it is also likely that the preparation of milk could also be made directly within the barn. It was also explained that for ventilation purposes, whilst it was preferable to have the main doors open, the gaps at the top of the barn could give sufficient ventilation to the calves.
28. In his 'counterargument to Parish Council', the appellant contends that his Herd Register confirms a regular presence and turnover of, amongst other things, sheep and poultry. However, the Herd Register contains no record of this, with the appellant confirming verbally during the proceedings that no records are needed. Notwithstanding this, I accept that approximately 12 Jacob sheep may have been kept at West View in approximately 2024, all of which may have had lambs which were kept outside.
29. The appellant is of the view that an on-site presence is required during calving and lambing season. He confirmed, however, during the Hearing that he would not be taking on any sheep in the future if the appeal were allowed, as sheep were not worth keeping, and that he would only be rearing calves.
30. I heard that security on site is provided mainly by the on-site presence and CCTV, utilising cameras powered by batteries charged by solar panels. I was also told that the enterprise was small-scale and that if a worker was not present, there would be a

risk of theft of valuable tools and machinery. I acknowledge that there was a number of valuable tools within the barn; however, I have nothing before me to demonstrate that the current CCTV, which I saw, provided camera cover externally, would not be sufficient deterrence to any anti-social behaviour or potential theft.

31. I did see several hens inside the barn. The appellant confirmed that they are fed once in the morning, which, in my mind, indicates that low-level husbandry is required.
32. From the evidence before me, I am not persuaded that the level of enterprise the appellant operated generated a functional need to live in the countryside.

Financial

33. The appellant told me that he buys 5 calves at a time from a wholesaler for approximately £50 per calf. He spends approximately £47 on one bag of milk for each calf, which lasts about the length of time it takes until their stomachs develop to a stage where they could take hard feed (hay). At this point, he would then sell the calves for approximately £150 each. The appellant also sells eggs produced by his chickens via an honesty box for approximately £1.50 a box.
34. Apart from what the appellant explained during the proceedings, I have no substantive financial information. I therefore cannot be certain that, since starting, whether the enterprise is financially viable and sound.

Other available accommodation

35. The appellant verbally informed me that whilst previously renting in Haydon Bridge prior to completing his sale on West View, the accommodation was not in good condition. He also confirmed that rents within the area were approximately £1,000 per month and that while he had previously paid the rent on that property for the year, this money was from the sale of his previous property in Longframlington, and that such rents were unviable in the longer term.
36. An interested party corroborated the appellant's view by stating that renting in Haydon Bridge was expensive and that properties often excluded tenants with dogs. As I have nothing from the Council to demonstrate that there are other suitable or available accommodation near West View, I am satisfied that there is no alternative accommodation likely to become available in the immediate area as set out in Local Plan Policy HOU8.

Conclusion on essential need

37. I acknowledge that the enterprise at West View is relatively new and that living on site would save time, expense and added cost for the appellant. I also acknowledge that the Planning Practice Guidance¹ recognises that there may be a degree of uncertainty with new enterprises and indicates that it may be appropriate to consider granting permission for a temporary dwelling for a trial period. However, as stated above, apart from what the appellant explained during the proceedings, I have no financial information to demonstrate that the enterprise had been financially sound and viable. Furthermore, for the reasons given above, it has not been demonstrated that there is an essential need for a rural worker at West View. In this instance, I do

¹ Paragraph: 010 Reference ID: 67-010-20190722

not consider that a temporary permission to establish whether the enterprise is viable in the longer term would be appropriate in this case.

38. I do not doubt that an on-site presence would be effective and would reduce the time the appellant would be required to travel to address animal welfare, however, even if there is no other existing accommodation in the immediate area, from the evidence before me, I am not persuaded that the level of enterprise the appellant operated generated a functional need to live in the countryside.
39. My attention has been drawn to two appeal decisions which allowed agricultural workers' dwellings² in the open countryside. The appellant explained that both decisions demonstrated there was an essential need for a rural worker's dwelling. Whilst this is not disputed, I note that in the case of appeal at Throphill, the parties agreed that there was an essential and clearly established need for a full-time rural worker, which is not the case in the appeal before me. With regard to the case at Great Whittington, the appellant had submitted sufficient evidence to demonstrate that the family farm was financially sound and viable with a clear prospect of remaining so. However, in the case before me, I have limited financial information. Given my findings above, I do not consider these cases to be comparable to the scheme before me.
40. For the above reasons, I conclude it has not been demonstrated that there is an essential need for a rural worker to reside at West View. As such, in the absence of a demonstrable essential need, the proposal would conflict with Local Plan Policies HOU 8, STP1 and HOU 2. Furthermore, the proposal would conflict with the requirements set out in Paragraph 84 of the Framework.

Character and appearance

41. Local Plan Policies QOP1 and QOP2, together with NP Policy H6, relate to design. Collectively, they seek to ensure new development makes a positive contribution to local character and ensures that development conserves and enhances the local distinctiveness by demonstrating high-quality design.
42. Criterion 2. b. of Local Plan Policy QOP2 seeks to ensure that development retains, where appropriate, or introduces trees and soft landscaping. Local Plan Policies QOP4 and ENV3, and NP Policy H8, relate to landscape. These collectively seek to ensure that new development incorporates landscaping that is of a high quality in accordance with the principles set out in Policy QOP1, and that new development is informed by the context of the site and its surrounding landscape in terms of height, scale, massing, orientation, and position.
43. The Parish Council explained during proceedings that the proposal would also conflict with NP Policy H8 criterion B. This seeks to conserve and enhance, amongst other matters, the western approaches, which it contends include the approach from the bottom of the hill, the B6319, and the minor lane (the U8128) immediately in front of the appeal site.
44. It is common ground that the location of West View is rural in character. I saw that West View is situated in an elevated position to the north side of the Tyne Valley, with rolling countryside to the south leading towards the A69. There is limited tree cover within the immediate context, with the land prominently laid to pasture, with a

² APP/P2935/W/24/3351301 - Land North East of Throphill, Road to Throphill, Throphill Northumberland, and APP/P2935/W/24/3344897 - East Farm, C224 Military Road Junction to District Boundary, Great Whittington, Northumberland

mix of low open fences, hedgerows and stone walls marking field boundaries. Given the topography, the barn associated with West View can be easily seen from several locations within the surrounding landscape.

45. The caravan, however, is situated to the rear of the barn and is nestled between it and the hillside in the adjacent field. It is rectangular in shape, with a mix of white and green walls and a mainly flat roof and is enclosed by a timber fence approximately 1.8 metres high on all sides.
46. Whilst the topography rises steeply to the rear (northwest), and ground levels are significantly higher than the U8128, I saw that both the roof and parts of the northeast and northwest elevations of the caravan could easily be seen from the Public Right of Way leading to Hill House. From this point, however, the barn mainly dominated its immediate background.
47. I also saw that the roof could readily be seen above the fenceline from both the northeast and southwest when approaching from the U8128. I am mindful, however, that the appellant's Plan 204.CP1 Rev B shows a planting screen to the northwest and southwest outside of the enclosure. I also note that the Council do not dispute that the caravan is not visible from views across the Tyne Valley to the south and only partially visible above the fence when travelling along the U8128, and that additional planting would soften the caravan within wider views. Whilst no planting specifications accompany the appeal, I am satisfied that the caravan could be suitably screened through the imposition of a suitably worded condition, and therefore, otherwise unacceptable development could be made acceptable.
48. For the above reasons, I conclude that the development would not cause any unacceptable effects upon the character or appearance of the site and the surrounding landscape. It follows that the development therefore accords with the relevant parts of Local Plan Policies QOP1, QOP2, QOP4, STP1, ENV1 and ENV3, which collectively require development to conserve the local distinctiveness by demonstrating high-quality design.

Other Matters

49. I acknowledge that the appellant has undertaken works at West View which may have improved the visual appearance of the existing barn, which in turn, aided the security of the site for himself and his neighbours. Furthermore, the works undertaken to the front of the barn may have improved the area, providing parking for people wishing to buy eggs and take part in horse riding. I also heard that the appellant has integrated into the community since moving to Haydon Bridge. However, for reasons given above, these benefits do not demonstrate that there is an essential and clearly established need for a full-time rural worker to live at West View.
50. Furthermore, the absence of harm to highway safety and drainage are neutral matters in the overall planning balance, as these would be likely requirements of any well-designed development.
51. I am aware that the appellant has sought to convert the existing barn into residential accommodation through two separate applications³, both of which were refused by the Council, and that the Notification of Prior Approval application was subsequently

³ Ref 24/00779/FUL - Conversion/Change of use of Agricultural Barn to residential dwelling and Ref 24/02917/AGTRES - Notification of Prior Approval for change of use from agricultural building to residential

dismissed at appeal. Any advancement of this proposal falls outside the scope of my assessment, which must focus on the planning merits of the proposed development sought. I have considered this appeal proposal on its own merits and concluded that it would cause harm for the reasons set out above.

Planning Balance and Conclusion

52. I have found that through the imposition of a suitably worded condition relating to a planted screen, the position of the caravan would not cause harm to the character and appearance of the site or its surrounding landscape. I recognise that a grant of planning permission would enable the appellant to remain at West View. I have therefore considered the rights of the appellant under Article 8, as set out under the Human Rights Act 1998, which affords the right to respect for private and family life, home and correspondence. This is a qualified right, and interference may be justified in the public interest, but requires the application of proportionality to balance the fundamental rights of an individual against the legitimate interests of other individuals and the wider community and public interest.
53. I acknowledge that a dismissal of the appeal would lead to the appellant having to move from their current accommodation and would interfere with their rights under Article 8. However, the interference would be in accordance with the law and legitimate public interest aims of protecting the countryside from isolated development. I therefore find the interference would be proportionate and necessary, and it would not amount to a violation of the human rights of the appellant. The protection of the public interest cannot be achieved by means that are less interfering of their rights.
54. Therefore, on balance, the proposal conflicts with the development plan taken as a whole, and material considerations do not indicate a decision otherwise than in accordance with the development plan. I therefore conclude that it is proportionate and necessary to dismiss the appeal.

L Clark

INSPECTOR

APPEARANCES

FOR THE APPELLANT:

Mr Graeme Scantlebury Appellant

FOR THE LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITY:

Ms Kate Blyth Planning Area Manager (West), BA (Hons), MA TP
Northumberland County Council

INTERESTED PARTIES:

Mr John Nattrass Neighbour

Ms Carolyn Hagger Neighbour

Mr David Thornhill Chair of Haydon Parish Council

DOCUMENTS SUBMITTED AT THE HEARING

Mr Graeme Scantlebury provided 3 photographs (pages 3, 5 and 7) from his Herd Register.