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FROM AONB - JAC
TO Chief Planner
OUR REF
DATE 15 December 2016
ORIGINATOR Nidderdale AONB Manager

PLANNING CONSULTATION

APPLICATION TYPE: 005 Other Major Largescale
APPLICATION NO 16/02777/COUMAJ
PROPOSAL Change of Use of Woodland to form Off-Road Driving Course (Site Area 79.5ha) (Revised Scheme).
LOCATION Swinton
GRID REF:
APPLICANT: Mr M Cunliffe-Lister

My observations on the above application are as follows:-

The reports on the impact of the off-road driving proposal on noise and ecology are helpful but the key issue for the Joint Advisory Committee (JAC) remains the impact on tranquillity. The National Planning Policy Framework specifically advises local planning authorities to protect sites that are 'demonstrably special to a local community and [of] particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value... tranquillity or richness of its wildlife (paragraph 77). It is clear from the objections to the original proposal by mainly local people that the wood is highly valued primarily as a relatively unspoilt place of refuge despite periodic timber harvesting work and other forestry operations which the overwhelming majority accept as necessary and unremarkable. The opportunity for the public to enjoy the wood has been significantly enhanced by Swinton Estate's willingness to allow members of the public to wander freely through the wood both on and off public rights of way, but the JAC is concerned that the use of the wood as an off-road driving course on up to six days a week will limit future enjoyment of the wood by the public and have an adverse impact on users of public rights of way. As well as noise, the impact of off-road vehicles is the result of their form, movement and colour, and their physical proximity to people using rights of way. Tyre tracks and ruts caused by the vehicles would detract from its unspoilt character, and the level of activity would disrupt the woodland's sense of place to the detriment of the amenity of recreational users. The JAC acknowledges the importance of the hotel and the wider estate to the local economy, not to mention its contribution to maintaining the special qualities of the AONB's landscape, but is unable to support this application for the reasons outlined above.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul Bryson".

Signed