

**Northamptonshire County Council  
Countryside Services  
Planning Application Supporting Statement**

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This statement supports the planning application for change of use of the Mackintosh Residential Centre at Brixworth Country Park

**1.0 Background to Planning Application**

- 1.1 The 24 bedroom Mackintosh Centre was provided as part of the Millennium Lottery funded Countryside for All project at Brixworth Country Park and Pitsford Water. The centre was run by the Country Park from 1998 to 2008 as a fully accessible self catering accommodation for groups to hire. The centre.
- 1.2 The original business plan aim was for the facility to operate on a self financing basis. The centre never achieved this aim and when the centre manager left the service (circa 2007) it was decided that revenue subsidy could no longer be provided to offer the service and the manager post was not recruited to.
- 1.3 As part of a review of country park business arrangements and the need to maximise use of assets, an alternative use of the centre was explored. This included consultation with other residential providers both in NCC and the private sector and no alternative provider of residential accommodation was identified.
- 1.4 The funding provider (now the Big Lottery) has been consulted and has raised no objections to the proposed change of use.
- 1.5 In order to meet an identified need for meeting room and activity space for both country park educational activities and events and opportunities for income generation from the hire of the centre to both community and commercial groups, it has been decided that changing the use of the centre to meeting/function rooms and office space for the re-location of country park staff from County Hall is the preferred option.

**2.0 Planning**

2.1 Although the building has always been part of a Country Park, planning Permission for a change of use is considered necessary as the building will no longer provide any residential function.

**3.0 Statement of Use**

- 3.1 The bunk rooms will be converted to provide:
  - 1x office room for the Countryside Services administration team
  - 2x meeting/function rooms. Both are an expansion of an existing functions provided at the Mackintosh Centre which already has one meeting room and office bases for park staff.
  - 2x store rooms serving office and meeting rooms.
- 3.2 The Countryside Services administration team will be re-located from County Hall in order to free up corporate office space. The team consists of 4 people:

the Countryside Services Manager, 2x part time Administration clerks and a Pocket Parks officer and the park will become their new work base.

3.3 The use of the meeting/function rooms will be administered by the Countryside Service and not leased to another party. The rooms will be used to support country park activities, including the environmental education programme for schools and groups as well as public events. The rooms will also be available to hire by both community and corporate groups. It is anticipated that the rooms will primarily be used 8am to 6pm; however, they may also be used for evening functions. The country park grounds are open every day all year. There are no other residential or business properties overlooking the park or its buildings and it is therefore not anticipated that any activity related to these buildings will be a nuisance to any neighbours.

3.3 A large car park is available on site with ample capacity; however, there is not expected to be any discernable difference between the number of vehicles associated with residential centre operation compared to its changed use as office and activity rooms.

3.4 The conversion work would be undertaken under the supervision of the Council's Property Asset Management section to ensure compliance with all building and other regulations.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Chris Haines', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Chris Haines  
Countryside Services Manager  
15<sup>th</sup> October 2010