

[REDACTED]
Sent: 25 June 2026 16:02

To: Planning [REDACTED]

Subject: DC/26/0732 – Further applicant response to objector's Counsel's Opinion

Please forward this to Daniel Holmes, case officer for DC/26/0732, and place this correspondence on the application file as applicant clarification in response to Counsel's Opinion submitted by objector.

Application DC/26/0732 – Coombewick House, London Road, Ashington
Further applicant response to Counsel's Opinion submitted by objector

Dear Mr Holmes,

I write further to the Counsel's Opinion dated 10 June 2026, submitted on behalf of the neighbouring objector.

I have already provided a Planning Supporting Statement and a further response to the Parish Council and neighbour objections, together with photographic evidence showing the access field, access track and screening both historically and as they exist now. I do not propose to repeat all of those points, but I wish to make the following further observations so that my position is clear.

The Counsel's Opinion does not identify an automatic legal bar to the grant of a further temporary permission. The Planning Practice Guidance is plainly a material consideration, but its application remains a matter of planning judgment for the Council on the particular facts of the case. The relevant issue is whether the unusual circumstances of this site provide clear planning justification for a further controlled temporary permission and for the retention of the already-established access infrastructure.

The application is not for an unrestricted permanent dwelling in the countryside. Properly understood, it is a single, controlled proposal for the further temporary siting and occupation of the existing mobile home, with associated decking and ramped access, together with the retention of the existing access track and turning area which serve that occupation and the wider lawful/residential fallback position associated with the barn. The mobile home element remains temporary and capable of being controlled by condition. The access track is existing infrastructure, has now been in place for a considerable period, is shown in the submitted photographic evidence as having assimilated into the landscaped field setting, and has not attracted any objection from the Highway Authority.

The objector's Counsel places considerable weight on the repeated temporary permissions and on the fact that the barn conversion has not yet been implemented. I acknowledge that the planning history is unusual, but it should not be fairly characterised as simple inaction or as an attempt to secure an unrestricted permanent

residential use by default. The history includes appeal proceedings, repeated prior approval applications, professional work on alternative development options, replacement-dwelling proposals, personal/family circumstances, planning/enforcement queries, and significant water-neutrality constraints which affected deliverability. That history is evidenced by a continuing sequence of planning applications, professional drawings, technical work, legal and planning advice, investigations, and expenditure directed at achieving a lawful residential outcome on the site, rather than by an absence of intention to progress development. The position has also materially changed following the more recent change in approach to water neutrality.

The previous appeal decision remains a material planning consideration. The Inspector considered the mobile home and access in the context of the site and did not find unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the countryside. The current position is stronger in visual terms because the access field and access route are now established, planted and screened. The photographic appendix submitted with my previous response shows that the access is not a harsh or urbanising feature, but sits within a managed, landscaped rural field setting.

The permanent retention of the access track should not be treated as though a new access road is now being proposed across an untouched greenfield site. The access exists. It is rural in character, visually contained, and has practical benefits in providing a more self-contained access arrangement for Coombewick House, reducing reliance on the shared access associated with Coombewick Farm. The Highway Authority has not objected.

The Counsel's Opinion also relies on the Planning Practice Guidance relating to repeated temporary permissions. I do not dispute that the guidance must be considered. However, it does not remove the Council's discretion to reach a planning judgment on the particular facts. In this case, clear justification exists because of the unusual planning history, the continuing residential fallback position associated with the barn, the changed water-neutrality position, the established and visually assimilated nature of the development, the absence of any objection from the Highway Authority, and the absence of any identified technical harm sufficient to justify refusal.

It is also important not to conflate arguments about duration with the actual planning effects of the development. The mobile home and access have formed part of the site context for a considerable period. Their presence has not generated any identified highway harm, drainage harm, ecological harm or wider public harm. The objection remains a neighbour objection supported by legal opinion, but it does not identify any new statutory consultee objection or technical evidence demonstrating unacceptable planning harm.

For those reasons, the Counsel's Opinion does not justify refusal. It is an objection prepared on behalf of a neighbouring party and presents the planning history selectively. The Council remains entitled to exercise its own planning judgment, taking into account the full history, the submitted Planning Supporting Statement, the

photographic evidence, the existing Class Q/residential fallback position, the changed water-neutrality context, and the actual planning effects of the existing development.

If the Council considers it helpful, I would be happy to facilitate a site visit so that the current relationship between the mobile home, barn, access track, field planting, screening and surrounding properties can be properly understood on site.

I respectfully ask that the application be determined on its planning merits, rather than by reference to the possibility of legal challenge raised by the objector.

Kind regards,

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the signature of the sender.