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WATERFALLS COUNTRY ESTATE SET TO CREATE JOBS

A brand new luxury eco holiday resort in Northumberland is set to boost regional business and create 126 jobs in the construction and leisure service industry.

Waterfalls Country Estate, a 14 acre site just off the A68 in Ridsdale, Northumberland, is currently going through the planning process and, if accepted, will have a positive impact on the local economy - not only boosting tourism, but also creating an additional spend within region of £2million, according to an Economic Impact assessment by Tourism UK Ltd.

The development is the brainchild of local entrepreneur Sherod Walker, 24, who has undertaken extensive consultations throughout the planning process with parties including the Environment Agency, Natural England, One North East, Northumberland Tourism, Northumberland National Parks and a number of local residents and businesses. Mr Walker has also consulted with Northumberland County Council over the planned development.

He said: "The Waterfalls Country Estate development would be fantastic news for the regional economy, with the facilities to attract tourists from all over the UK and further afield. We will use local materials and local suppliers during the build, helping to create 106 jobs in the construction sector, but also a further 20 full time equivalent roles in the leisure and hospitality sector on site.

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“We look forward to the planning decision in November and, if planning permission is granted, it's aimed that work will start on site in December on an exceptional development which will benefit both regional tourism and the local economy.”

Waterfalls Country Estate will be designed to blend in with the local landscape of rural Northumberland and will have 18 luxury chalets and three high quality holiday cottages, converted from existing stone barns. The resort will also house a restaurant and bar, pool and beauty spa, a state of the art equestrian centre and sporting facilities.

Liz Askew, landlady of The Gun Inn pub in Ridsdale, said: “Waterfalls will bring increased footfall to the area – the more people come here, the more people will spend money here which will hopefully be spread around local businesses as well as Waterfalls. It will also bring jobs, helping to employ local people in an area where jobs are scarce.

“The plans look great – everything will blend in with the surroundings and it will enhance what we already have in the area.”

Mr Walker has worked with Newcastle-based GWK Architects on the design for the luxury chalets, which has been adapted to help enhance the local area. Chalets will be eco friendly and contemporary in style, using locally sourced, traditional materials of slate, timber, stone and sedum-type roofs. They will also be secluded and private, with excellent views over the Northumberland countryside.

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Giles Ingram, executive director for Northumberland Tourism, said: "The high quality of this proposal and the intended availability of a range of activities both on site and further afield is just what visitors are looking for these days. It should provide the perfect place to relax and reinvigorate, very much in tune with Northumberland's growing national reputation. Indoor facilities should attract customers year-round, which is just what this part of the county needs."

Geoff Hodgson, chairman of the North East Tourism Advisory Board: "The objectives for Waterfalls sound very exciting and I am sure the resort will be very popular with visitors to the region who are looking for a holiday experience with a sustainable element to it."

Rachel Anderson from the North East Chamber of Commerce, said: "Whilst every planning application has to be judged on its merits, developments which bring jobs and higher level hospitality skills to the local area and help to maintain vibrant rural communities should be encouraged. The recent increase in tourist numbers to Northumberland has seen a rising demand for top quality accommodation and facilities and the county needs to offer new developments to meet demand and provide as much revenue for the county from high spending visitors as possible.

"Northumberland is definitely on the worldwide tourism map and good quality developments appeal to both new markets looking for luxury and those tempted to return because their experience was so good."

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Photo caption:

Sherod Walker, project director for Waterfalls Country Estate

Impression – Chalet at Waterfalls Country Estate

Notes to Editors:

- Waterfalls Country Estate will be a unique luxury eco holiday resort in the heart of rural Northumberland. Set in a 14 acre site, it will offer a traditional country estate experience for visitors looking for a truly memorable holiday in this beautiful county.
- The exclusive accommodation will comprise 18 luxury chalets and three holiday cottages (converted from existing stone barns) designed and equipped to the highest standards, whilst site facilities include a restaurant, bar, pool and beauty spa. Waterfalls will also have a state of the art equestrian centre.
- Sherod Walker won the Young Businessman of the Year accolade at the Pride in Tynedale Awards in 2005 and was runner up in 2006.