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WATERFALLS ESTATE SCHEME IS OF STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE

Only a few days after the planning appeal hearing ended [2nd of February 2011], it has been announced that the Waterfalls Estate scheme is to be included in Northumberland's strategic tourism document known as the ATMaP (Area Tourism Management Plan).

The Northumberland Area Tourism Management Plan is the tourism strategy and action plan for the County, two of the main objectives are to increase visitor spend in Northumberland and to derive maximum benefit from tourism across Northumberland.

The scheme which is proposed near Ridsdale in Northumberland was refused planning permission at Northumberland's West Area Planning Committee in June 2010 despite being recommended for approval and strong local support. Waterfalls Estate appealed against the decision at a hearing lasting 2 days and are awaiting a decision in March 2010.

Although the decision as to whether or not the scheme is granted planning permission now lies with the Planning Inspectorate, the ATMaP document was used to assist the Local Authority in assessing the Waterfalls Estate planning application which was recommended for approval by Northumberland County Council's planning officers in June 2010.



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The Waterfalls project was assessed by the Culture & Tourism Board, and subsequently endorsed by the Northumberland Tourism Board for inclusion in Northumberland's ATMaP. The panel included representatives from the Northumberland County Council, Kielder Water & Forest Park, Northumberland Coast AONB (on behalf of the landscape partnerships), and Northumberland Tourism.

Sherod Walker, the entrepreneur driving the scheme forward, said: "I'm absolutely delighted that the board have assessed the scheme and considered it to be of strategic importance to the county. To be included in the document alongside the likes of Seaton Deleval Hall and Housesteads on Hadrian's Wall is a wonderful achievement."

"The ATMaP was highlighted throughout the planning officer's report last June and the officer quite rightly identified that in light of central Government guidance in recent years that planning must become more spatially aware and recognising of objectives beyond those of just the adopted development plan. I have always said there is much more to planning than just policy, we need to look at the bigger picture."

"We have always contended that the scheme will be of huge importance to the future of tourism in the county. Not only does the scheme have the support from the tourism departments and representatives from the tourism community, but now the scheme has been embedded into the future of Northumberland. All this before

we have even been granted planning permission, let alone put a spade in the ground. Hopefully this is a sign of great things to come."

Caroline Stewart, Deputy Chief Executive of Northumberland Tourism, said: "The aim of the assessment process is for Northumberland's public / private tourism partnership to understand and prioritise which key strategic projects are being developed in the county."

"The panel felt that the Waterfalls Estate project addresses accommodation need and demonstrates strong environmental ethos, and it has potential to make a positive contribution to Northumberland's destination brand. The panel recognised the potential positive economic impact to the area."

- ENDS -

For more media information, please contact media@waterfallsestate.co.uk

Notes to Editors:

- Waterfalls will be a unique luxury eco holiday resort in the heart of rural Northumberland. Set in a 16 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 pool and beauty spa. Waterfalls will also have a state of the art equestrian centre.
- Dr David Bellamy OBE is supporting plans for Waterfalls Country Estate.
- The scheme received over 330 signatures of support during the planning process.
- The Waterfalls development will also have a positive impact on the wider regional economy in North East England - not only boosting tourism, but also creating an additional spend of £2million within the region, according to an Economic Impact Assessment by Tourism UK Ltd. Tourism is a major part of the North East regional



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economy, contributing almost £4bn and employing more than 60,000 people. The sustainably designed development will also bring 56FTE jobs to the area, as well as creating over 100 new jobs in the construction industry and a further 20 full time roles on site.

- Sherod Walker won the Young Businessman of the Year accolade at the Pride in Tynedale Awards in 2005 and was runner up in 2006.
- More information on the ATMaP is available at www.northumberlandtourism.co.uk.