

Country park lodges plan will support future

A plan to build up to 200 holiday lodges within Dalkeith Country Park will help sustain the estate for the future and boost the local economy, its operators say.

The proposals are set to have a first look from Midlothian councillors at a meeting of their planning committee next week.

Buccleuch Estates says the move into holiday accommodation will provide 'vital income' towards its continued stewardship of the country park.

In their design statement for the lodges they say more investment is needed in the commercial side of the park to attract people all year round and ensure its future.

They say: "Holiday lodge accommodation offers an important commercial opportunity for the estate, given the natural beauty and accessibility of its parkland.

"Developed sympathetically within the landscape at an appropriate scale, it would contribute vital income to Buccleuch's stewardship programme and provide a valuable economic benefit to the local economy, through employment and visitor spend."

The proposed site for the lodges lies between Salters Road on the East and the River South Esk on the west over nearly 42 hectares of land.

In their proposal the applicants say the lodges will be designed to blend in to the natural landscape and will be energy efficient and use eco-friendly material.

There are also plans to reduce their footprint by off site construction to deliver them in sections to reduce onsite work and environmental impact.

They include an image of a lodge retreat cabin at Blenheim Palace as an example of the type proposed.

The Pre Application Notice will go before planning committee next week for councillors to comment on ahead of any plans being formally submitted.

They are available to view on the Midlothian Planning Portal.

By Marie Sharp Local Democracy Reporter