

**STAFFORDSHIRE MOORLANDS DISTRICT COUNCIL
PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE**

24 January 2019

Application No:	SMD/2018/0677	
Location	Blakehall Fisheries, New Close Fields, Adderley, Cheadle	
Proposal	Proposed camp site ancillary to Blakehall Fisheries.	
Applicant	Mr J Heath	
Agent	Byatt Oliver Associates	
Parish/ward	Cheadle	Date registered 23/10/18
If you have a question about this report please contact: Jane Curley tel: 01538 395400 ex 4124 Jane.curley@staffsmoorlands.gov.uk		

REFERRAL

Recent and similar applications were considered by the Planning Applications Committee in 2018

1. SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATION

APPROVE with conditions

2. DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE AND ITS SURROUNDINGS

2.1 The application site forms part of the Blakehall Fishery site which lies in open countryside which is also designated as Green Belt. It comprises the single-storey “clubhouse” and café building and land to the south and west of it. The proposed campsite is on land to the south of the clubhouse. It is part of a much larger field with no physical boundaries defining the application site to the west, south or east. Access is via the long fishery access driveway which connects onto Trimpos/Brookhouse Road (a classified public highway). The main fishery pools lie to the north and east of the clubhouse. New Close and New Close Fields Farm lie further to the north.

3. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSAL

3.1 This is a full planning application for a campsite ancillary to Blakehall Fisheries. According to the application forms four equivalent full time jobs would be created by the proposal although the DAS refers to 5 jobs.

3.2 The Design and Access Statement provides some background to the Fishery. It refers to the Blake Hall Fishery being established in the 1990's. It says that as one of Cheadle's leading visitor attractions, keen coarse anglers and novice anglers' are all welcome with visitors traveling from far and wide to try their hand at the sport. The

Fishery has 5 main fishing pools, which can accommodate over 180 anglers at any one time. There is a clubhouse which provides hot and cold food for the anglers and visitors who want to enjoy the peace and tranquillity of Blake Hall. As a keen environmentalist and local land owner the applicant it says has invested heavily in the area and has planted new trees, formed woodland areas, reed beds and other types of habitats for all types of wildlife. The applicant it says has greatly improved the area over the last 2 decades and is eager to continue for future generations to enjoy. The applicant says the primary focus of the development is to support and enhance the existing fishing use.

3.3 This application has some similarities to two recent applications which were refused; see history below. However this application is only for a campsite. It does not include alterations/extension to the clubhouse which is submitted as a separate application to be considered elsewhere on this Agenda (ref SMD/2018/0705). Neither does it include any proposal for a caravan site. In this respect it is materially different from previous applications.

Amended Plans

3.4 During the processing of the application the red edge application site was reduced so that it aligned with the area proposed for the campsite in previous applications.

4. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

SMD/2017/0539 Change of use to campsite and caravan park and alterations and extensions to existing clubhouse. Refused

SMD/2018/0212 Proposed change of use and development comprising of camp site and touring caravan park with associated alterations and extension to the existing club house. Resubmission of SMD/2017/0539. Refused

5. PLANNING POLICIES RELEVANT TO THE DECISION

5.1 The Development Plan comprises of:

- Saved Local Plan Proposals Map / Settlement Boundaries (adopted 1998).
- Core Strategy Development Plan Document (adopted March 2014)

Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan (1998)

5.2 Development boundaries within the 1998 Adopted Local Plan are still in force until such time as they are reviewed and adopted through the site allocations process. Following consultation last year a Preferred Options Site Allocation DPD is currently out for consultation.

Adopted Staffordshire Moorlands Core Strategy DPD (26th March 2014)

5.3 The following Core Strategy policies are relevant to the application:-

- SS1 Development Principles
- SS1a Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
- SD1 Sustainable Use of Resources
- SD3 Carbon-saving Measures in Development
- SD4 Pollution and Flood Risk
- SS6C Rural area strategy
- DC1 Design Considerations
- DC2 Heritage
- E3 Tourism and Cultural development
- C1 Creating Sustainable Communities
- NE1 Biodiversity and Geological Resources
- T1 Development and Sustainable Transport
- T2 Other Sustainable Transport Measures

National Planning Policy NPPF

National Planning Policy Guidance

Emerging Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan

National Policy Guidance

5.4 Paragraph 48 of the NPPF states that:

“...decision-takers may also give weight to relevant policies in emerging plans according to:

- *the stage of preparation of the emerging plan (the more advanced the preparation, the greater the weight that may be given);*
- *the extent to which there are unresolved objections to relevant policies (the less significant the unresolved objections, the greater the weight that may be given); and*
- *the degree of consistency of the relevant policies in the emerging plan to the policies in this Framework (the closer the policies in the emerging plan to the policies in the Framework, the greater the weight that may be given).*

Local Plan process

5.5 The Council agreed to publish the Local Plan Submission Version for representations in February 2018. At this point, the Council agreed that the Local Plan was “sound”. Formal representations were then invited from residents, businesses and other stakeholders to provide them with the opportunity to support or challenge the soundness or legal compliance of the Local Plan. This stage in the process followed three previous public consultations since 2015 which had informed the preparation of the Local Plan alongside a comprehensive evidence base.

5.6 In June 2018, the Council subsequently agreed to submit the Local Plan Submission Version to the Secretary of State for examination. An examination in public was held last Autumn in order to determine whether the Local Plan is sound and legally compliant. Subject to the findings of the appointed inspector, the Local Plan is expected to be adopted in the Spring of 2019. At this point, it will supersede

the adopted Core Strategy and become part of the statutory development plan for the District.

5.7 In this context, the Council's position on the weight to be given to the policies contained in the Local Plan Submission Version in terms of the three criteria set out in Paragraph 48 of the NPPF is as follows:

- The stage of preparation – the Local Plan is now at an advanced stage of preparation as the Council has submitted it to the SoS for examination
- The extent to which there are unresolved objections to relevant policies – this varies depending on the policy in question. The Officer Comments section of this report identifies the level of outstanding objections to each policy and recommends the amount of weight to be given to them at this stage in the process
- The degree of consistency of policies with the NPPF – given that the Council has submitted a Local Plan that it considers to be sound, all policies are deemed to be consistent with the NPPF.

Emerging Policies

The following policies are considered to be relevant to this application:

- Policy SS1 Development Principles
- Policy 1a Presumption in favour of sustainable development
- SS2 Settlement Hierarchy
- SS10 Other Rural Areas Strategy
- Policy E4 Tourism and Cultural Development
- Policy SD4 Pollution and Water quality
- Policy SD5 Flood Risk
- Policy DC1 Design Considerations
- Policy DC3 Landscape and Settlement Setting
- Policy NE1 Biodiversity and Geological Resources
- Policy NE2 Trees Woodland and Hedgerows
- Policy T1 Sustainable Transport

6. CONSULTATIONS CARRIED OUT

Press Notice expiry date: 5th December 2018

Site Notice expiry date: 19th December 2018

No letters of representation received.

Dilhorne Parish Council

Object. The previous reasons for refusal have not fundamentally changed from the previously refused application, these reasons are as follows:-

1. The proposal represents inappropriate development in the Green Belt. It is harmful by definition. It is not considered that the considerations put forward by the applicant clearly outweigh this harm such that very special circumstances exist. The NPPF requires decision makers to give substantial weight to any harm to the Green Belt. The proposal is therefore contrary to

policies SS6c, E3 and R1 of the Staffordshire Moorlands Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

2. The site is not considered to be well connected to existing tourist attractions and facilities, by modes of transport other than the car and the provision of a caravan park of the size proposed, together with a campsite, would lead to a significant increase in vehicle movements in the area for visitors to reach attractions and services, resulting in an increase in emissions. Furthermore, no evidence of need or demand has been provided for this type of tourist accommodation on this site. The proposal is therefore not considered to amount to sustainable tourism development and would therefore not comply with policies SS6c, E3 or R1 of the Staffordshire Moorlands Core Strategy and conflict with the NPPF.

We also wish to make the following comments:-

1. The proposed extension to the clubhouse is over development of the site.
2. We appreciated that you have to consider each application independently from any other however the proposed alterations to the Clubhouse do not in our opinion allow for the land at the Fisheries being used for other purposes, i.e. camp site. An application for a camp site has also been submitted by the applicant (SMD/2018/0677) and therefore we would have expected the applicant to include additional toilets or any additional washing facilities (showers) for the use of the campers, which is not the case.
3. Should you grant permission for this application then we would ask that you include a condition to include specified opening times.
4. We would also request that should you grant permission construction work would be limited to specific times.

Cheadle Town Council

Awaited

Environmental Health Officer

No objection subject to conditions

Ecology Officer

Awaited

Trees and Woodland Officer

Awaited

Local Highway Authority

No objections

Coal Authority

No objections

Severn Trent Water

No objection

7. OFFICER COMMENT AND PLANNING BALANCE

7.1 As with all applications, the LPA is required to determine this application in accordance with the Development plan, unless there are material circumstances which indicate otherwise and in determining these applications, it shall have regard to the provisions of the Development Plan, in so far as material to the application and to any other material considerations.

7.2 Core Strategy Policy SS1a establishes a 'Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development' in line with the National Planning Policy (herein referred to as the NPPF) where: (1) planning applications that accord with policies within the Core Strategy will be approved without delay and (2) where there are no relevant policies or they are out of date, the Council will grant planning permission unless material considerations indicate otherwise considering:-

- I. Any adverse impacts of granting permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the NPPF taken as a whole, or,
- II. Specific policies in within the NPPF indicate that development should be restricted.

Principle of development

7.3 This site lies within the Green Belt. The first issue to establish therefore is whether the proposal is appropriate development.

7.4 Policy SS6C refers to development in the Green Belt being in line with national policy. In this respect Paragraph 146 of the NPPF refers to material changes of use of land, which this application is. It confirms that provided that such development preserves openness and does not conflict with the purposes of including land within it, such changes of use can be regarded as appropriate development.

7.5 Unlike previous proposals (see history) this application does not seek permission for caravans. It is materially different in this respect. The proposal is for a campsite only. The view is that openness in this case will be preserved because the site area is relatively small; tents are more likely to be seasonal and thus more transient than caravans. Although they can be brightly coloured tents are also generally smaller, more temporary in form, less regular in size and shape. This view is supported by Policy E3 which refers specifically to tourism and cultural development. It makes specific reference at bullet point 2 to camping and touring caravans outside of the Green belt were it says that they may be acceptable subject to a number of criteria. However within the Green Belt it says that *only small camping sites* may be

appropriate provided amongst other matters they do not prejudice 'openness'. It is noteworthy that there is no reference to caravans being appropriate in the Green Belt.

7.6 Emerging policy E4 generally supports new tourism and cultural development where it promotes the distinctive character and quality of the District and is in line with the other area policies. Emerging Policy SS10 deals with the other rural areas including Green Belt. The Inspectors report is still awaited and there are objections to both policies. Only limited weight can therefore be attached to these at this stage.

7.7 The conclusion is that this relatively small camp site would preserve openness and given that it is land associated with the fisheries and would not conflict with any of the main purposes of including land within the Green Belt, it is appropriate development in the Green Belt. It accords with Policies SS6C, E4 and the NPPF. This application is materially different from the two recent applications which involved a larger site and provision for caravans. The principle in this case is acceptable.

Location and Accessibility

7.8 In the previous applications the lack of connectivity of the site to existing tourist attractions and facilities and the poor accessibility of the site were one of the reasons for refusal of the application. Policy E3 says that new tourist and visitor accommodation should be developed in locations that offer, or are capable of offering, good connectivity with other tourist destinations and amenities, particularly by public transport, walking or cycling.

7.9 As stated in previous applications, the site is not located close to any tourist destinations or amenities and there is no nearby public transport. The policy also states new tourist accommodation should normally be located in or close to settlements where local services, facilities and public transport are available. The centre of Cheadle is a 2.0 mile car journey or bike ride. The distance by walking is reduced to 1.5 miles but this is only managed safely via a half-mile unlit and unsurfaced path across fields to Brookhouse Road. The policy goes on to say that outside of areas with good connectivity, new accommodation should be of a scale which can easily be assimilated into the area in a sustainable manner.

7.10 This application is materially reduced in scale from the previous applications. The applicant says that the campsite is aimed primarily at anglers at the fisheries. Its reduced scale leads to the conclusion that whilst there is some conflict with Policy E3 because this is not an accessible location, the conflict is more limited. Whilst it does weigh against the proposal, it is not considered alone to warrant refusal of the application.

Biodiversity

7.11 The application is accompanied by a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal carried out by Evolution Ecology dated 5th March 2018. No significant ecological constraints were identified in the previous application and although none are expected this time, the Ecology Officers formal comments on this application are awaited and will be reported at the meeting.

Ground Stability

7.12 The site is within a High Risk Coal Mining Zone due to historical coal mining in the area which has caused a degree of land stability issues. However, the pitching of tents on the land is not considered to have any impact on land stability. SCC as Mineral Authority raises no objection to the application on the basis that the nature of the proposed development is such that it would be unlikely to lead to the permanent sterilisation of any underlying mineral resources. In addition they say that the site is constrained by its proximity to the lake and therefore it is unlikely that the extraction of any underlying minerals would be practicable or environmentally acceptable in the foreseeable future. There is no conflict with Policy SD1 of the Core Strategy or the NPPF in this respect.

Landscape Impact

7.13 Unlike the previous applications no landscaping is proposed, particularly on the boundaries which, as described above, are largely undefined. The applicants view is that the proposal will seamlessly integrate with the landscape.

7.14 Although the proposal would have no impact on any significant existing trees or hedgerows it will have a visual impact by its very nature of being a more concentrated use of potentially brightly coloured tents. There would be attendant vehicles adding to the concentration of visually prominent features. Public footpath No. 58 (Cheadle Parish), becoming Public Footpath No. 21 (Dilhorne Parish) passes through fields to the south of the site continuing to Dilhorne Common. There are views directly into the site from this footpath. These views were addressed and mitigated in the previous application by the indicative new woodland planting. No landscaping is offered in the application. However in order to reduce/mitigate the visual impact such that there is policy compliance, it is considered that some landscaping is required both around the boundaries of the site (which are largely undefined as noted above) and to screen/filter views from the public footpath. A condition can secure this. Public Footpath No. 8 (Dilhorne Parish) follows the tarmac roadway serving Blake Hall and neighbouring properties, with Public Footpath No. 17 (Dilhorne Parish) leading off this along the stoned access track into and through the fisheries site and carrying the route of the promoted self-guided Staffordshire Moorlands Walk "Centuries of Coal"; The application site is only notably visible along a relatively short stretch of this track, within the fisheries site passing the long northerly pond.

7.15 In light of the above no objection is raised on visual and landscape impact grounds subject to the imposition of a landscaping condition. With this in place there is no conflict with Policy DC3.

Residential Amenity

7.32 The nearest dwelling is between 400-500 metres to the north of the site. The previous applications have concluded that the amenities of residents would not be harmed by way of privacy loss, noise or disturbance with the safeguard of appropriate environmental health conditions. There is no reason to take a different

line this time as the proposal is virtually identical in scale and location. With the imposition of conditions there is no conflict with Policies DC1 and SD4.

Conclusion & Planning Balance

7.33 This application is materially different from the two recent submissions both of which were refused. These two submissions involved a larger site and included a caravan site. This proposal relates solely to a campsite. It is found to be appropriate development in the Green Belt. There are no technical constraints to its development. Landscaping can reduce/mitigate visual impact. Some limited conflict is found with Policy E3 because the site is not within an accessible location nor is it close to other tourist destinations. However this conflict is not considered to be overriding and having regard to the provisions of the Development Plan as a whole and the NPPF, a material consideration, the proposal is considered to be acceptable and a recommendation of approval is therefore made.

8. RECOMMENDATION

That planning permission be granted subject to the following conditions:-

- 1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.**

Reason:- To comply with the provisions of Section 51 of the Town & Country Planning, Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act, 2004.

- 2. The development hereby approved shall be carried out in accordance with the following Approved Plans:**

5434 001A

5434 002A

Reason:- For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning

- 3. No caravans shall be stationed on the site at any time**

Reason:- To define the permission; for the avoidance of doubt; to protect the Green Belt and in the interest of the character and appearance of the area.

- 4. The use hereby approved shall not be commenced until such time that a landscaping scheme has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall include amongst other matters species mix, planting sizes, positions, density, future maintenance/management and a timescale for implementation.**

Reason:- To protect the character and appearance of this rural area.

- B. In the event of any changes being needed to the wording of the Committee's decision (such as to delete, vary or add conditions/informatives/planning obligations or reasons for**

approval/refusal) prior to the decision being issued, the Operations Manager – Development Services has delegated authority to do so in consultation with the Chairman of the Planning Applications Committee, provided that the changes do not exceed the substantive nature of the Committee’s Decision.