

## DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

**ADDRESS : TITTESWORTH WATER SPORTS AND ACTIVITY CENTRE,  
MEERBROOK, LEEK, ST13 8SH**

**APPLICANT : TITTESWORTH WATER SPORTS AND ACTIVITY CENTRE**

**PROPOSAL : PROPOSED PORTAKABINS**

**DATE : March 2018** **JOB No. : 2018-2295**

## DESIGN

### ASSESSMENT

#### Introduction

This application proposes the stationing of four temporary portakabins to meet an urgent temporary need for additional accommodation on the site.

#### Assessment Area

The application site operates as a watersports activity centre on the west side of Tittesworth Reservoir. The site accommodates a single storey building, originally constructed as a fishing lodge. The building is itself of stone construction with a tiled roof and provides toilets and changing facilities and a space that has a dual use of reception and coaching. There is a timber boat store to the side of this.

The site has a frontage to the lake where access is available for boat launching from a jetty. The site has vehicular access from Meerbrook Road where there is a small car park.

The site is located within the extensive grounds of Tittesworth Reservoir and is operated by Severn Trent Water as a reservoir and as a centre for recreation. Severn Trent has a Visitor Centre on the opposite side of the reservoir where they have a café and shop. An exhibition area provides information about the history of the site and the presence of wildlife on the site. The grounds accommodate a large children's play area, an ice cream hut and toilet facilities. The grounds have an extensive network of footpaths that are heavily used.

The site is located in attractive open countryside about 3.5km to the north of Leek.





**Top photo: current buildings**

**Bottom photo: Site for proposed portakabins**

## THE PROPOSAL

The application is a response to a growth in the number of users of the site. The applicant provides a variety of water-borne activities and has expanded into non-water activities including archery and countryside walking. The applicant has set out its case in a separate document submitted with the planning application.

The application proposes the stationing of four portakabins on the open area to the south of the boat store. These buildings will free up the existing stone building for use for indoor activities. Two of the portakabins will provide replacement changing facilities; replacement toilet facilities and a stand-alone classroom. Each building will be of standard construction and will be sited on a concrete base. The applicant has stated his preparedness to timber clad the buildings. A “hit and miss” timber fence is proposed between the buildings and the shoreline.

## PLANNING POLICY AND POLICY EVALUATION

The Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan 2016-2031 is currently being prepared. Its Core Strategy is considered to be at a stage that has significant influence on the determination of planning applications.

The Core Strategy Challenges are set out on P32. These include: -

“Creating healthy, sustainable communities ..... Need to improve provision and accessibility to health and education services and facilities and address under-provision or poor quality provision of recreational facilities and open space. There is also evidence of high levels of obesity in the District.”

**Comment:** The proposal contributes to the area’s portfolio of leisure and recreational activities. The applicant has recognised a significant increase in demand for the experiences that it offers, and the application seeks to satisfy these. The proposal contributes to the wide aim of improving the health of the local population and visitors to the area.

P35 - Protecting and Enhancing the Distinctive Quality of the Environment acknowledges that whilst continuing to protect, manage and enhance the quality of the District’s .... natural ...., “there is also opportunity to capitalise on the .... natural assets of the District .... to maximise the quality of life for local residents, attract new investment and achieve economic benefits through tourism”.

**Comment:** This seeks to strike a balance between the need to protect the area’s natural assets and encourage appropriate development that meets the District’s strategic needs. Tittesworth Reservoir is an important natural asset that acts as a centre for recreational and leisure activities. The proposal seeks to enhance the facilities that are operated on the site and improve the capacity of the site to improve the public’s health.

The Vision for the Staffordshire Moorlands District seeks a “sustainable and balanced ...range of recreational, cultural and leisure opportunities”. It recognises that “tourism will be a key element in the diversification of the District’s economy and will also contribute significantly to raising the environmental quality and the regeneration of the District”.

**Comment:** The site currently attracts visitors into the area. The proposal will increase tourism specifically to the site’s activities, and generally to the wider area though, for instance, people stopping at local pubs for meals etc. The proposal will also result in additional employment on the site. The applicant’s Statement demonstrates a genuine aim towards local employment.

One of its 11 Spatial Objectives is therefore: -



“To support and enhance the tourism, cultural, recreation and leisure opportunities for the District’s residents and visitors”.

The Core Strategy Development Principles therefore requires development to contribute positively to the delivery of: -

“leisure, community, cultural and tourist facilities in response to anticipated population change and visitor numbers; a healthy, safe, attractive and well-maintained environment”.

**Comment:** The proposal clearly meets these aims.

Spatial Strategy S1a states the overarching presumption in favour of sustainable development.

**Comment:** The application site is within a larger area where extensive recreational and leisure activities take place. Visitors from the District and further afield are encouraged. The nature of the proposal fits well within the purpose of the wider site. It is considered that the proposal meets sustainability aims.

Spatial Strategy SS6c Other Rural Areas Strategy recognises the important part that proposals that assist tourism and support rural employment play in the achievement of rural sustainability.

**Comment:** The proposal clearly benefits from the support that this strategy aim gives to appropriate development in rural areas. Economy and employment policies in Para 8.3 of the Core Strategy particularly where the importance of connectivity is emphasised. This proposal sits in a site where a large range of leisure and recreational uses are provided. The proposal enhances that provision.

## **CONCLUSION**

The application proposes to improve existing facilities on the site whilst seeking to satisfy growing demand for water-borne and non-water activities that the applicant provides. The proposals will enhance the recreational and leisure experience of customers.

The Council’s Core Strategy highlights the need to support existing and growing recreational and leisure activities for two very important reasons-

1. To realise a growth in tourism in the area, and
2. To respond to a need to engage people in activities that aid their health and prolong their lives.

This application clearly satisfies both of these objectives.

It is acknowledged that the proposed buildings are of temporary construction and that, should the Council grant planning permission, it is likely to be for a temporary period. The applicant is currently not in a position to propose permanent buildings. However, a reasonable time period within which the applicant could secure an opportunity to provide a more permanent solution would be to the applicant’s and Council’s interests.

## **ACCESS**

### **Vehicular and Transport links**

The site is located within an area that generates high levels of visitors by car. There is limited public transport although visits can be linked with other sustainable means of transport such as cycle and walking. Group activities can be satisfied by shared transport and bus/coach.

### **Inclusive Access**

The development provides for use and occupation by less able people through compliance with Part M of the Building Regulations.