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To: [Planning Comments \(SMDC\)](#)
Subject: Comment Received from Public Access
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Application Reference No. : SMD/2021/0536 Site Address: Land at Barnfields Industrial Estate Sunnyhills Road Leek Staffordshire ST13 5RJ Comments by: Alison Smedley MBEThe Inland Waterways Association
From:

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Submission: Objection

Comments: The Inland Waterways Association (IWA) is the membership charity that works to protect and restore the country's 7000 miles of canals and navigable rivers. IWA is a national organisation with a network of volunteers and branches who deploy their expertise and knowledge to work constructively with navigation authorities, local and national government and other organisations.

IWA North Staffordshire & South Cheshire Branch objects to planning application SMD/2021/0536 because it does not commit the developer to incorporating the canal into the plans for the site.

We note that this new planning application still includes a marina/basin and associated boating facilities with 13 berths, even though the Casey Group is not able to commit to the delivery of the marina basin.

It is our view that the condition in previous planning application, SMD/2014/0750, that the developer of the site should also deliver the mooring basin, should be retained.

Waterways can contribute to the economic development of an area; by improving the physical and mental health of the local population through opportunities for exercise, holidays and recreation which in turn creates financial benefits to local economies through tourism, employment and regeneration.

The current terminus of the Leek Arm of the Caldon Canal is under-used and little visited, due to the lack of facilities and limited turning space. The proposed marina/basin, combined with the provision of boaters facilities, would resolve this and bring many more waterborne visitors to the town.

We note that the covering letter associated with the application states: "Although the Casey Group is not able to commit to the delivery of the marina basin, the reserved matters application seeks detailed approval for this facility and delineates an area of land within the site to be reserved for its future delivery or, if not implemented within an agreed period of time, an area of public open space. It is understood the Council is seeking to access Government funding in order to deliver the marina basin as part of a wider package of potential projects in Staffordshire Moorlands." If indeed SMDC is progressing such a scheme, we would be very happy to support the project in any way we can.

However, it remains our concern that if planning permission is granted without the requirement for the marina to be built, that it may well never be built.

We believe that the developer has missed an opportunity to get a better outcome for this site. It is well documented that waterside housing can increase the value of property by up to 15-20% (Water Adds Value, Highlighting the impact of the restoration of our waterways, Canal & River Trust and IWA, 2015). Conversely, by not building the marina from the outset, the residents of the houses adjacent to the marina site could object to the marina being built in the future, resulting in a loss of amenity to the wider community.

Looking specifically at the proposals for the marina, it isn't clear from the plans whether any of the proposed 13 berths are for visiting boats, or whether they are all proposed for permanent moorings. We would suggest that at least 3 to 4 berths are available for visiting boats at any one time, and that boaters facilities should be provided. This should include chemical toilet disposal point, water taps and rubbish disposal as a minimum. The provision of electric charging points for visiting boats in addition to those paying for long term moorings would be a welcome contribution to making our waterways more sustainable and will encourage those visitors with electric boats to make the journey to spend the night in Leek, spending money in the local area, while they charge their batteries.

Electric boats are becoming more and more popular and local authorities, navigation authorities and developers should be working together to incorporate boat charging points (which should be basic electric hook up points as currently provided in marinas).

We would question why a 2.1 high metre security fence is required all around the basin, if this is to be used by boats visiting Leek. There are other similar scale developments in other canalside locations that incorporate both long term and visitor moorings where an open and welcome environment has been created by not using security fencing, eg Brecon, Aylesbury and Market Harborough (details can be provided on request).

In conclusion, by including the proposed mooring basin in this planning application, but stating that they will not themselves be building it, the developers will be avoiding any obligation to deliver the mooring basin. There is a strong likelihood that the basin will not get built at all, and none of the benefits outlined above will ever be realised for the people of Leek. We therefore object to the planning application as currently proposed.

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