

Response to Planning Application SMD/2021/0536 Land at Barnfields Industrial Estate, Sunnyhills Road, Leek – SMD/2021/0536.

Dear Planning,

Thank you for forwarding the plans for approval of reserve matters (SMD/2021/0536) relating to approved outline planning application SMD/2014/0750.

The following information provides more detailed comments regarding the opportunities relating to play, open space, playing pitches and Sport England 'Active Design' guidance.

On-site play and open space provision.

The layout of the site shows an area of open space which includes a small number of play items. We think that the size of the play area and the number of items currently shown is not sufficient for the size of development being considered. The play area for a development of this size needs to meet the criteria of a Local Equipped Area for Play (LEAP). As such the activity zone should be at least 400m² and provide stimulating and challenging play experience for both the toddler and junior ages (0 to 14yrs). There should additionally be room for children to run around and play 'chase' type games.

There are just four main play items shown with this application. One of those items is a basic swing unit which only provides one toddler cradle seat and one junior flat seat. Three of these items are positioned within a fenced part of the site whilst the multi-climber unit for the junior age group is situated outside. It is felt that the road next to the play area should be considered as one of two main vehicle access points to the development and as such would probably be well-used throughout. Therefore, to position the multi-climber on the very edge of the open space would seem to be inappropriate and unnecessarily increasing the risks to children. There are no other significant play areas situated close to this site.

Another issue we would highlight is the close proximity of the trees to the south boundary. These trees may cause the equipment and surfacing to become covered with algae build-up and leaf litter in the autumn/winter months would be a problem.

The original masterplan layout of the development included a much larger percentage of accessible open space within the development area, even though much of that was linear in its design. The play area was additionally positioned in a more central location and with a more considered, safe, road layout near-by. We feel that there is a reduction in the quantity of open space with the new layout.

We would be willing to work with the developer to improve the design and layout of the open space and play area to reach an acceptable final offer.

Active design.

The opportunities for the new residents of this development to be involved / take part in physical activity are focused mainly off-site. There is an opportunity for residents to leave the site and enter Ladderedge Country Park (Barnfields site) and also the canal tow path which offers access to various places such as Cheddleton, Consall and Froghall or on a different path to Endon, Stockton Brook and onwards to Stoke-on-Trent.

As mentioned above there is a lower percentage of open space than on the original plan and as such the opportunities for recreation on the site are limited but having the options nearby including Birchall Playing fields means that there are plenty of options on offer.

Off-site playing pitch contributions.

We would be looking for off-site contributions towards playing pitches from this development. These would be used with-in 2km of the development site.

The current contribution formula is:

£685.36 x number of bedrooms

Thanks

Gareth Knapper

Staffs Moorlands District Council

Service Commissioning

Leisure & Recreation