

Planning Statement

For Quarry Walk Park Ltd | 6100

Application for 10 Glamping Pods and Biomass Boiler and Building - Quarry Walk
Park, Coppice Lane, Hollington, Staffordshire, ST10 1RQ

Project: 6100
Site Address: Quarry Walk Park, Coppice Lane, Hollington, Staffordshire, ST10 1RQ
Client: Quarry Walk Park Ltd
Date: January 2025
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1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 We have been instructed by Quarry Walk Park Ltd to submit a full application seeking retrospective planning permission for 10 glamping pods for holiday accommodation and a biomass boiler and building at Quarry Walk Park.
- 1.2 Quarry Walk Park is an established existing holiday park located off Coppice Lane, Winnothdale, near Hillington. The original permission in 1994 was for a total of 40 caravan pitches, 34 of which were for touring caravans with the remaining patches used for static caravans. Subsequent permissions have resulted in the approval of 20 log cabins, followed by an application in 2008 for a further 20 cabins with an additional 16 log cabins approved in 2021. The total number of log cabins approved is 56.
- 1.3 There is currently an application SMD/2023/0660 to establish the lawful existing use of 10 glamping pods on the site and an application SMD/2023/0658 for a biomass boiler and building. The former is yet to be determined and the latter has been approved. Application SMD/2024/0082 was a retrospective application for 11 Glamping Pods which was approved on 22nd October 2024. The same conclusions reached on that application would also apply to this application.
- 1.4 Paragraph 11 of the National Planning Policy Framework states that decision takers should be:
- “c) approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay”*
- 1.5 Policy E4 states that new visitor and tourist accommodation should be developed in locations that offer or are capable of offering either:
- “A) good connectivity with other tourist destinations and amenities, particularly by public transport, walking and cycling; or*
- B) in locations in or close to settlements where local services, facilities and public transport are available; or*
- C) in areas specifically identified for tourism development in the Churnet Valley Masterplan or other relevant documents.”*
- 1.6 The Tourism Strategy is clearly a relevant document as the Staffordshire Moorlands Tourism Study dated 2011 is specifically referred to in paragraph 7.43 of the Local Plan. That has now been superseded by the 2023 Staffordshire Moorlands Tourism Strategy. It follows that this document is material when considering Policy E4(1).
- 1.7 A key weakness in the Tourism Strategy is that “Day visitors dominate (low av. spend)”. This is quantified in page 11 which states:



“The most recent data tells us that day visitors dominate accounting for about 90% of the 5.6m visits but just 58% of the £335m spend. Staying visitors however account for 42% of the total spend despite just being 10% of visits. This highlights the importance of overnight visits and extending the duration of visits.”

1.8 Action Area 4 of the Tourism Strategy states:

“Aim – expand, improve and encourage the development of accommodation to attract visitors to stay overnight and keep their spending in the local area rather than losing it to neighbouring regions

Approach – unlock private sector investment with a clear policy environment that encourages suitable accommodation development and improvement in Staffordshire Moorlands

Actions:

- *Encourage accommodation development in the towns/villages, at existing sites (where services are already in place e.g. Alton Towers, Rudyard Hotel) and to support rural/farm diversification*
- *Ensure planning within the Council is supportive and enabling with access to pre-app advice and clear policies that encourage economic growth*
- *Improve the quality and facilities of existing accommodation including adding to the leisure offer at camping sites and expand the provision of alternative or glamping accommodation*
- *Undertake a hotel and accommodation study to determine future supply needs which can inform planning policy”*

1.9 We have emphasised the key parts in the action area 4, which these 10 glamping pods will achieve, as they expand alternative accommodation (glamping) at an existing holiday park and attracts overnights stays which is a key factor to contribute economic impact, business profitability and sustaining jobs. In short, this form of development accords with the Tourism Strategy and the development plan and permission should be granted without delay.



2. The Proposed Development

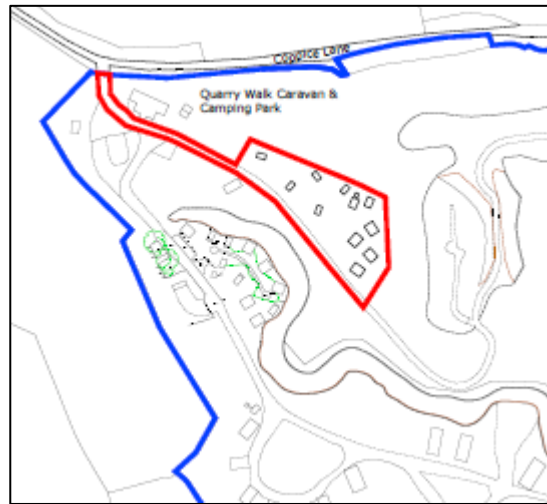
Site location and description

- 2.1 The application site is located 4km to the east of Cheadle which is the largest settlement in the vicinity. Other settlements close to the appeal site are Upper Team which is 2km to the west and Alton which is 2.5km to the north east. Hollington is 1km to the south of the site.
- 2.2 There are a number of ways to access the Park depending on which direction one is travelling from. However, the site entrance is located off Coppice Lane, which can be accessed off either Sandy Lane to the east or the A522 to the west. Tourist signs direct visitors from the A522.
- 2.3 The site has two distinct parts, which are separated by a cliff which cuts through the middle of the site. The lower part of the site comprises a long sloping shelf below the south facing quarry face. It is this lower part where the application site and log cabins are located.
- 2.4 On entering the site from the north, the reception and manager's accommodation is immediately on the left hand side. The only vehicular access runs down towards the lower level where the remaining touring caravan pitches and log cabins are located. In addition to the existing caravan pitches and log cabins, there is also a toilet/shower block and a children's play area.
- 2.5 The internal link road splits into a number of loops which serve the remaining touring caravan pitches and log cabins.
- 2.6 One of the advantages of the holiday park is that it is heavily vegetated and views into the site are minimal, if non-existent even in the winter.
- 2.7 The site is also in close proximity to Alton Towers which is one of the country's major tourist's attractions. In addition, the wider countryside and landscape are a significant attraction for visitors to the area.



The Application

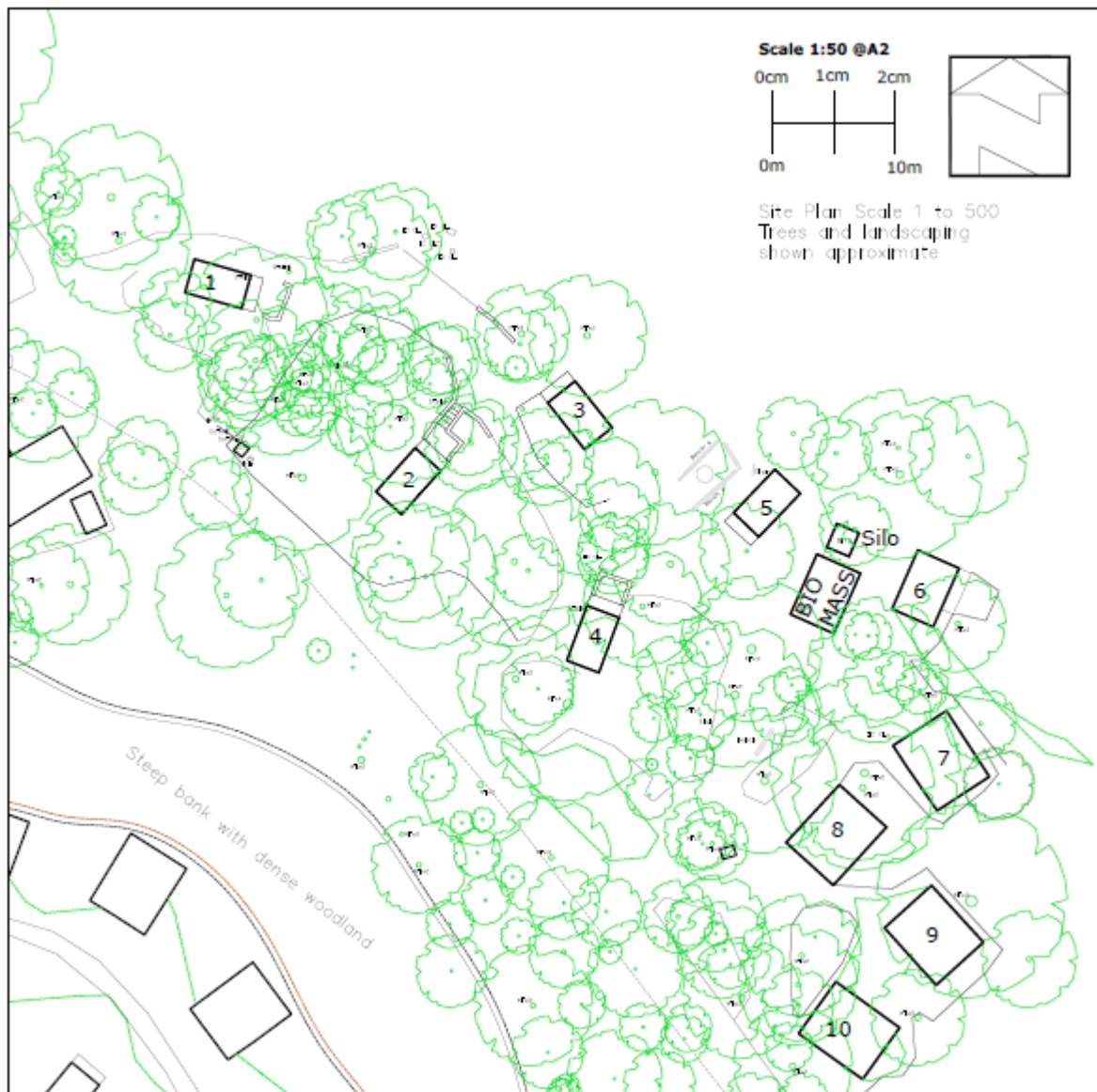
2.8 The below site plan shows where the 10 glamping pods are located within Quarry Walk Park.



2.9 The pods are located in a cluster in the western corner of the site in close proximity to the site access on an area that has been previously underused.

2.10 All of the pods contain an bedroom (double bed) living/dining, kitchen and ensuite. Pods 1,2,3, 4 and 5 are smaller in size while pods 8,9,10, and 11¹ are larger with more space around the bed and have decks with canopy covers on the principal elevations. As can be seen from the layout plan below, the pods are well contained by existing trees.

¹ the plans do not show a plot 6



2.11 The pods are made of interlocking logs and have a felt roof as shown on the images below.





The pods are of similar design to the larger log cabins and pods on the site.



3. Relevant planning history

- 3.1 The site has been established as a holiday destination since the mid-1990s when planning permission was granted on appeal (T/APP/B3438/A/229978/P4) on 20 January 1994. This permission was for 40 touring caravans together with a warden's static caravan, a reception lodge and a toilet/shower block.
- 3.2 Since the original permission, there have been a number of planning applications and permissions on the site. The first was for a reception building at the entrance to the park (SM95-0337) which was approved.
- 3.3 Permission was then granted on 21 August 1996 (SM96-0522) for the siting of six static caravans. These six static caravans replaced six of the existing touring pitches granted by the Inspector in the 1994 appeal.
- 3.4 Permission was granted on 25 July 2000 (00/00434/FUL) for a reception lodge. This proposal was for a larger reception building than that previously approved by Application No SM95-0337.
- 3.5 An application (04/00187/FUL) was submitted by Quarry Walk Caravan Park Ltd for the erection of six log cabins on the six static caravan pitches permitted by Application No SM96-0522. An extension to the reception building was also permitted for manager's accommodation as part of that application. This application was approved by the planning committee who welcomed the proposal to improve holiday accommodation at the park.
- 3.6 A subsequent planning application (05/00892/FUL) was submitted by Quarry Walk Caravan Park Ltd for the replacement of 14 touring caravan pitches with log cabins. The application was refused on 7 December 2005. Following the refusal of the application for 14 log cabins, an appeal was submitted.
- 3.7 A revised application (05/01449/FUL) was submitted on 20th December 2005 for the erection of 6 log cabins. The planning application was approved under delegated powers on 15th February 2006.
- 3.8 As set out above, the planning application for 14 log cabins was the subject of an appeal decision in March 2007. Permission was granted for the replacement of the touring caravan pitches with the log cabins. An application for costs against the council was successful. This in essence increased the number of log cabins on the site to 20.
- 3.9 A further 20 log cabins were approved (08/00973/FUL-MJ).
- 3.10 An application was submitted in 2020 and given ref SMD/2020/0385 for the erection of 16 log cabins this was a resubmission of previously refused planning application SMD/2017/0391 (erection of 17 log cabins). The application was approved January 2021.



3.11 Three applications were submitted in December 2023, these being:

- Application SMD/2023/0658 was submitted in December 2023 seeking full planning permission for a biomass boiler and has been approved.
- Application SMD/2024/0082 was a retrospective application for 11 Glamping Pods which was approved on 22nd October 2024.
- Application ref SMD/2023/0660 seeks to attain a Certificate of Lawful Existing Development for 10 glamping pods and biomass building. This application is on the same site as the Certificate application and enables the LPA to issue an approval without the need to issue an Lawful Certificate.



4. Policy Context

- 4.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires planning applications to be determined in accordance with the relevant development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 4.2 For the purposes of the proposed development, the relevant development plan comprises the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan 2014-2033 adopted in September 2020 superseding the previous Core Strategy.

Development plan context

- 4.3 The development plan comprises the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan adopted in September 2020. Relevant policies to the proposed application are listed below:
- Policy SS10 Other Rural Areas Strategy;
 - Policy E4 Tourism and Cultural Development;
 - Policy DC1 Design Considerations; and,
 - Policy DC 3 Landscape and Settlement Setting.
- 4.4 These policies will be discussed in the following section of the statement.

National planning policy and guidance

National Planning Policy Framework (The Framework) (2024)

- 4.5 The National Planning Policy Framework (the “Framework”) sets out the Government’s planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. At the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development.
- 4.6 Paragraph 8 of the Framework states that there are three dimensions to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. These dimensions give rise to the need for the planning system to perform a number of roles:
- an economic role – contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right



time to support growth and innovation; and by identifying and coordinating development requirements, including the provision of infrastructure;

- a social role – supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by providing the supply of housing required to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by creating a high quality built environment, with accessible local services that reflect the community’s needs and support its health, social and cultural well-being; and
- an environmental role – contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; and, as part of this, helping to improve biodiversity, use natural resources prudently, minimise waste and pollution, and mitigate and adapt to climate change including moving to a low carbon economy.

Other material considerations

- 4.7 The Tourism Strategy for Staffordshire Moorlands 2022-2027 was approved in February 2023. This will be discussed further in the following section of the statement.



5. Planning Considerations

Principle of Development

National Policy

- 5.1 Paragraphs 88 and 89 are under the heading “Supporting a prosperous rural economy”. They state:

“88. Planning policies and decisions should enable:

a) the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed, new buildings;

b) the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses;

c) sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments which respect the character of the countryside; and

d) the retention and development of accessible local services and community facilities, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship.

89. Planning policies and decisions should recognise that sites to meet local business and community needs in rural areas may have to be found adjacent to or beyond existing settlements, and in locations that are not well served by public transport. In these circumstances it will be important to ensure that development is sensitive to its surroundings, does not have an unacceptable impact on local roads and exploits any opportunities to make a location more sustainable (for example by improving the scope for access on foot, by cycling or by public transport). The use of previously developed land, and sites that are physically well-related to existing settlements, should be encouraged where suitable opportunities exist.” (our emphasis)

- 5.2 Therefore, the clear advice of Government is that the **growth and expansion of all types of business** in rural locations should be supported. Specifically, sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments which respect the character of the countryside are given direct support.

Staffordshire Moorland Tourism Strategy

- 5.3 The Staffordshire Moorlands Tourism Strategy was approved in February 2023.
- 5.4 Page 5 sets out the overall importance of tourism to the local economy. It states:

“Tourism is a significant economic sector employing approximately 6000 people or around 18% of all jobs in Staffordshire Moorlands (2). Visitors spend almost £335m,

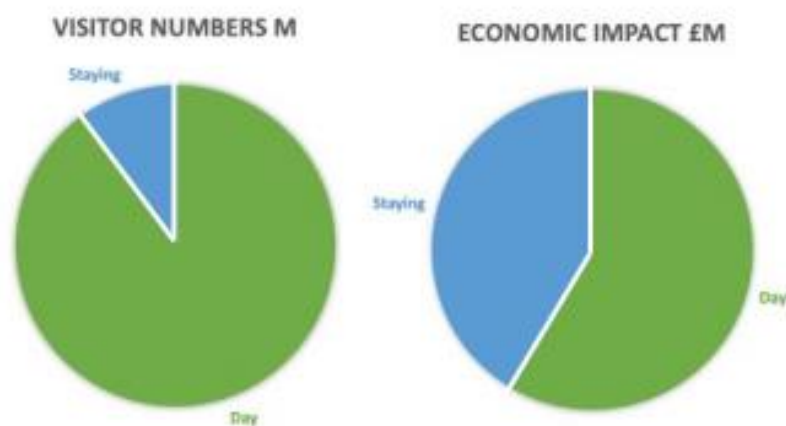


with about 42% generated by staying visitors who account for almost 10% of all visits. Half of all spend is on shopping, and food and drink - facilities and services which benefit and are used by residents as well as visitors”.

- 5.5 A key weakness on page 7 is that “Day visitors dominate (low av. spend)”. This is then quantified in page 11 which states:

“The most recent data tells us that day visitors dominate accounting for about 90% of the 5.6m visits but just 58% of the £335m spend. Staying visitors however account for 42% of the total spend despite just being 10% of visits. This highlights the importance of overnight visits and extending the duration of visits.”

- 5.6 This is then shown visually.



- 5.7 Under a heading “Lessons from Elsewhere” it states that “there are lots of insights and tools from elsewhere that can quickly and easily be adopted to progress actions”. One of the principles is:

“Alternative accommodation – glamping, yurts, ecopods – tell a new a story about a destination and help to attract new audiences while developing budget accommodation addresses value for money”.

- 5.8 Section 4 is titled “Priorities for Growth”. The first paragraph states that “Focussing on a small number of priorities is much more likely to lead to positive outcomes. Four areas of opportunity will provide that focus for Staffordshire Moorlands”. The four areas of opportunity are:

“The four areas of opportunity are:

- 1. Alton Towers – unlocking investment to create a year round driver of visits*
- 2. Towns & Villages – animated hubs with distinct food & drink to increase dwell times*
- 3. Active Experiences – developing cycling and walking routes, trails and events*
- 4. Accommodation – expand, improve and encourage investment” (our emphasis)*

5.9 Page 16 states that “It is fully recognised that no one organisation can deliver this Strategy. Tourism is indeed the business and concern of many. So, following the detail on the four areas of opportunity, the approach which will be taken to working in partnership is set out”. In this case the LPA and the applicant are the two key parties to achieve this relevant priority for growth which in this case is Action Area 4 which states:

“Aim – expand, improve and encourage the development of accommodation to attract visitors to stay overnight and keep their spending in the local area rather than losing it to neighbouring regions

Approach – unlock private sector investment with a clear policy environment that encourages suitable accommodation development and improvement in Staffordshire Moorlands

Actions:

- *Encourage accommodation development in the towns/villages, at existing sites (where services are already in place e.g. Alton Towers, Rudyard Hotel) and to support rural/farm diversification*
- *Ensure planning within the Council is supportive and enabling with access to pre-app advice and clear policies that encourage economic growth*
- *Improve the quality and facilities of existing accommodation including adding to the leisure offer at camping sites and expand the provision of alternative or glamping accommodation*
- *Undertake a hotel and accommodation study to determine future supply needs which can inform planning policy”*

5.10 We have emphasised the key parts of Action Area 4 above which these 11 glamping pods will achieve as it expands alternative accommodation at an existing holiday park and attracts overnights stays which is a key factor to contribute economic impact, business profitability and sustaining jobs.

5.11 The proposal accords with the Tourism Strategy 2023.

Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan

5.12 The Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan states that tourism plays a vital role in supporting the local economy through the creation of jobs, visitor spending and diversification of the economy. In Chapter 3 of the Local Plan the current Challenges faced by the District to drive change (which had previously been identified in the now superseded Core Strategy) tourism is identified as playing a major role in the District and strengthening its wider role.

5.13 On page 24, under “Strengthening the District’s wider role”, the second bullet point states:



“Tourism is identified as one of the key areas where the District can have a major role to help bring more people in and diversify its economy.”

5.14 The sixth bullet point states:

“Supporting wider economic initiatives and strategies including the Local Enterprise Partnership's Strategic Economic Plan and the Constellation Partnership.”

5.15 We have discussed the Tourism Strategy earlier.

5.16 Under the heading “Fostering business growth and economic sustainability”, the fourth bullet point states:

“Service sector is seen as the main driver for economic growth with an opportunity to capitalise on the growth of the ‘experience economy’ – tourism, leisure and retail - in particular developing the District’s tourism role.”

5.17 Policy SS10 (Other Rural Areas Strategy) states that *“These areas will provide only for development which has an essential need to be located in the countryside, supports the rural diversification and sustainability of the rural areas, promotes sustainable tourism or enhances the countryside”*. Various actions are then set out. Under Part 2, the policy states *“Enabling the limited expansion or development of business for employment uses where a rural location can be justified”*. Part 5 of the policy states:

“5. Enhance tourist opportunities by:

- Supporting sustainable tourism developments and measures in the Churnet Valley in accordance with Policy SS 11 and the Churnet Valley Masterplan SPD;*
- Allowing for small-scale tourism developments in other areas (in accordance with policy E 4);*
- Establishing strong linkages between recreational and tourist resources;*
- Recognising and developing the close linkages to the Peak District National Park”*

5.18 We now assess Policy E4. It states that new visitor and tourist accommodation should be developed in location that offer:

“1. New tourist, visitor and cultural accommodation, attractions and facilities should be developed in locations that offer, or are capable of offering either:

- A) good connectivity with other tourist destinations and amenities, particularly by public transport, walking and cycling; or*
- B) in locations in or close to settlements where local services, facilities and public transport are available; or*
- C) in areas specifically identified for tourism development in the Churnet Valley Masterplan or other relevant documents.”*



5.19 Paragraph 7.42 states:

“It is essential however that all new tourism, visitor and cultural proposals that are located outside settlement boundaries should be in sustainable locations and carefully assessed so that they do not have a detrimental impact on the local area unless it can be demonstrated that a particular tourism proposal requires such a location”.

5.20 In the delegated report for application SMD/2024/0082 it was considered that the site was appropriate and was meeting a tourism need and the 2023 Tourism Strategy specifically promotes the development of accommodation such as glamping accommodation on existing parks to increase overnight stays. On that basis the application meets criterion (C) of Policy E4.

5.21 Policy E4(2) sets out criteria where proposals do not comply with those of E4(1). As set out above we consider that the proposal is in full accordance with the Tourism Strategy so there is no need to consider E4(2). If the LPA considers it is relevant, we address it nonetheless. It states:

“2. Developments in other locations may be supported where a rural location can be justified. New accommodation, attractions and facilities should:

A) support the provision and expansion of tourist, visitor and cultural facilities in the rural areas where needs are not met by existing facilities; and

B) all development shall be of an appropriate quality, scale and character compatible with the local area, protect the residential amenity of the area, enhance the heritage, landscape and biodiversity of the area and shall not harm interests of acknowledged importance. “

5.22 The glamping pods subject to this application contribute to the increased levels of occupancy attracting overnight visitor tourists and that same conclusion would continue to apply.

Landscape Impact

5.23 Policy DC3 “Landscape and Settlement Setting” sets out how the council will protect and enhance the local landscape where possible. They aim to do this by:

“1. Resisting development which would lead to prominent intrusion into the countryside or have a significant adverse impact on the character or the setting of a settlement or important views into and out of the settlement as identified in the Landscape and Settlement Character evidence;

2. Supporting development which respects and enhances local landscape character and which reinforces and enhances the setting of the settlement as identified in the Landscape and Settlement Character evidence;



3. Supporting developments which conserve or enhance the biodiversity qualities of any natural or man-made features within the landscape, such as trees, woodlands, hedgerows, walls, watercourses or ponds;

4. Supporting opportunities to positively manage the landscape and use sustainable building techniques and materials which are sympathetic to the landscape;

5. Ensuring that development does not adversely affect the wider setting of the Peak District National Park."

- 5.24 As can be seen from the layout plan, the pods are well contained and located in a close cluster surrounded by trees. BNG has been assessed and forms part of the application to achieve a 10% net gain.

Conclusion

- 5.25 Planning policy and strategies at Staffordshire Moorlands convey how essential tourism is to the district, but also states where the sector can be improved upon. Expanding the overnight visitor sector of the tourism economy is an opportunity for the district and is being encouraged to be put into practice with planning application encouraged for alternative accommodation such as camping, lodges and glamping pods.



6. Summary and Conclusions

- 6.1 This retrospective application for 10 glamping pods and biomass building is part of the expansion of Quarry Walk Park to provide improved holiday facilities coming to the area for overnight stays, an aspect of the tourism economy greatly encouraged by the council. Since 2004. The Council has permitted 56 log cabins on the wider site and the 11 glamping pods.
- 6.2 The log cabins offer a high standard of accommodation for visitors coming into the area. They also enable more year-round bookings as the glamping pods are suitable for visitors to stay in off peak periods thus increasing tourism spend outside of the peak holiday season which is a key objective of the Tourism Strategy for Staffordshire Moorlands 2022-2027.
- 6.3 Considering the three interdependent objectives for sustainable development set out in Paragraph 8 of the Framework at the beginning of this statement it has been proven that the application supports the local economy while encouraging tourists to stay in Staffordshire Moorlands as well as meeting social objectives.
- 6.4 To conclude, the proposal is in accordance with the provisions of the development plan.



