

Planning, Design and Access Statement

Change of use of informal overspill car parking
area to a formal overspill car parking area

Prepared by Fisher German LLP on behalf of
Severn Trent Water Limited

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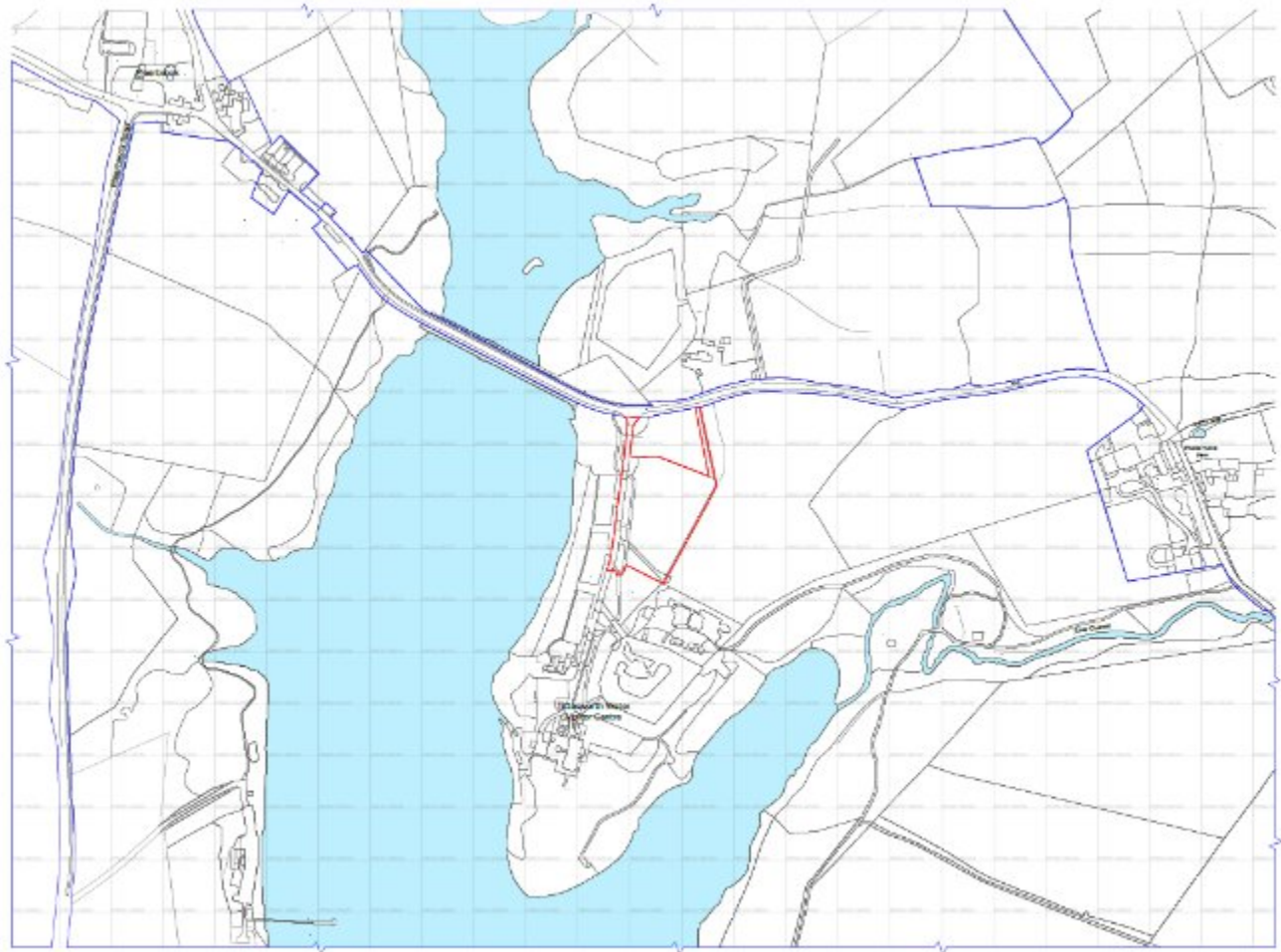
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1. Introduction

- 1.1. This Planning, Design and Access Statement has been prepared by Fisher German LLP on behalf of Severn Trent Water Limited (“STWL”) in relation to the change of use of informal overspill car parking area to a formal overspill car parking area within the grounds of Tittesworth Water Visitor Centre, Meerbrook, Leek, ST13 8SW.
- 1.2. STWL is a regulated business with statutory responsibilities for the provision of water and sewerage services to over eight million people and businesses in an area stretching across the heart of the UK, from the Bristol Channel to the Humber, and from the West to the East Midlands.
- 1.3. STWL has commenced the implementation of its Asset Management Plan (AMP8) for the period April 2025 to March 2030, which is a five-year capital expenditure programme regulated by OFWAT. Investment during the AMP8 period will be substantial and directly addresses improvements needed in response to a number of key challenges including population growth and the importance of protecting the environment. There will be a particular focus during this period on building the resilience of the water supply and reducing leakage and pollution incidents.
- 1.4. New formalised overspill car parking provision is required to create a more accessible, usable area which will maintain the natural surface and reduce negative impacts currently taking place and reduce the impact on the nearby village, by decreasing the number of visitors parking in the village at peak times. There are approximately 300,000 yearly visitors to Tittesworth Water Visitor Centre. The proposed formalised overspill car parking area will meet demand all-year round including, in weather that does not currently allow for field parking. Overall, the formalised overspill car parking area will create revenue generation, provide for better management of visitors and provide safe and efficient car parking, in particular at standalone events held throughout the year.
- 1.5. This application should be read alongside the following plans and documents:
 - 144998-- BP01 - Block Plans
 - 144998-- EP01 - Existing Plan
 - 144998-- LP01 - Location Plan
 - 144998-- PP01 - Proposed Plans
 - 144998-- PP02 - Proposed Levels
 - 32116-STN-XX-XX-DR-C-0001-P01- car park layout and vehicle tracking
 - 32116-STN-XX-XX-DR-C-1000-P01 - proposed drainage layout and details
 - 32116-STN-XX-XX-DR-C-2000-P01 - proposed levels and earthworks analysis
 - 32116-STN-XX-XX-DR-C-4000-P01- proposed surfacing works
 - DIG_GRASSPROTECTA_SDI_Guidance_Aug17
 - Preliminary Ecological Appraisal – Oct25
 - Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment And Biodiversity Enhancement Plan (January 2026 Update)
 - Statutory Metric Calculator (Jan 26)
 - Tree Constraints Plan
 - Tree Survey Schedule Key
 - Arboricultural Planning Statement Tittesworth (January 2026)
 - Archaeological Desk Based Assessment (October 2025)

2. Site and Surrounding Area

- 2.1. The proposed site is located to the north of the Tittesworth Water Visitor Centre, Meerbrook, Leek, ST13 8SW at approximate Grid Reference: SJ 99436 60430 (Easting: 399436 , Northing:360430) as shown on plan reference Severn Trent Tittesworth Rangers Yard 144639-P-- LP01 (Site Location Plan), which has been submitted as part of this application. The site falls within the jurisdiction of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council.



Existing : Location Plan - Scale 1:1000

Figure 1. Location Plan

- 2.2. The proposed site is situated within the Churnet Valley Masterplan Boundary, within the Countryside and within the extent of Leekfrith Neighbourhood Plan Development area.
- 2.3. The site comprises of an informal overspill car parking area. The wider landscape predominantly comprises of agricultural land, woodland and the reservoir.
- 2.4. The site is located within Flood Zone 1, meaning there is a low risk of flooding from rivers. The site experiences a low risk of flooding via surface water.

- 2.5. The proposed works are located approximately 50m south of the Peak District National Park boundary. 'Leek Moors' Site of Special Scientific Interest ("SSSI") which is also designated as 'South Pennine Moors' Special Conservation Area & Peak District Moors' Special Protection Areas is approximately 1.5km north-east of the proposed works. 'Thorncleft Moor' SSSI is approximately 2.8km south-east of the proposed works.
- 2.6. The proposed works are located within the SSSI Impact Risk Zone ("IRZ") for 'Leek Moors' and Thorncleft Moor'.
- 2.7. The nearest statutory heritage asset is 'Marsh Farmhouse and attached Outbuildings (Grade II) Listed Building which is approximately 100m north of the proposal.
- 2.8. The proposed works are not located within a Conservation Area. The closest being Meerbrook Conservation Area approx. 450m to the north west.
- 2.9. There are no known TPO's located on site or within the immediate vicinity.
- 2.10. There are no Public Right of Way ("PRoW") located on site or within the immediate surrounding area.
- 2.11. The nearest residential property is Marsh Farmhouse approximately 100m north of the proposal, which is not visible from the site.

Planning History

- 2.12. There is no planning history on the location of the proposed overspill car park, however, the following planning history is relevant to the wider Tittesworth Visitor Centre:
 - SMD/2025/0341 - Installation of 1no. storage barn – **Approved** 30/09/2025
 - SMD/2024/0070 - Changing Places Toilet – **Approved** 05/04/2024
 - SMD/2021/0372 - 2 x freestanding entrance signs – **Approved** 13/08/2021
 - SMD/2021/0534, Installation of 2 no. cabins, Tittesworth Visitors Centre, Blackshaw Lane, Meerbrook, Leek, Staffordshire, ST13 8SW - **Approved** 12/08/2021
 - SMD/2012/1186 - 2 timber site entrance signs, 2.45m high, 1.58, wide and 0.2m in the form of a sail 2 timber information signs 2.1m high, 1.3m wide and 0.2m deep situated within the reservoir car park 1 set of 3 6m flag poles within the car park for hanging banners, 3 – **Approved** 13/02/2013
 - SMD/2009/0465 - Replacement toilet block – **Approved** 28/04/2009
 - SMD/2006/0995 - Erection of two free standing non illuminated signs – **Approved** 19/03/2008
 - SMD/2006/0987- Removal of existing sign clutter; erection of new signs, automatic entrance gates, new gravel path link realigned timber fencing, with associated planting and turf – **Approved** 19/01/2007
 - SMD/1999/1144 - TITTESWORTH LODGE TITTESWORTH VISITOR CENTRE TITTESWORTH LEEKFRITH - EXTENSION TO VISITOR CENTRE – **Approved** 07/04/1999
 - SMD/1985/0155 - Extension to form toilet for the disabled – **Approved** 31/10/1985

3. The Development Proposal

- 3.1. This application seeks full planning permission for the change of use of informal overspill car parking area to a formal overspill car parking area within the grounds of Tittesworth Water Visitor Centre.
- 3.2. Specifically, the proposed development comprises the following elements:
- 202 car parking spaces on grass reinforcement mat 'Glassprotecta' laid on existing and newly seeded grass
 - Wildflower planting
 - Self-righting reflective flexible traffic bollards, no base ('Moravia', Layout is indicative).

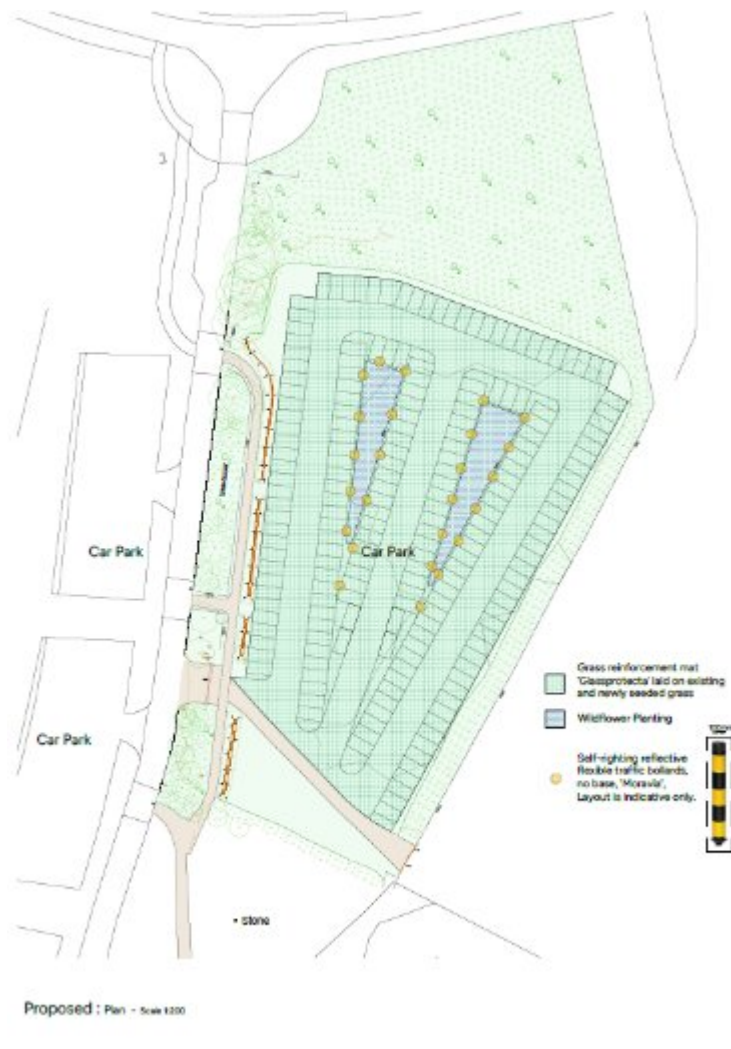


Figure 2. Proposed Block Plan

Amount and Scale

- 3.3. It is proposed to upgrade the existing, informal overspill car park using grass reinforcement mat 'Glassprotecta' laid on existing and newly seeded grass and self-righting reflective flexible traffic bollards to create approx. 202 parking spaces.

- 3.4. The bollards will have a base that can be secured in/on the surface then easily removed. The approximate amount/locations are shown on drawing 144998 PP01 Issue 01 – Proposed Plans.
- 3.5. The formalised overspill carpark will be utilised from Mid-March until end of October, with it in full use from Mid-July to second week of September.

Layout

- 3.6. The layout of the proposed development can be seen on the following plans, which have been submitted as part of this planning application:
 - 144998-- BP01 - Block Plans
 - 144998-- EP01 - Existing Plan
 - 144998-- LP01 - Location Plan
 - 144998-- PP01 - Proposed Plans
 - 144998-- PP02 - Proposed Levels

Appearance

- 3.7. The appearance of the site is currently a grassed, informal overspill car park area. Following the works taking place the appearance will remain with the grass growing through the geo-grid green matting. Overall, in the long-term the area will appear as it is currently, but with a firmer, level structure.

Access

- 3.8. Access to the proposed site extension area will be via the existing access to the visitor centre, which has an existing access leading from the north. No alterations are proposed to the main entrance off the highway.

Landscaping

- 3.9. Landscaping is proposed as part of the development. The details of which are included on plan ref: 144998 PP01 Issue 01. As part of this landscaping scheme, it is proposed to plant the following:
 - newly seeded grass
 - Wildflower Planting
 - BNG

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

- 3.10. The application site currently has a baseline biodiversity value comprising 2.27 habitat units, 2.43 hedgerow units, and 0 watercourse units, as detailed in the Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment and Biodiversity Enhancement Plan. The post-development biodiversity value will be +33.54% Biodiversity Units (Area Units) and +46.56% Biodiversity Units (Linear Hedgerow Units) exceeding the mandatory requirement of a 10% biodiversity net gain.
- 3.11. Full details of the proposed compensation measures will be outlined in the Biodiversity Gain Plan, which will be submitted following the grant of planning approval.

Drainage

- 3.12. A Drainage Layout & Details Plan has been prepared to support the proposed development. The Drainage Plan outlines the locations for the proposed surface water drainage, inspection chamber and filter trench. Further technical details and design considerations are provided on drawing 32116-STN-XX-XX-DR-C-1000 P01.

4. Planning Policy

- 4.1. Planning policy relating to the application site is formed through:
- Local Planning Policy
 - National Planning Policy
- 4.2. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires applications for planning permission to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The development Plan material to the proposal consists of:
- Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan 2014 – 2033 (Adopted September 2020)
 - Leekfirth Neighbourhood Plan (Adopted July 2021)
- 4.3. In addition to the Development Plan, applications should also have regard to National Planning Policy, which is a material consideration in any determination and the Churnet Valley Masterplan SPD (March 2014).

Staffordshire Moorlands District Local Plan (Adopted September 2020)

- 4.4. The following policies from the adopted Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan are considered relevant to the application:

Policy SS 1: Development Principles

- 4.5. This policy states that the Council will expect the development and use of land to contribute positively to the social, economic and environmental improvement of the Staffordshire Moorlands in terms of delivering, in partnership with other agencies and services:
- quality local services, including provision for education, healthcare, leisure, community, cultural and tourist facilities in response to anticipated population change and visitor numbers;
 - easy access to jobs, shops and transport services by all sections of the community;
 - increased economic prosperity and opportunities for employment and greater local capacity with an educated, skilled and flexible workforce;
 - a healthy, safe, attractive, active, well-designed and well-maintained environment;
 - development which maintains the locally distinctive character of the Staffordshire Moorlands, its individual towns and villages and their settings;
 - support development which secures high quality, sustainable environments, efficient and effective use of resources and contributes effectively to tackling climate change and reduced carbon emissions.

Policy SS 2: Settlement Hierarchy

- 4.6. **Other Rural Areas** – this comprises the open countryside where development is normally unacceptable and green belt where further development is generally inappropriate. Within these areas there are some groups of houses and hamlets which are not identified as ‘smaller villages’ because of their predominantly open character and loose-knit nature. They also contain major developed areas which may be suitable for appropriate development or redevelopment.

Policy SS 10: Other Rural Areas Strategy

- 4.7. This policy states that the other rural areas comprise the countryside outside of the development boundaries of the towns and larger villages and the open countryside surrounding the smaller villages.
- 4.8. These areas will only provide development which has an essential need to be located in the countryside.
- 4.9. This policy sets out the actions the council and its partners will take to achieve this policy including: Sustain the rural economy by:
- Enabling the limited expansion or development of business for employment uses where a rural location can be justified
 - Enhance tourist opportunities by: Supporting sustainable tourism developments and measures in the Churnet Valley in accordance with Policy SS 11

Policy SS 11: Churnet Valley Strategy

- 4.10. This policy states the Churnet Valley is identified as an area for sustainable tourism and rural regeneration. The Churnet Valley Masterplan provides a comprehensive framework for development in the Churnet Valley, and development should be in accordance with the Masterplan. Within this area particular support will be given to:
- The expansion of existing tourist extractions and facilities
 - Measures to enhance, protect and interpret the landscape character of heritage assets
 - measures to remediate and restore derelict land, buildings and features including the appropriate redevelopment of sites
 - Actions to protect and enhance biodiversity
- 4.11. Development proposals should be of a scale and nature and of a high standard of design which conserves and enhances the heritage, landscape and biodiversity of the area. Strong sustainable development and environmental management principles should also be demonstrated. The consideration of landscape character will be paramount in all development proposals in order to protect and conserve locally distinctive qualities and sense of place and to maximise opportunities for restoring, strengthening and enhancing distinctive landscape features.

Policy SD 5: Flood Risk

- 4.12. The Council will follow a sequential approach to the management of flood risk. New development will be guided to the areas with the lowest risk of current and future flooding where this is viable and compatible with other policies aimed at achieving a sustainable pattern of development.

Policy E 4: Tourism and Cultural Development

- 4.13. This policy states new tourism and cultural development which complements the distinctive character and quality of the District will be supported having regard to the Area Strategies in Policies SS 5 to SS 10 and Churnet Valley Strategy Policy SS 11.

Policy DC 1: Design Considerations

4.14. Staffordshire Moors Council require all development to be well designed and reinforce local distinctiveness by positively contributing to and complementing the special character of the area in line with the Councils Design Guide SPD. Development should;

- be of a high quality and add value to the local area, incorporating creativity, detailing and materials appropriate to the character of the area;
- be designed to respect the site and its surroundings and promote a positive sense of place and identity through its scale, height, density, layout, siting, landscaping, character and appearance;
- incorporate sustainable construction techniques and design concepts for buildings and their layouts to reduce the impact of the development;
- protect the amenity of the area, including creation of healthy active environments and residential amenity, in terms of satisfactory daylight, visual impact, sunlight, outlook, privacy, soft landscaping as well as noise, odour and light pollution;
- promote the maintenance, enhancement, restoration and re-creation of biodiversity and geological heritage, where appropriate
- ensure that existing drainage, waste water and sewerage infrastructure capacity is available, and where necessary enhanced, to enable the development to proceed

Policy DC 2: Historic Environment

4.15. This policy states the Council will conserve and where possible enhance heritage assets, including their setting in a manner appropriate to their significance. This will take into account the desirability of maintaining and enhancing their significance and will ensure that development proposals contribute positively to the character of the built and historic environment.

Policy DC 3: Landscape & Settlement Setting

4.16. This policy states the Council will protect and, where possible, enhance local landscape and the setting of settlements in the Staffordshire Moorlands by:

- 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;
- 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;
- 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;
- Supporting opportunities to positively manage the landscape and use sustainable building techniques and materials which are sympathetic to the landscape;
- Ensuring that development does not adversely affect the wider setting of the Peak District National Park.

Leekfirth Neighbourhood Development Plan (Adopted July 2021)

4.17. There are no policies within this Neighbourhood Plan, which are considered relevant to this proposal.

National Planning Policy Framework (2024)

- 4.18. National policy is set out in the NPPF which was updated in December 2024. This framework seeks to ensure sustainable forms of development and good design, alongside the protection and enhancement of the environment.
- 4.19. *Paragraph 8* states the planning system has three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways. The first of these is an economic objective, to help build 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, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and co-ordinating the provision of infrastructure.
- 4.20. *Paragraph 11* states there should be a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Local plans should positively seek opportunities to meet the development needs of their area and development proposals which accord with, and up-to-date development plan should be approved without delay. Where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies are out-of-date, permission should be granted unless policies in the Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance prove a clear reason for refusing the proposed development, or the adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.
- 4.21. *Paragraph 20* states strategic policies should set out an overall strategy for the pattern, scale and quality of development, and make sufficient provision for:
- homes (including affordable housing), employment, retail, leisure and other commercial development;
- 4.22. *Paragraph 88* states that planning policies and decisions should enable sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments which respect the character of the countryside
- 4.23. *Paragraph 116* states that development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.
- 4.24. *Paragraph 129* states planning policies and decisions should support development that makes efficient use of land, taking into account the availability and capacity of infrastructure and services – both existing and proposed – as well as their potential for further improvement.
- 4.25. *Paragraph 135* states planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:
- a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;
 - b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;
 - c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);
 - d) establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;
 - e) optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and
 - f) create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.
- 4.26. *Paragraph 139* states development that is not well designed should be refused, especially where it fails to reflect local design policies and government guidance on design, taking into account any local

design guidance and supplementary planning documents such as design guides and codes. Conversely, significant weight should be given to:

- a) development which reflects local design policies and government guidance on design, taking into account any local design guidance and supplementary planning documents such as design guides and codes; and/or
 - b) outstanding or innovative designs which promote high levels of sustainability, or help raise the standard of design more generally in an area, so long as they fit in with the overall form and layout of their surroundings
- 4.27. *Paragraph 162* confirms plans should take a proactive approach to mitigating and adapting to climate change, taking into account the long-term implications for flood risk, coastal change, water supply, biodiversity and landscapes, and the risk of overheating from rising temperatures. Policies should support appropriate measures to ensure the future resilience of communities and infrastructure to climate change impacts.

Churnet Valley Masterplan SPD (March 2014)

- 4.28. The Churnet Valley Masterplan identifies Tittesworth Reservoir as a Hub and Opportunity Site. It is key for access to The Roaches and Peak District landscape.
- 4.29. It is to act as a gateway in which it is an existing centre of interest, with visitor facilities, from which visitors can explore the local area.

5. Planning Policy Assessment

- 5.1. This application seeks full planning permission for the change of use of informal overspill car parking area to a formal overspill car parking area within the grounds of Tittesworth Water Visitor Centre.
- 5.2. The application is supported by a comprehensive set of reports and surveys which have considered the potential impact of the proposed development upon the site and the surrounding area. An assessment of the proposed development has been made against the relevant planning policy framework for the area and other material considerations in accordance with Section 38 (6) of the 2004 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act.
- 5.3. The assessment considers the following matters:
 - Need for Development
 - Principle of Development
 - Environmental & Technical Matters:
 - Design
 - Access
 - Ecology and Biodiversity Net Gain
 - Arboriculture
 - Amenity
 - Flood Risk and Drainage
 - Heritage/Archaeology

Need for Development

- 5.4. Severn Trent Water requires the existing informal overspill car parking area to be formalised.
- 5.5. New formalised overspill car parking provision is required to create a more accessible, usable area which will maintain the natural surface and reduce negative impacts currently taking place and reduce the impact on the nearby village, by decreasing the number of visitors parking in the village at peak times. There are approximately 300,000 yearly visitors to Tittesworth Water Visitor Centre. The proposed formalised overspill car parking area will meet demand all-year round including, in weather that does not currently allow for field parking. Overall, the formalised overspill car parking area will create revenue generation, provide for better management of visitors and provide safe and efficient car parking, in particular at standalone events held throughout the year.

Principle of Development

- 5.6. Section 38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that planning applications be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. For the purposes of this Act, the development Plan relevant to this proposal comprises the Staffordshire Moorlands District Council Local Plan 2014 – 2033 (Adopted September 2020).
- 5.7. Ensuring sustainable development is achieved is at the heart of local and national planning policy and is key to deciding whether the principle of development is acceptable. Paragraph 8 of the NPPF sets out that the planning system has three overarching objectives, which are: economic, social and environmental, and that these are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways. On reflection, it is considered that this development can constitute sustainable development because:
 - From a social perspective the development provides opportunities for job creation (the construction workers required to build the overspill car park) and supports the upkeep of a popular tourist facility;

- From an economic perspective it will help ensure there is necessary infrastructure to support a positive visitor experience;
- From an environmental perspective, the proposed development has been carefully positioned and designed to minimise impacts on the countryside, landscape, heritage, amenity and biodiversity as far as practicable, whilst ensuring the required operational needs are met on site.

- 5.8. The area is currently used as an informal overspill car parking area, and these proposals seek to formalise the overspill car parking area. The provision of the overspill car park will help support an existing viable rural leisure and tourism business. Therefore, the proposals are considered to be acceptable in the countryside location, in line with policies SS 1 (Development Principle), SS 2 (Settlement Hierarchy), Policy SS 10 (Other Rural Areas Strategy), SS11 (Churnet Valley Strategy), and E4 (Tourism and Cultural Development) and Policy DC 3 (Landscape & Settlement Setting) of the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan (September 2020) and the aims of the Churnet Valley Masterplan SPD (March 2014).
- 5.9. Given the above, the development is therefore considered to be compliant with the local and national planning policies set out above and acceptable in principle subject to the material considerations set out below.

Environmental & Technical Matters

- 5.10. A number of detailed technical assessments, surveys and reports (as listed in Section 1 of this statement) have been commissioned to inform the siting, design and layout of the proposed development. The outputs of these reports, including any required mitigation measures, are summarised below. For further information on any of these topics, please refer to the full reports directly.

Design

- 5.11. The overspill car park will be sited to the north of the Tittesworth Water Visitor Centre. The proposal will respect the site and its surroundings by being a suitable scale. The design of the overspill car park will not detract from the character of the wider landscape, intrude into the countryside or detract from any views across the site and wider area.
- 5.12. Once the works are complete the appearance of the site will be as it is currently as a grassed area. With the additional benefits of the area being durable and well-managed, not muddy or churned up.
- 5.13. Given the above, the proposals to formalise the overspill car parking area are in line with Policies SS1 (Development Principles), DC1 (Design Considerations) and DC3 (landscape & Settlement Setting) of the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan 2014 – 2033.

Access

- 5.14. Tittesworth Water Visitor Centre is accessed via a vehicular access track, owned by STW, that leads off Blackshaw Lane, Meerbrook. This access is considered suitable for the operation of the site and no amendments are proposed. Visitor traffic associated with the proposal is expected to be at similar levels currently experienced, as such, there will be no adverse impacts on highway. The proposals will not significantly increase traffic to the site as the proposals are to improve existing operations at the site. Therefore, it is considered that the proposed development is compliant with Paragraph 116 of the NPPF 2024.

Ecology and Biodiversity Net Gain

- 5.15. Ecological consultant Penny Anderson have prepared the following Reports which have been submitted as part of this application:
- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

- Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment And Biodiversity Enhancement Plan

- 5.16. The Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (“PEA”) examines the context of the site, the habitats and species which are, or could be, present and the potential effects of the work on them during the construction of the formalised overspill car parking area. They include suggestions for appropriate mitigation measures and recommendations to ensure the proposed development does not adversely impact local ecology and note for opportunities for biodiversity enhancement. The PEA sets out recommendations for if the works change as well as for the current scope of works. Under the current scope of works there are precautionary approaches recommended for badgers, hedgehog, brown hare and harvest mouse, reptiles and amphibians as well as to avoid clearance in bird nesting season and minimise vegetation clearance to avoid removal of habitats. These recommendations will be followed. Therefore, the proposal is compliant with Policy SS 11 (Churnet Valley Strategy), DC1 (Design Considerations) and DC3 (landscape & Settlement Setting) of the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan 2014 – 2033.
- 5.17. As per the deemed BNG condition introduced by Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (inserted by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021 and amended by the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023) the objective is for development to deliver at least a 10% increase in biodiversity value relative to the pre-development biodiversity value of the on-site habitat. As per the Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment and Biodiversity Enhancement Plan. The post-development biodiversity value will be +33.54% Biodiversity Units (Area Units) and +46.56% Biodiversity Units (Linear Hedgerow Units) exceeding the mandatory requirement of a 10% biodiversity net gain. The BNG will be delivered on site through the enhancement of modified grassland and enhancement of hedgerow.

Arboriculture

- 5.18. An Arboricultural Impact Assessment has been prepared by ADAS (Jan 26).
- 5.19. The proposed development will require the removal of the moderate-quality category B Silver Birch tree T23 to facilitate ground levelling works if they are not able to accommodate working around it. This loss will be mitigated by the proposed wildflower planting in the centre of the site. Minor facilitation pruning will also be necessary on the northern aspect of G1 and the southern aspect of T2 to provide sufficient clearance for access and the planned works. This facilitation tree work is not considered to have detrimental impact on the long-term health of the trees. Drainage pipe works are expected to encroach into the RPAs of T7 and T20. Arboricultural supervision will therefore be required for these works when in and around these RPAs. Initial and culminating arboricultural monitoring is also required to ensure the correct implementation of tree protection measures and oversee their safe and compliant deconstruction. These works are not expected to encroach into any other tree feature RPAs, however, should the current plans change, the appointed arboricultural consultant should be informed. ADAS are satisfied that, providing the recommendations contained within this report are followed, the proposed development of the site can be successfully achieved without causing undue harm to those trees identified for retention.
- 5.20. Given the above, the proposals are in line with Policy DC 3 (Landscape & Settlement Setting) of the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan (September 2020).

Amenity

- 5.21. The nearest residential property is Marsh Farmhouse approximately 100m north of the proposal, which is not visible from the site. Given the existing separation distance between the site area and the nearest residential property it is not considered that there would be any adverse impacts to amenity. Therefore, the proposals are in line with Policy DC 1: Design Considerations and paragraph 135 of the NPPF (2024).

Flood Risk and Drainage

- 5.22. The development site is located within Flood Zone 1, meaning there is a low risk of flooding from rivers. The site experiences a low risk of flooding via surface water. It is proposed for the surface water to run-off into new perforated pipe located along the northern, eastern and western boundaries, with the surface water

then draining to a stone filled pit excavated on the existing culvert/pipe inlet. It is therefore not considered that the proposed development will result in a heightened risk of flooding elsewhere.

- 5.23. For the reasons stated, the drainage strategy proposed is considered suitable for managing surface water. The proposed development is therefore in compliance with Policy DC 1 (Design Considerations) and Policy SD 5 (Flood Risk) of the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan 2014 – 2033.

Heritage/Archaeology

- 5.24. It is not considered that the proposed works will have a detrimental impact on any designated heritage assets. The nearest statutory heritage asset is 'Marsh Farmhouse and attached Outbuildings (Grade II) Listed Building which is approximately 100m north of the proposal.
- 5.25. This listed building is not visible from the location of the proposed formalised overspill car parking area so the installation of the proposal will not cause harm to any heritage assets, in line with Policy DC 1 (Design Considerations) and Policy DC 2 (Historic Environment) of the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan (September 2020).
- 5.26. Furthermore, the application is supported by an Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment. The assessment identified there is a low potential for groundworks associated with the proposed development to have an impact on the archaeological resource. Any archaeological remains which may be present would likely be of low significance. This report will assist the archaeological advisor to the Local Planning Authority to make an informed decision on the need for further archaeological work on the Site, in advance of any consented development.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1. This application seeks full planning permission for the change of use of informal overspill car parking area to a formal overspill car parking area within the grounds of Tittesworth Water Visitor Centre.
- 6.2. The proposed development has been carefully designed to meet visitor requirements and has been informed by a number of technical assessments. The proposed works will be situated on land near to the existing Visitor Centre car parking and the development is not considered likely to result in any significantly adverse impacts on siting within the countryside, landscape, heritage, ecology, flood risk or amenity nor highways safety. It is also anticipated that environmental benefits will be delivered as part of the scheme in terms of biodiversity net gain.
- 6.3. The proposal has been demonstrated to accord with the policies set out within the adopted Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan as well as the relevant national planning policies. There are material considerations to support the proposed development, and the works are considered to accord with the presumption in favour of sustainable development as set out in the NPPF (2024).
- 6.4. It is considered that there are compelling grounds to grant planning permission of the proposed development, and the proposals accord with the main aims of both local and national planning policy. It is therefore respectfully requested that planning permission be granted.