
2017/0240

Applicant: Mr. Richard Cutler

Description: The erection of eleven pods, two club lodges, one yurt, one WC/shower block and associated paths and landscaping

Site Address: Kingswood Peak Venture, Huddersfield Road, Penistone, Sheffield, S36 7GF

Penistone Town Council have no objections
3 letters of objection received

Description

The Kingswood Peak Venture Centre is located on outskirts of Penistone and occupies approximately 5 hectares of land on the north side of Huddersfield Road, adjacent to Scout Dyke Reservoir and within the Green Belt countryside. The centre currently comprises the main centre building which is a mix of one and two storeys together with single storey structures to the rear. These buildings comprise bedrooms, toilet/ shower rooms, canteen, teaching rooms, media suites, a kitchen area and storage facilities. The remainder of the site comprises of hardstanding, landscaped grassed areas with a range of outdoor activity equipment including a zip line and climbing tower. The existing trees provide significant screening of the site from Huddersfield Road.

The site is accessed from two points, with the access from Manchester Road being limited for deliveries and the main access point being situated along Carr Head Lane to the north western boundary, which leads to a secure entrance and car park.

The application site is a grassed recreational area set to the north east of the main buildings. The western side of the proposed accommodation area is bounded by established trees and the north eastern boundary of the site incorporates the existing zip wire. To the south west of the application site is a residential property known as School House, which is not connected to the centre. The rear of the property and its garden area faces onto the site. There are three other properties, Dentwait View, The Moorlands and Carr Lodge Farm which are set adjacent to the northern western boundary with the main access road along Carr Head Lane.

The centre is a long standing outdoor recreational facility, and currently provides accommodation for approximately 218 visiting children mainly of primary school age, and 21 accompanying teachers within the existing buildings on site. It allows children to undertake outdoor education and physical activities both on site using existing adventure equipment and at the nearby Scout Dyke reservoir in a controlled and supervised manner.

Kingswood is a leading educational activity provider operating 10 centres around the UK and northern France. It provides residential educational and adventure activity holidays for school children aged 8-18 and other paying guests. The range of guests are outlined below:-

Schools

The Kingswood brand caters for schools (primary and secondary) and other groups. The children visit the centres in groups of twelve upwards and are accompanied by their teachers and parent assistants. School groups visit at every time of the year except Christmas and the summer holidays.

Kingswood Peak Venture generally provides educational activity breaks of 2 to 5 days for up to approximately 200 school children aged 8 – 18 although most of the children visiting the centre are of primary school age. The centre generally operates at a maximum of 75% capacity due to gender splits and configurations in dormitory rooms.

Children's Summer Camp

Kingswood operates a camp for seven weeks in the summer. Its guests are children aged 6 – 16 who are normally unaccompanied by adults.

National Citizenship Service

Since its pilot year in 2010 Kingswood have delivered the adventure phase of the National Citizenship Service (NCS) to over 75,000 young people making Kingswood the lead provider of this phase 1 programme in England.

Scout Association

Kingswood has an established relationship and provides overnight stays to the Scout Association and enables young people to take part in outdoor, adventure activities and enables them to learn skills and have experiences which they may otherwise not have the opportunity to try.

Proposed Development

The proposed development comprises the erection of eleven camping pods, two club lodges, one yurt, one WC/ shower block and associated paths and landscaping.

The proposed camping pods are approximately 6m by 3m timber structures, finished with rust coloured metro tile cladding, set on concrete pads. There are eleven in total, with six being child pods (sleeping up to 8 people) and five teacher pods (sleeping up to 4 people).

To the west of the site a yurt is proposed with a diameter of 12.2m and a maximum height of 3.65m. The yurt would provide a dry seating area and would be covered in green canvas with clear PVC and timber decked flooring.

The two proposed club lodges are set adjacent to the yurt, and would sleep 16 people. The lodges would be single storey and would measure approximately 8.4m by 7.5m (including deck), made from a canvas material constructed over a wooden post frame. The roof of the lodges will be olive green in colour with a camel coloured inner tent featuring PVC windows. A timber decked terrace area is proposed at the entrance to the lodge.

The proposed shower block measures approximately 22m by 3.6m and 2.7m in height and is sited adjacent to the existing reception area and car park. The shower block would be clad in Siberian larch cladding.

The plans have been amended during the course of the application following objections being received from neighbouring residents. In response to the concerns raised by neighbouring residents, the fire pit has been removed and a 1.5m planted earth embankment is to be formed adjacent to the pods and club yurts close to the south west of the site.

In support of the application, the applicant has submitted a planning statement. The applicant states:

'Kingswood has decided to invest in this centre, through the provision of an alternative type of accommodation. The proposed development will offer an exciting new 'glamping style' experience for visiting children and teachers. In addition to providing additional bed spaces on the site, this new development will provide an alternative type of accommodation for visitors and help to sustain the future of the centre for Kingswood, whilst contributing to the economy of the local area through additional jobs created.

The centre currently provides 239 bed spaces. The proposed development will increase the maximum theoretical capacity to 334 bed spaces. The increase in bed spaces is required to meet the anticipated demand for the camping style accommodation and enable two schools to visit the centre at any one time, whilst catering for a varying gender mix. Whilst the proposed development will mainly be occupied between spring and autumn, it is proposed that the accommodation and other infrastructure would remain in-situ all year round.

There is currently a deficit of accommodation at the centre. None of the existing buildings on site are capable of providing the additional accommodation required for visiting children and teachers as they are occupied by other uses integral to the use of the site as an educational activity centre.

There are several benefits which would be provided by the proposed development, in summary:

- The development would enable Kingswood to continue to meet the demand for its outdoor education courses and therefore enable it to provide more young people with the benefits of a Kingswood residential holiday.
- Enabling Kingswood to meet demand for residential holidays will contribute to the longevity of the business operating at the Peak Venture site.
- The development would expand the provisions at the centre for disabled children.
- The development would attract more people to the area (staff and visitors) and create nine jobs, supporting the local economy.'

Policy Context

Planning decision should be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise and the NPPF does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making. The development plan consists of the Core Strategy and the saved Unitary Development Plan policies. The Council has also adopted a series of Supplementary Planning Documents and Supplementary Planning Guidance Notes, which are other material considerations.

The Council has submitted our emerging Local Plan to the Secretary of State but we are at an early stage in the examination process. It establishes policies and proposals for the development and use of land up to the year 2033. The document is a material consideration and represents a further stage forward in the progression towards adoption of the Local Plan. As such increasing weight can be given to the policies contained within the document although, in accordance with paragraph 216 of the NPPF, the extent of this will depend on:

- The extent to which there are unresolved objections to relevant policies (the less significant the unresolved objections, the greater the weight that may be given) and;
- The degree of consistency of the relevant policies in the emerging plan to the policies in the NPPF (the closer the policies in the emerging plan to the policies in the NPPF, the greater the weight that may be given).

Barnsley UDP Saved Policies

UDP Allocation – Green Belt

GS8 'Development within the Green Belt' states that the construction of new buildings will not be permitted unless it is for purposes including essential facilities for outdoor sport or outdoor recreation, for cemeteries, or for other uses of land which preserve the openness of the Green Belt and which do not conflict with the purposes of including land in it.

Local Development Framework

Core Strategy

Policy CSP21 - Rural Economy

Policy CSP26 – New Development and Highway Improvement

Policy CSP34 - Protection of Green Belt

Policy CSP36 – Biodiversity and Geodiversity

NPPF

The National Planning Policy Framework sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. At the heart is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Development proposals that accord with the development plan should be approved unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out-of-date, permission should be granted unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework as a whole; or where specific policies in the Framework indicate development should be restricted or unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Paragraphs of particular relevance to this application include:

80. Green Belt serves five purposes:

- to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
- to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
- to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
- to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
- to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

89. A local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in Green Belt. Exceptions to this are:-

- provision of appropriate facilities for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation and for cemeteries, as long as it preserves the openness of the Green Belt and does not conflict with the purposes of including land within it;

28. Planning policies should support economic growth in rural areas in order to create jobs and prosperity by taking a positive approach to sustainable new development. To enable this to happen plans should:-

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

Consultations

Penistone Town Council – No objections

Highways – No objections

Regulatory Services – No objections

Tree Officer – No objection

Drainage – No objection subject to conditions

Biodiversity Officer – Recommends appropriate mitigation measures if the site is shown to have low ecological value

Representations

3 Letters of objection have been received which raise the following concerns:-

- The increase in numbers of children and potential noise and disturbance to adjacent residential properties
- The proposal is not camping but a group of buildings resembling a holiday camp from the 1950's with plumbed in facilities
- The permanent and semi-permanent structures will result in a reduction in the openness of the Green Belt
- The site currently operates at 75% capacity, no evidence has been provided of alternative accommodation within the existing buildings being properly evaluated or even extensions to the existing structures on the existing developed sites.
- Camping experiences could be provided in tents if required. The proposal is effectively a residential development in the Green Belt.
- Very special circumstances have not been provided and the scheme does not comply with policy CSP34
- Granting permission for 'glamping' may allow for a change in use of the customer base
- Concerns have been raised with regard to older children being allowed to leave the camp and roam at night
- Potential impact on wildlife
- Potential buried asbestos on the site from previously demolished WW2 buildings

- Impact of increased traffic on the safety of Carr Head Lane and the 4 properties on it, The Moorlands, Denthwaite View, Carr Lodge Farm and Carr Head Farm. It is a designated bridle path and is very frequently used by walkers as it is part of the Boundary Walk.
- Impact of increased vehicle movements upon residential amenity, by way of noise and smells/fumes
- The proposed fire pit will encourage further evening activity and noise and smells/fumes

Assessment

Principle of Development

The site is located within the Green Belt as allocated within the UDP proposals maps. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence.

Paragraph 88 of the NPPF states that when considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt. Paragraph 89 also states that a Local Planning Authority should regard the construction of new buildings as 'inappropriate' in Green Belt. Exceptions to this include the 'provision of appropriate facilities for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation' as long as it preserves the openness of the Green Belt and does not conflict with the purposes of including land within it.

The site is situated within the Green Belt and the proposal results in the siting of new buildings in the Green Belt, however this is an existing site which provides an important outdoor recreational facility for children and young adults. It is considered that the use would provide 'appropriate facilities' to an existing outdoor recreation centre and is therefore in principle in accordance with paragraph 89, subject to the assessment of the impact of the proposal upon the openness of the Green Belt.

In terms of local policy, CSP21 of the adopted Core Strategy relates to the Rural Economy and supports tourism/recreation developments in the rural parts of the Borough, however ideally proposals should look to utilise or extend existing buildings. A statement of justification has been submitted which justifies the need for the new buildings, due to the improvement of the facilities on site and the increase in visitor numbers, there is a demand for the improvement of the facility and the proposal would provide additional recreational benefits.

Objections have been raised with regard to the Centre only currently operating at a maximum 75% capacity. Kingswood state that 'this as an approximate maximum occupation across all Kingswood sites as the school groups come in different sizes; each school group requires to be in an exclusive self-contained area; and each group will have a different proportion/split of boys and girls and will need to be dormed separately. The suggested erection of tents will be more difficult to manage and control and thereby potentially cause more of a noise issue to neighbouring properties.'

Due to the nature of the pods and lodges being used for 'camping style' purposes, it would be necessary to impose planning conditions upon any permission to ensure that they are not occupied as any person's sole or main place of residence. The proposal is considered to be justified and acceptable, subject to the impact of the proposal upon the openness of the Green Belt and other material considerations below.

Visual Amenity

Camping pods fall within the statutory definition of a caravan. A caravan is any structure designed or adapted for human habitation which is capable of being moved from one place to another by towing or transported on a vehicle or trailer; however the pods would have a degree of permanence and would stay on site year round, therefore careful attention must be paid to their impact upon the landscape.

The proposed buildings are single storey and are sited within the site behind existing buildings within a small pocket of development, the impact on openness is limited as the site is largely contained in order to minimise the effect on the openness of the Green Belt. In terms of visual impact, significant tree planting along the boundaries successfully screens the site from view from the main Manchester Road and surrounding areas. The development will only be visible from close quarter or from within the site. The additional landscaping and earth embankment will further screen the proposal and enhance the site. The proposal is considered to be acceptable in terms of visual amenity and would not significantly affect the openness of the Green Belt in accordance with policy CSP34.

Residential Amenity

Objections have been raised with regard to a loss of privacy and disturbance from the increased activity on the site, including additional vehicular movements along Carr Head Lane. Revised drawings have been submitted with a view to addressing concerns expressed by neighbouring residents in particular the closest property, School House.

The rear of School House is approximately 28 metres from the nearest proposed pods and an established area of trees and shrubs separates the two boundaries. An earth embankment is also proposed between the proposed pods and the boundary with School House in order to mitigate noise impacts from the proposed development. The proposed tree and shrub planting will cover this new embankment and would also provide a degree of enclosure for the camping facility whilst also providing further screening of the camping area from School House. The fire pit has also been omitted from proposals in order to address residents' concerns about smoke, odours and potential encouragement of evening activity. In addition, a condition is recommended to provide an acoustic barrier within the land between the pods and the neighbouring property. Given these measures, and that the centre have confirmed that no formal activities will continue beyond 9:00pm, Regulatory Services have raised no objections to the scheme.

In terms of increased vehicular activity the applicant has stated that a maximum of 2 extra coaches would visit the centre every Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Sunday to transport visiting children. Any additional staff would be accommodated within the existing minibus transport service which is considered to be acceptable and should not cause significant disturbance. The proposal is considered to be acceptable in terms of its impact upon neighbouring residents.

Impact on Trees/Biodiversity

The Tree Officer has been consulted and does not object to the proposal. Given the minor nature of the works and the specimens present there should be no significant impact upon existing trees. A landscaping scheme has been provided and would improve the existing mix of landscaping on the site and would provide further screening to adjacent properties.

The ecological report submitted with the application states that there would be very limited impact on the local ecology as a result of the proposals, provided the recommendations and mitigation measures set within the report are carried out. A condition is therefore recommended to ensure provision of these appropriate mitigation measures.

Highway Safety

The Highways Section have raised no objection to the proposed development. Any additional vehicular movements can be accommodated and sufficient parking and turning areas exist. The proposal is considered to be acceptable in terms of highway safety in accordance with policy CSP26 of the Core Strategy.

Conclusion

The site is situated within the Green Belt and the proposal results in the siting of new buildings in the Green Belt, however this is an existing recreational site which provides an important outdoor recreational facility for children and young adults. It is considered that the proposal would provide for the 'provision of appropriate facilities for ...outdoor recreation' 'as they are connected to an existing centre and is therefore in principle in accordance with paragraph 89 of the NPPF. The proposal is considered to be acceptable in terms of impact upon the visual amenity and openness of the Green Belt and would not cause significant harm to residential amenity or highway safety.

Recommendation

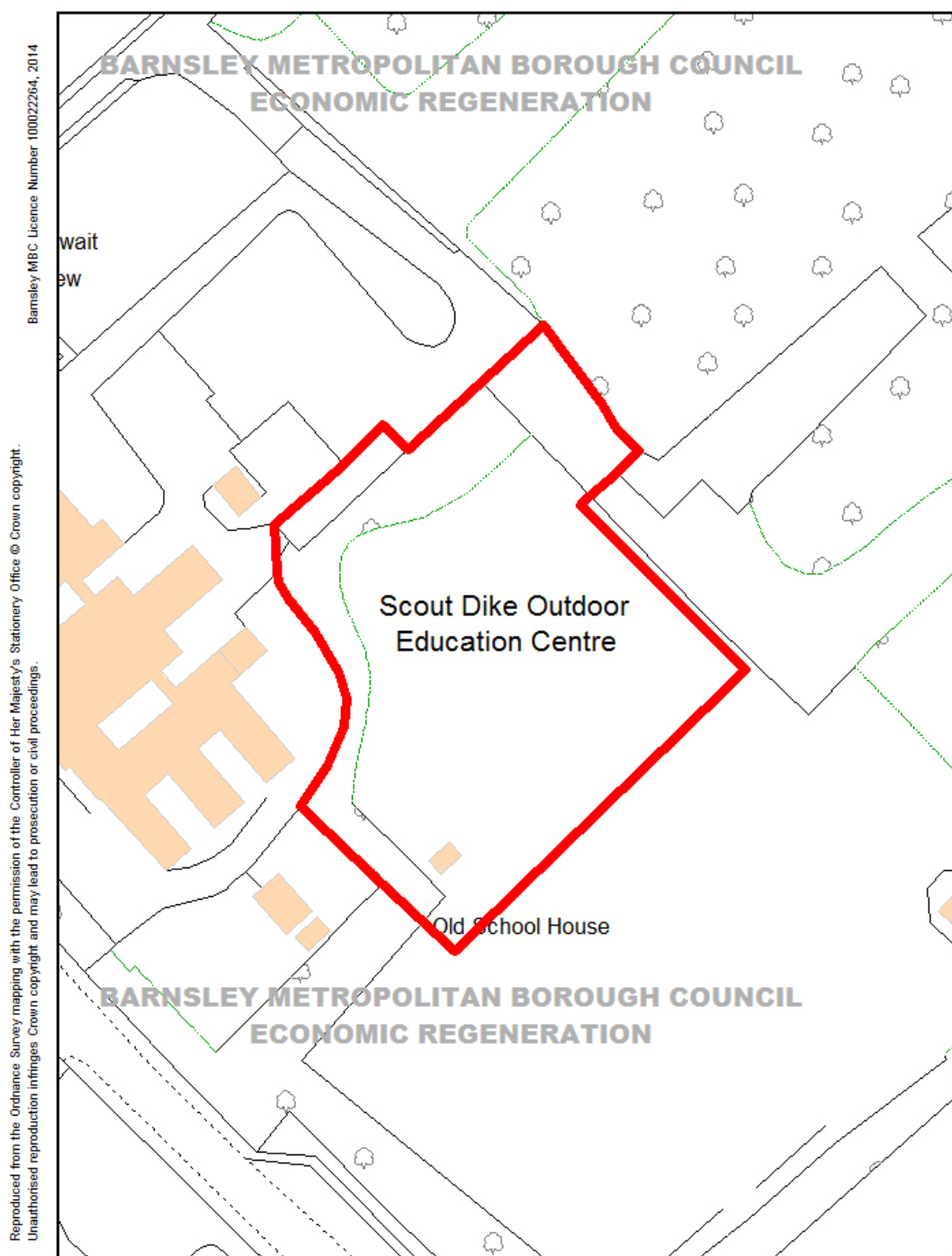
Grant subject to conditions:

- 1 The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of 3 years from the date of this permission.
Reason: In order to comply with the provision of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.
- 2 The development hereby approved shall be carried out strictly in accordance with the amended plans (Nos: 1958-02-001, 1958-02-002 Rev C, 1958-02-003 Rev B, 1958-02-004 Rev B, 1958-02-005, 1958-02-006, 1958-02-007, 1958-02-009 Rev A, 17-09-001, Planning Statement dated February 2017, Arboricultural Impact Assessment dated February 2017, Ecological Appraisal Ascerta, Rev B, dated April 2017) And specifications as approved unless required by any other conditions in this permission.
Reason: In the interests of the visual amenities of the locality and in accordance with LDF Core Strategy Policy CSP 29, Design.
- 3 The camping pods, club lodges and yurt hereby approved shall be used for holiday/recreational purposes only ancillary to the outdoor recreational activities carried out at the site by Kingswood Peak Venture. The pods, lodges and yurts should therefore not be used as permanent residences.
Reason: For the avoidance of doubt, to ensure the development is used appropriately to increase the supply of holiday/recreational accommodation on the site and to safeguard the appearance of the Green Belt.

- 4 Construction or remediation work comprising the use of plant, machinery or equipment, or deliveries of materials shall only take place between the hours of 0800 to 1800 Monday to Friday and 0900 to 1400 on Saturdays and at no time on Sundays or Bank Holidays.
Reason: In the interests of the amenities of local residents and in accordance with Core Strategy Policy CSP 40, Pollution Control and Protection.
- 5 All planting, seeding or turfing comprised in the approved details of landscaping shall be carried out in the first planting and seeding seasons following the occupation of the buildings or the completion of the development, whichever is the sooner; and any trees or plants which die within a period of 5 years from the completion of the development, are removed, or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with other of similar size and species.
Reason: In the interests of the visual amenities of the locality and in accordance with Core Strategy Policy CSP 36, Biodiversity and Geodiversity.
- 6 No development shall take place unless and until full foul and surface water drainage details, have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter no part of the development shall be occupied or brought into use until the approved scheme has been fully implemented. The scheme shall be retained throughout the life of the development unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.
Reason: To ensure proper drainage of the area in accordance with Core Strategy Policy CSP 40, Pollution Control and Protection.
- 7 Prior to the commencement of development, details of the ecological enhancements, including a timetable of their implementation, shall have been submitted to and agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority. The enhancements shall be in line with the recommendations as set out in Ascerta Ecological Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (Ref: P.836.17) dated 14th February 2017. The scheme shall then proceed in accordance with the approved details.
Reason: To conserve and enhance biodiversity in accordance with Core Strategy Policy CSP 36.
- 8 Prior to commencement of development, details of an acoustic barrier along the south western boundary of the site, in the land in-between the pods and the neighbouring property, shall have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The acoustic barrier shall be erected prior to use of the approved development and shall thereafter be retained as such.
Reason: In the interests of neighbouring amenities in accordance with CSP40.

PA reference :-

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Scale 1:1250