

13. FULL APPLICATION – INSTALLATION OF AN ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY, OUTDOOR BENCH, AREA OF LAND APPROX. 900M TO THE SOUTH OF ILAM ON THE EASTERN SIDE OF BLORE ROAD ILAM (NP/SM/0120/0004 JEN)

APPLICANT: THE PEAK DISTRICT NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

Summary

1. The proposed development seeks to erect a bench for public use on land close to a car park. The provision of these facilities can only be permitted development for 'local authorities' and for the purposes of the Town and Country Planning (Permitted Development) Regulations the Peak District National Park Authority is not a 'local authority'. Therefore permission is required. The development is considered acceptable in all respects and is recommended for approval.

Site and surroundings

2. Blore Pastures is a free of charge car park for 55 vehicles and amenity grassland with tree planting (used as a picnic area). It is 0.7ha and is situated to the eastern side of Ilam Moor Lane, approximately 900m south of Ilam.

Proposal

3. Erection of a recycled plastic bench on a concrete plinth.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the application be APPROVED subject to the following conditions:

1. **3 year implementation period.**
2. **Bench to be a simple wooden structure to match existing, constructed from sustainably sourced timber**
3. **Bench to be provided in a natural timber finish to match existing benches**

Key Issues

- Principle
- Design

History

There is no site history to report. Other benches on the land are long established.

Consultations

Highway Authority – No objections The red edge includes the whole of the Blore Pastures site. This response is issued on the basis that the precise location of the bench is at the tip of the arrows on 'Block Plan' and 'Site Plan'; and that it will be in the location detailed on the submitted photograph approximately between the two existing benches and at a similar offset from the carriageway edge to the two existing benches. It would not be appropriate to site it any closer to the carriageway.

Blore Road is subject to a speed limit of 60mph (derestricted). However, the location, nature and geometry of the road mean speeds are generally considerably lower than this particularly at times when the bench is likely to be in use.

There are no recorded accidents within 50m of the Blores Pastures frontage within the last five years. The bench will be sited at an existing picnic/amenity site with existing parking area. Based on this and the proposed location of the bench as described above, there are no objections to this proposal on highway grounds

Parish Council – Supports the application.

Representations

4. No representations have been made in relation to this application.

Main policies

5. Relevant Core Strategy policies: GSP1, GSP2, GSP3, CC1
6. Relevant Development Management Plan policies: DMC3.

National planning policy framework

7. National Park designation is the highest level of landscape designation in the UK. The Environment Act 1995 sets out two statutory purposes for national parks in England and Wales which are to conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage and promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of national parks by the public. When National Parks carry out these purposes they also have the duty to seek to foster the economic and social well-being of local communities within the National Parks.
8. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) has been revised (2019). This replaces the previous document (2012) with immediate effect. The Government's intention is that the document should be considered as a material consideration and carry particular weight where a development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out of date. In particular Paragraph 172 states that great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues.
9. In the National Park the development plan comprises the Authority's Core Strategy 2011 and the Adopted Development Management Policies. Policies in the Development Plan provide a clear starting point consistent with the National Park's statutory purposes for the determination of this application. It is considered that in this case there is no significant conflict between prevailing policies in the Development Plan and government guidance in the NPPF with regard to the issues that are raised.

Development plan

10. Policy GSP1 sets out the broad strategy for achieving the National Park's objectives having regard to the Sandford Principle, (that is, where there are conflicting desired outcomes in achieving national park purposes, greater priority must be given to the conservation of the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the area, even at the cost of socio-economic benefits). GSP1 also sets out the need for sustainable development and to avoid major development unless it is essential, and the need to mitigate localised harm where essential major development is allowed.

11. Policy GSP2 states that development in settlements necessary for the treatment, removal or relocation of non-conforming uses to an acceptable site, or which would enhance the valued characteristics of the National Park will be permitted.
12. Policy GSP3 sets out development management principles and states that all development must respect, conserve and enhance all valued characteristics of the site and buildings, paying particular attention to, amongst other elements, impact on the character and setting of buildings, scale of the development appropriate to the character and appearance of the National Park, design in accordance with the National Park Authority Design Guide and impact on living conditions of communities.
13. Policy DS1 sets out that development for recreation and tourism is in principle acceptable in this location outside of a settlement and not in the Natural Zone.
14. Policy CC1 states that in order to build in resilience to and mitigate the causes of climate change all development must make the most efficient and sustainable use of land, buildings and natural resources.

Development Management Policies

15. Development Management Policy DMC3 requires development to be of a high standard that respects, protects, and where possible enhances the natural beauty, quality and visual amenity of the landscape, including the wildlife and cultural heritage that contribute to the distinctive sense of place. It also provides further detailed criteria to assess design and landscaping, as well as requiring development to conserve the amenity of other properties.

Assessment

16. The proposal is for a bench on an existing amenity area looking towards the River Manifold. The principle of a bench in this location is in accordance with policy DS1 as it is proposed to be provided in the interests of recreation and tourism.
17. The bench is proposed to be provided in black and brown recycled plastic. It has been sponsored by a member of the public and will have a stainless steel plaque of 150mm x 50mm engraved with the words 'Happy Memories' affixed to the backrest.
18. The installation of a plastic bench of the design proposed at this location (while appreciating the sustainability credentials of its recycled material) would not be acceptable as it has a very urban appearance and would appear incongruous next to the more typically rural wooden benches either side of the proposed location. The bench as proposed would not be in accordance with policies GSP3 and DMC3.
19. The proposal would not enhance the National Park and the design would not respect the character of the area contrary to GSP2.
20. Although the bench has better sustainability credentials (being recycled) than a non recycled plastic bench the appearance is fussy and suburban. Wooden benches can also be sustainable and this could be specified by condition.
21. The issues of design can be resolved by condition and therefore the application is recommended for approval.

Conclusion

22. The bench is acceptable in principle. Conditions can be imposed to require that the structure itself be required to match the simple bench structures either side of the proposed site, and this could also specify that the bench be constructed from sustainably sourced timber ensuring the scheme is in line with policy CC1.

Human Rights

Any human rights issues have been considered and addressed in the preparation of this report.

List of Background Papers (not previously published)

Nil

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