

**16. FULL APPLICATION - FOR THE INSTALLATION OF A SOLAR POWERED CAR PARK MACHINE AND ASSOCIATED BASE, PEDESTRIAN AREA AND SIGNAGE - MILLDALE CAR PARK, MILLWAY LANE, MILLDALE (NP/SM/1122/1457, DH)**

**APPLICANT: PEAK DISTRICT NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY**

**Summary**

1. The application is for the installation of a solar powered car park machine and associated base, pedestrian area and signage.
2. The National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 (Section 12) gives the Authority powers to provide and operate parking places, and may for the purposes of such arrangements erect such buildings and carry out such work as may appear to them to be necessary or expedient.
3. The site is an existing operational car park within the Peak District National Park owned and operated by the National Park Authority, which currently is free to use by members of the public.
4. The existing use and character of the site is not altered, and the harm to the wider landscape setting of the car park is minimal.
5. The application is recommended for approval.

**Site and Surroundings**

6. The application site is located in the steep sided wooded valley of Hope Dale Hollow at Milldale, approximately 850m to the south of Alstonefield. Milldale is not a named settlement in policy DS1.
7. The site comprises a hardsurfaced parking area off each side of Millway Lane; to the north side the car park is bounded by drystone walls, to the south of the road is a lay-by.
8. The site does not lie within the designated conservation area, and there are no listed buildings in the vicinity.
9. The nearest residential neighbouring properties are Bank Farm and Bankside, over 70m to the east of the site.

**Proposal**

10. The proposal is for the erection of a solar powered car park machine along with associated signage and two posts in front of the installation to create a safe area for people using the machine.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

11. That the application be **APPROVED** subject to the following conditions:
  - **Statutory time limit**

- **The development to be in accordance with the submitted specifications received 18/11/2022 and amended plans received 14/02/2022**

### **Key Issues**

12. The key issues are:

- Whether the proposals would have a detrimental effect on the character and appearance of the site and its setting, or the wider landscape setting within which it sits; and
- Public safety; and
- Whether the proposals would harm the amenities of nearby neighbouring properties.

### **History**

13. 1979 – Application NP/SM/0179/005 to construct the car park turning area & improve the layby parking facilities was granted conditionally.

14. 1983 - Construction of car park, turning area, and improvement of existing lay-by parking area was granted subject to conditions under NP/SM/1283/103.

### **Consultations**

15. Staffordshire County Surveyor (Highway Authority) – No objections.

16. Staffordshire Moorlands District Council – No response to date.

17. Alstonefield Parish Council –Object. The PC has strong concerns regarding the impact on highway safety. Their detailed comments are as follows, *“Milldale is a small hamlet; apart from a tiny track to Alstonefield, there is only one small lane that runs through it. Milldale is very popular with tourists, visiting Dovedale and the surrounding area. The carpark is currently free and well used. The introduction of a parking charge will certainly encourage people to park on the road which will create congestion on the narrow roads and increase the danger to pedestrians, dog walkers and children. In addition, the carpark is in a very remote area, surrounding by very steep sides. The payment machine is designed to accept contactless card payments in an area where there is virtually no internet or 'phone coverage. Those people who are willing to pay the charges may well find that they are unable to make payment - thus forcing the willing to park on the roads along with the unwilling. The only way to prevent roadside parking would be the introduction of yellow lines which would have a very detrimental impact on the beauty of the area”*

### **Representations**

18. During the publicity period the Authority received one representation, which objects to the proposals for the following reasons:

- *Concern that people will park on the verges of the single carriageway road in preference to paying.*
- *With no power in the car park and the location in the steep valley and surrounding trees, there is no mobile signal so people will not be able to pay using an app.*
- *Cash in the machine will encourage theft and vandalism in the area.*

Officer comment: All the sites which it is proposed to introduce charges to have been assessed and found to have mobile signal.

### **Main Policies**

19. Relevant Core Strategy policies: GSP1, GSP2, GSP3, CC1, CC2, DS1, L1, T1, T3 & T7
20. Relevant Local Plan policies: DM1 & DMC3
21. National Planning Policy Framework

### **Wider Policy Context**

22. 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:
  - Conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage
  - 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.

### **National Planning Policy Framework**

23. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) replaced a significant proportion of central government planning policy with immediate effect. A revised NPPF was published in July 2021. 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 the National Park the development plan comprises the Authority's Core Strategy 2011 and policies in the Peak District National Park Development Management Policies document 2019. 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 more recent Government guidance in the NPPF.
24. Paragraph 176 of the NPPF states that *'great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues. The conservation and enhancement of wildlife and cultural heritage are also important considerations in all these areas, and should be given great weight in National Parks and the Broads.'*

### **Peak District National Park Core Strategy**

25. GSP1 & GSP2 - *Securing National Park Purposes and sustainable development & Enhancing the National Park.* These policies set out the broad strategy for achieving the National Park's objectives, and jointly seek to secure national park legal purposes and duties through the conversion and enhancement of the National Park's landscape and its natural and heritage

26. GSP3 - *Development Management Principles*. GSP3 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.
27. CC1 – *Climate change mitigation and adaptation*. CC1 requires all development to make the most efficient and sustainable use of land, buildings and natural resources to achieve the highest possible standards of carbon reductions
28. CC2 – *Low carbon and renewable energy development*. Policy CC2 is supportive of proposals for low carbon and renewable energy development provided it can be accommodated without adversely affecting landscape character, cultural heritage assets, other valued characteristics or other established uses of the area.
29. DS1 - *Development Strategy*. This sets out what forms of development are acceptable in principle within the National Park.
30. L1 - *Landscape character and valued characteristics*. L1 states that all development must conserve and enhance valued landscape character and valued characteristics, and other than in exceptional circumstances, proposals in the Natural Zone will not be permitted.
31. T1 – *Reducing the general need to travel and encouraging sustainable transport*. T1 (E) says that sustainable access for the quiet enjoyment of the National Park, that does not cause harm to the valued characteristics, will be promoted.
32. T3 – *Design of transport infrastructure*. T3 (B) requires particular attention to be given to using the minimum infrastructure necessary.
33. T7 – *Minimising the adverse impact of vehicles and managing the demand for car and coach parks*. T7 (C) refers to the management of non-residential parking.

#### Local Plan Development Management Policies

34. DM1 – *The presumption of sustainable development in the context of National Park purposes*. These being (i) to conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the National Park; and (ii) to promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the valued characteristics of the National Park.
35. DMC3 - *Siting, Design, layout and landscaping*. DMC3 states that where development is acceptable in principle, it will be permitted provided that its detailed treatment is 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.

#### Assessment

##### Principle of the development

36. The proposal contributes to the Authority's statutory purposes and is acceptable in principle.
37. The provision of car parking ticket machines could help to encourage car sharing, thereby reducing travel, which policy T1 seeks to promote.

38. Policy DS1 states that renewable energy infrastructure is acceptable in principle provided that they can be accommodated without adverse visual impact and do not raise any amenity issues.

#### Visual Impacts

39. The siting for the proposed car park ticketing machine is within the car park to the north of the road. It is to the west side of the car park entrance, behind the existing boundary wall, with the tariff sign alongside.
40. In terms of the wider visual impact, due to the positioning behind the high wall only a small part of the development would be visible from the road.
41. The proposed machine is a functional structure comprising a solar panel measuring 475mm by 378mm, on top of a pedestal whose dimensions are 290mm by 274mm. The overall height of the machine is 1.714m. The machine has a black finish, which is a recessive colour.
42. The machine is on a concrete pad with a small tarmac standing area and two posts are provided to ensure the safety of the area when members of the public are using the machine.
43. The tariff sign measures 850mm across, by 1.2m in depth. It is mounted on poles with its highest edge at 1.5m. The sign has a dark green background with lettering and symbols in Peak District National Park colours. The smaller advisory signs, measuring 290mm by 425mm (approximately A4 size), are also green.
44. Although the design of the proposed infrastructure does not reflect or harmonise with the natural environment or local building traditions, the development is a modest scale, recessive colour. The siting, which utilises existing features and screening makes the impact negligible. Within the existing car park it is screened from wider viewpoints, and in the context of the car park, is not incongruous and does not have a detrimental impact on the site.
45. The proposals are considered to have a minimal impact on the character and appearance of the existing site and a negligible impact on the wider setting of the car park.
46. It is therefore concluded that the proposal is compliant with policies GSP3, L1, and DMC3 and also in line with policies CC1, CC2, T3 and T7.

#### Amenity Impacts

47. Due to the site being an existing car park and the intervening distance between the site and any residential properties, it will have will not have an adverse effect upon any neighbouring properties.
48. As noted above, the proposed installations will not have a detrimental effect on the character and appearance of the site, or the wider landscape setting.
49. The Highway Authority have no safety concerns, and the proposed posts to keep the immediate area to the front of the machine protected means there are no public safety issues.
50. In terms of amenity issues the proposal is in line with the Authority's policies and national planning policy.

### **Sustainability**

51. Policy CC1 requires all development to make the most efficient and sustainable use of land, buildings and natural resources to achieve the highest possible standards of carbon reductions. The solar powered infrastructure is inherently sustainable and therefore complies with the requirements of CC1.

### **Conclusion**

52. The proposed development does not have an adverse impact on the character and appearance of the existing site.

53. As such, it is concluded that the proposal is compliant with policies GSP3, L1, CC1, CC2, T3, T7, DMC3, and national planning policy.

### **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

### **Report Author and Job Title**

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