



PEAK VENTURE

**PLANNING APPLICATION FOR NEW RECEPTION BUILDING,
STAFF ROOM, EXTENDED QUAD BIKE TRACK
(RETROSPECTIVE) AND OTHER SMALL ANCILLARY
BUILDINGS**

SUPPORTING STATEMENT

January 2018



Well House Barns
Chester Road
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CH4 0DH

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview

- 1.1.1 Kingswood operates the Peak Venture centre at Huddersfield Road, Penistone. This is a Barnsley Council owned facility, previously known as Scout Dyke Outdoor Education Centre, which Kingswood has leased from the Council and operated since 2006.
- 1.1.2 Kingswood has historically offered 2 – 5 day breaks at Peak Venture, mainly for primary school age children. Accommodation has been provided within the existing 70's style brick built building. Visitors have been able to use a range of adventure and learning equipment around the 5-hectare site including zip lines, high ropes, problem solving, quad bike course and camping area. They also have access to the Scout Dyke reservoir on the opposite side of the main road for water based activities.
- 1.1.3 Over the last 11 years, Kingswood has invested in several improvements to the facilities provided and accommodation available, the most recent being the proposed lodges and pods. While consent (ref 2017/0240) was secured for this development earlier in 2017, this has still to be implemented.
- 1.1.4 Kingswood's reception building and staff room is currently located in the carpark at the rear of the permanent building. The reception and staff room are accommodated in containers for which a number of temporary planning permissions have been granted. The most recent consent (ref 2016/0834) was granted on 15 November 2016 included the bag storage but required that the containers be removed following the expiry of an 18-month temporary period, expiring 15 May 2018. Given Kingswood's operational need for a reception facility and a staff room, there is an imperative to create these new facilities and obtain permanent consent.
- 1.1.5 This application therefore covers the following development:
- New reception building (9 x 6 x 2.65m high);
 - New staff room (9 x 3 x 2.5m high);
 - Retrospective application for quad bikes course extension (8 x 24m) together with the relocation of existing quad bikes storage container (6 x 3m) and addition of further storage container (6 x 3m); and

- New garage/shed – provision of a new small garage/shed adjacent to the approved pods/ lodges development for storage of maintenance equipment.

1.1.6 The proposed development will help to sustain the future of the centre for Kingswood, whilst contributing to the economy of the local area through additional jobs created.

1.2 **The Applicant**

1.2.1 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 Benefits that a Kingswood Holiday Can Provide

1.2.2 Residential experiences stimulate interest, curiosity and passion for 'doing'. These activities broaden young people's horizons, enable them to develop new skills and build relationships. They make young people more engaged with learning and therefore more likely to do well.

1.2.3 Young people often take the place they live in for granted. Equally, they do not always have opportunities to travel to places beyond their immediate locality. Many young people, particularly in poorer inner-city areas and isolated rural communities, have never travelled more than a few miles from where they live.

1.2.4 Kingswood's curriculum and learning outcomes capitalise on and develop different learning styles, particularly kinaesthetic and non-cognitive learning. Experiencing something, as opposed to hearing it described or reading about it, can also help improve young people's recall and reflective skills, as they can relive the event in their heads.

1.2.5 Teachers and students collaborating during Kingswood activities are a key way in which their relationships can be cemented. Working with children in a different environment enables head teachers, governors, teachers and support staff to see, for example, how the children respond to teamwork, what their different friendships are, and what challenges them.

- 1.2.6 For young people with learning difficulties and disabilities, Kingswood residential holidays can increase opportunities for interaction with people in a wider community. This helps to develop independence and social skills which, in turn, raise attainment for these students who may otherwise have limited opportunities.
- 1.2.7 Being a part of a Kingswood residential holiday affords teachers the chance to develop new leadership skills. Also, schools which run student leadership programmes speak powerfully of the benefits of learning outside the classroom in making young people more engaged in the life of the school and acting maturely in both social and learning contexts. Kingswood has amongst its programmes a leadership programme for young people, using leading psychological profiles to help students take control of their own learning and work towards their own goals, in either their personal or school life. Kingswood has won awards for excellence for its programmes and their effectiveness.

The Range of Guests Benefitting from These Experiences

Schools

- 1.2.8 The Kingswood brand caters for schools (primary and secondary) and other groups, with a focus on courses and activities that deliver elements of the national curriculum which are difficult to teach in the classroom environment. Instruction is provided in computing with website design, earth sciences and a wide range of outdoor activities. 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.
- 1.2.9 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

- 1.2.10 Kingswood operates a camp for seven weeks in the summer. Its guests are children aged 6 – 16 who are normally unaccompanied by adults, so Kingswood staff look after the children in all respects.

National Citizenship Service

- 1.2.11 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. Kingswood has invested significantly in their staff, ensuring all are NCS ethos trained which means they can deliver the six key principles: social mixing, challenge, increased responsibility and independence, reflection, social action and inspiration. NCS and Kingswood share the belief that young people should be encouraged to defy their limits and challenge themselves. An NCS summer residential with Kingswood is a fun place to make new friends, achieve personal goals and gain key skills that employers want and need.

Scout Association

- 1.2.12 The Scout Association is one of oldest and most trusted movements in the world, delivering exciting programmes to over 400,000 boys and girls in the UK each week. Scouting 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. Kingswood has an established relationship with the association based on the belief of the Scout Association that Kingswood offers so much more than an overnight stay.

1.3 Site Description

The Peak Venture centre

- 1.3.1 The Peak Venture centre is located approximately 1km north west of Penistone and 9km west of junction 37 of the M1 with access gained from the A629 Halifax/Huddersfield Road.
- 1.3.2 The centre extends to approximately 5 hectares and provides a complete indoor and outdoor education facility with controlled access to nearby Scout Dyke reservoir on the opposite side of Huddersfield Road for water based activities.

- 1.3.3 The centre itself comprises a 2-storey brick faced building fronting the main road with single storey structures to the rear. These buildings accommodate bedrooms, toilet/ shower rooms, canteen, teaching rooms, media suites, a kitchen area and storage facilities. Visiting guests have historically been accommodated within the permanent buildings and have made use of indoor and outdoor adventure facilities elsewhere on site.
- 1.3.4 The wider site currently comprises hard surfaced approach roads and carparking and established woodland plantation belts which contain, or are adjacent to, a range of outdoor activity equipment including zip lines, climbing towers, challenge courses and den building areas. The existing woodland provides significant screening of activity equipment and the site from the adjacent properties on Carr Head Lane and Huddersfield Road.
- 1.3.5 Earlier this year, Kingswood received planning permission from Barnsley Council (application ref 2017/0240) for 11 pods, 2 lodges, 1 yurt and 1 WC/shower block. Kingswood intends to implement this development during the quieter winter months, such that it will be available from spring 2018. Visitors staying at the pods and lodges will also be able to make use of the activity equipment.
- 1.3.6 Kingswood staff working at Peak Venture are generally transported to the centre from nearby accommodation in staff minibuses or occasionally cars requiring carparking facilities at the rear of the centre.
- 1.3.7 Visiting guests generally arrive at the centre in privately hired 53 seater coaches. Coaches turn into the centre from A629 Huddersfield Road and into Carr Head Lane (understood to be a privately-owned road though designated as a public bridleway).
- 1.3.8 From Carr Head Lane, coaches turn right into a dedicated access road leading to the rear carpark. Coaches enter the carpark in a forward gear, sweeping into the northwest corner, before reversing towards the bag storage area. Luggage is deposited in the bag storage area and is then collected by children and taken to their bedrooms.
- 1.3.9 Occasionally, coaches will have to wait until Kingswood reception staff are ready to carry out welcoming duties. There is therefore a need for both manoeuvring space for coaches and parked cars/minibuses.

The application site

- 1.3.10 The proposed development covered by this application affects 3 different parts of the Peak Venture site. These are shown on plan ref 1958-04-002 and are described as follows.

Rear carpark

- 1.3.11 The rear carpark to Peak Venture measures approximately 40 x 40m and is generally surfaced in hardcore/gravel and slopes downwards from the main building across the carpark to the access road to the north.
- 1.3.12 Several structures are currently located within or adjacent to the carpark including:
- the bag store area and 4 temporary shipping containers which house the reception and staff room and other storage purposes. The bag store will be retained but the containers will be removed by 15 May 2018 at the latest in accordance with decision ref 2016/0834;
 - maintenance compound containing 4 no. smaller storage containers (each approx. 6 x 3m). The maintenance yard is surrounded by approx. 1.8m high close-boarded fencing and allows for both internal and external storage of materials used in running the centre. The close boarded fencing largely conceals any storage containers and equipment from wider view.

Quad bike course extension

- 1.3.13 The quad bike course is located between 2 of the bands of existing plantation woodland towards the northern edge of the site as shown on drawing 1958-04-002.
- 1.3.14 It comprises a hard surface surrounded by red and white interlocking plastic blocks providing an edge to the course with protective tyres placed around the edge to deflect quad bikes which accidentally collide with the plastic blocks.
- 1.3.15 Prior to May 2017, the quad bike course measured 14m wide x 37m length. In May 2017, the quad bike course was extended by adding a further

rectangle shaped parcel of land measuring 8 x 24m as shown on drawing 1958-04-010.

- 1.3.16 A number of trees/ shrubs/ saplings (mainly willow and sycamore) were removed to allow the works to take place. Prior to completing this work, Kingswood realised that planning permission was required so further work was brought to a halt, pending receipt of necessary consents.
- 1.3.17 This extension to the quad bike course was highlighted by Kingswood staff to Council officers Tanya Hunter (Estates - asset management) and Trevor Mayne (Biodiversity) at a site meeting on 17 October 2017. Trevor expressed concerns that this work had been carried out without the benefit of planning permission. Kingswood apologised for carrying out work without planning permission. It was agreed that this extension to the quad bikes course should be included in any subsequent planning application for the reception building and staff room.
- 1.3.18 Kingswood wishes to relocate its existing 6 x 3 m container and proposes a second 6 x 3m container adjacent to the quad bikes course all as shown on drawing 1958-04-010, allowing for secure storage of machines and their servicing during inclement weather.
- 1.3.19 The site where the new storage building is to be located is currently hardstanding in between the 2 bands of plantation woodland. The enlarged quad bike course affects land previously occupied as managed plantation woodland.

Pod/lodge development

- 1.3.20 Kingswood wishes to augment the existing shed and garage (repositioning approved as part of the pod and lodge development) with a further domestic single garage sized building to accommodate maintenance machinery and adventure equipment as shown on drawing 1958-04-002.
- 1.3.21 The site where the new garage/shed is to be located is currently close mown amenity grass forming part of the wider playing field.

2.0 THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

2.1 Overview

2.1.1 The proposed development is shown on drawings 1958-04-001 – 012.

2.1.2 It comprises:

- New reception building (9 x 6 x 2.65m high)
- New staff room (9 x 3 x 2.5m high)
- Quad bikes course extension (8 x 24m), relocation of existing quad bikes storage container (6 x 3m) and addition of further storage container (6 x 3m)
- New garage/shed – provision of a new small garage/shed adjacent to the approved pods/ lodges development for storage of maintenance equipment.

2.2 Design

Reception Facility

2.2.1 A number of options for a new reception facility were explored but the preferred solution comprises a new modular building on the site of the existing maintenance compound (see drawings ref 1958-04-003, 004 & 005).

2.2.2 The new reception would face outwards into the carpark allowing reception staff to monitor arriving coaches and easily perform 'meet and greet' functions.

2.2.3 The reception building would have a footprint of 9 x 6 metres with a height of 2.65m. The roof would have a profile steel cladding in a colour to be decided.

2.2.4 Internally, the reception building would have running water supply with sink and drain connection but there would not be any WC facilities. An indicative layout for the building showing the arrangement of external windows and doors is provided at drawing ref 1058-04-004.

2.2.5 The floor of the building would be set at approx. 300mm above ground for ease of maintenance necessitating steps/ramp for access at the main

entrance. The ramp indicated on drawing ref 1958-04—003 would be designed to accommodate disabled users.

- 2.2.6 It is proposed that the reception building would be clad using vertical larch cladding, similar to the adjacent consented WC/shower block. It would be fitted with black painted uPVC windows and doors, a black barge board and soffit and black plastic rainwater goods. Photos are provided as part of the submission providing an impression of how the reception building would look both externally and internally.

Staff room

- 2.2.7 The staff room would have a footprint of 9 x 3 metres and a flat roof at a height of 2.5 metres. Drawing ref 1958-04-009 shows the dimensions and likely appearance of the cabin to be used for the staff room. While this plan is provided for information purposes, it is possible that a provider other than PortaKabin will end up supplying the cabin so the precise details may vary from what is shown.
- 2.2.8 Regardless, externally, the building will be largely concealed from view by the adjacent reception building and the boiler room. In views from the direction of the bag store, it would be concealed from view by a 2.5m high close boarded fence (see drawing ref 1958-04-008), using larch to match the proposed cladding for the Reception Building.

Extended quad bikes course and storage container

- 2.2.9 The proposal involves extending the existing 37 x 14m quad track by the addition of an area measuring 8 x 24m, the extension being formed by an encroachment into adjacent plantation woodland all as shown on drawing 1958-04-010. This work has already been carried out so the planning application is retrospective in this regard. There would not be any further encroachment into the woodland than has occurred to date.
- 2.2.10 The construction comprises an imported MOT type 1 material over a geotextile membrane. It has been roughly graded to form a generally level surface.
- 2.2.11 If Barnsley Council considers the extended quad bike course to be an acceptable form of development in this location, Kingswood would intend to

complete the development by fine grading the MOT type 1, then finishing with bark chippings.

2.2.12 There is an existing container adjacent to the quad bikes course whose location is shown on drawing ref 1958-04-010. Kingswood wishes to relocate this container and complement this by the addition of a further 6 x 3m container to be sited as shown on drawing ref 1958-04-010.

2.2.13 Both the relocated and new container would be used for secure storage for quad bikes and for servicing purposes.

Maintenance equipment stores

2.2.14 This planning application covers a second domestic single garage/shed which is proposed to be located as shown on drawing 1958-04-002 & 003.

2.2.15 The proposed garage/shed will be used by the maintenance team for secure storage of maintenance and mobile activity equipment. The proposed new garage would be of the same design as the existing garage. A detail is provided at drawing ref 1958-04-012.

2.3 Access

2.3.1 All proposals covered by this planning application have been influenced by access considerations as discussed below.

Reception facility

2.3.2 The proposed location for the reception building allows staff to easily monitor arriving deliveries, cars and coaches, authorise entry through the automatic gates, and quickly reach the driver and visiting children to provide welcome, induction and direction to their rooms.

2.3.3 The proposed location would use a previously developed part of the site, albeit previously occupied by maintenance and storage containers. It would therefore not encroach into previously undeveloped land.

2.3.4 It would permit visiting coaches to arrive and depart unchanged from how they operate currently.

Staff room

- 2.3.5 The staff room would be accessed from a gate between the reception building and the adjacent WC/shower block (approved as part of the pod/ lodge development).

Extended Quad bikes course and storage container

- 2.3.6 Pedestrian access to the quad bikes course would be via an informal bark chipping surfaced path through the trees. Access for quad bikes brought to the course would be via the hardstanding between the trees.

Maintenance equipment stores

- 2.3.7 There would be no formal pedestrian access to the equipment stores but given that these are mainly accessed by site maintenance staff, this is deemed to be acceptable. The key consideration in considering levels for these maintenance stores will be in allowing access and egress of grass mowing machines.

2.4 Amenities

- 2.4.1 None of the proposed facilities would have WC facilities or showers but the reception and staff room would both have sinks with running water and connection to foul water outlets.
- 2.4.2 All facilities would have electricity supply taken from the existing mains electricity on site.
- 2.4.3 Given the proximity of the reception building to the main site plant room, it is likely that it would be heated by hot water radiators connected to the plant room.

2.5 Construction Programme

- 2.5.1 The proposed works subject to this application would take approx. 4 weeks to complete and construction is proposed during March/April 2018 such that this will be ready and available when the existing reception/staff room must be removed in May 2018.

3.0 PLANNING POLICY APPRAISAL

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 Section 38(6) of The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that any planning application be considered against the policies within the statutory development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

3.1.2 In this instance, the relevant planning policy framework consists of the Barnsley Core Strategy, the Barnsley Education Sites Development Plan Document (DPD) (not considered relevant to these proposals) and the remaining saved policies of the Unitary Development Plan.

3.1.3 The appraisal below considers all the relevant policies and guidance which are considered directly material to the determination of the proposal for which planning permission is sought. In this case, due to proposed development being located within allocated Green Belt, the main policy consideration is Section 9 of the NPPF which deals with the protection of the Green Belt; this consideration shall be dealt with first.

3.2 National Planning Policy Framework

Green Belt

3.2.1 Paragraph 79 of the NPPF states that 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.

3.2.2 Paragraph 89 of the NPPF states that the construction of new buildings in the Green Belt should be treated as inappropriate development. However, it goes on to identify a number of exceptions. These include, but are not limited:

- Construction of buildings for the 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;
- The replacement of a building, providing the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces; and

- Construction of buildings which represent the limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed sites (brownfield land), whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it than the existing development.

3.2.3 Engineering operations which preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land in Green Belt are also not inappropriate.

3.2.4 All elements of the proposed development fall within one or more of the above exceptions and as such are not inappropriate in the Green Belt. Each element is considered in turn below.

Reception Facility and Staff Room

3.2.5 The reception building and staff room will comprise single storey modular buildings on the site of the existing maintenance compound. The proposals represent development which is in the same use (serving the operations of the Peak Venture centre) and not materially larger than the one it replaces. Furthermore, the proposals represent the limited infilling and partial redevelopment of brownfield land.

3.2.6 The reception facility and staff room would replace the existing maintenance compound and allow for the removal of the existing four portacabins in accordance with planning permission 2016/0834. The overall impact on the openness of the Green Belt would certainly be no greater than existing. The Green Belt has five purposes, summarised as:

- To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
- To prevent neighbouring towns merging;
- To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
- To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
- Assist in urban regeneration.

- 3.2.7 The new reception and staff office represents small scale development, located centrally within the Peak Venture centre, replacing existing structures. It is abundantly clear the proposal would in no way conflict with the purposes of including land within the Green Belt. Accordingly, the proposed reception facility and staff room would not represent inappropriate development in the Green Belt.

Extended Quad Bike Course and New Storage Container

- 3.2.8 The proposal involves an extension to the existing quad track with imported MOT type 1 material over a geotextile membrane. This will be completed by fine grading the MOT type 1 material, then finishing with bark chippings. This represents an engineering operation.
- 3.2.9 The course is entirely screened by established woodland, with no views of the course from outside of the site boundary. The proposal would preserve the openness and not conflict with the purposes of including land within it.
- 3.2.10 The extension to the quad bike course is not inappropriate development in the Green Belt.
- 3.2.11 Kingswood also wishes to relocate its existing 6 x 3m container and provide a second 6 x 3m container adjacent to the quad bike course as shown on drawing 1958-04-010, allowing for secure storage of machines and their servicing during inclement weather.
- 3.2.12 The second container will provide an essential ancillary storage facility for the use of the site for outdoor recreation. Both containers will be entirely enclosed by two substantial tree belts and will not be visible from beyond the immediate area. The siting of the containers would preserve the openness of the Green Belt and would not conflict with the purposes of including land within it, thus they are not inappropriate in the Green Belt.

Maintenance Equipment Stores

- 3.2.13 The proposed garage/shed will be located adjacent to the repositioned garage and shed approved as part of the pod/lodge development, and will be of the same design. The proposed garage represents the limited infilling and partial redevelopment of brownfield land and is not inappropriate in the Green Belt.

3.3 Local Planning Policy

Barnsley Core Strategy (adopted September 2011)

- 3.3.1 The Core Strategy was adopted in September 2011 and sets out the long term strategic policies for Barnsley's development.
- 3.3.2 Policy CSP Policy CSP 4 states that development will not be permitted where it would be at an unacceptable risk of flooding or would give rise to flooding elsewhere. The proposed development site is within flood zone 1 and will not contribute to flooding elsewhere.
- 3.3.3 Policy CSP 19 requires that existing employment land and buildings be retained and aims to safeguard existing employment land from non-employment uses. The proposed development would allow the existing business at the site to grow. Consequently, the proposed development is in accordance with Policy CSP 9.
- 3.3.4 Policy CSP 21 states that the Council will encourage a viable rural economy by allowing development in rural areas, providing it achieves one of the objectives listed in the policy and meets the criteria required of development in such areas. The proposed development will help to sustain the future of the centre for Kingswood, whilst contributing to the economy of the local area through additional jobs created.
- 3.3.5 The development will not have a harmful impact on the countryside, biodiversity, landscape or local character of the area. Having regard to the aforementioned, the proposal is considered to be supported by Policy CSP 21.
- 3.3.6 Policy CSP 29 details the Council's expectations in terms of the design of development in the Borough. The proposed development makes a positive contribution to the existing development in terms of design and will enhance the experience of children at the centre by providing a new reception building whose external cladding will enhance the appearance of the rear car park and coordinate with adjacent fencing and buildings. The proposed development is therefore in accordance with Policy CSP 29.

- 3.3.7 Policy CSP 34 confirms the Council's commitment to safeguarding the Green Belt in the area. The proposed development is not inappropriate in Green Belt. Therefore, the proposal complies with Policy CSP34.

Saved Policies of the Unitary Development Plan

- 3.3.8 Policy WR10 confirms that the proposed development site is located within the Green Belt.
- 3.3.9 Policies GS6 and GS8 relate to development within the Green Belt. Policy GS8 requires that development proposals within the Green Belt must demonstrate very special circumstances unless they meet certain criteria to be considered exceptional. As set out above, the proposed development is not inappropriate in Green Belt. Therefore, the proposal should not be refused on Green Belt matters.

3.4 Conclusion

- 3.4.1 It is apparent from the assessment of the planning policy documents, set out in the appraisal text above, that the proposed development is either in conformity with, or supported by, all relevant facets of the planning policy context.

4.0 CONSULTATION

4.1 Introduction

- 4.1.1 Prior to submitting this application, Kingswood has undertaken a consultation exercise with officers from the Council and the residential neighbours to Peak Venture to understand any concerns such that they can be addressed in the application proposals.

4.2 Consultation with Council officers

- 4.2.1 Kingswood invited Barnsley Council officers Tanya Hunter, Asset Management as landlord for Peak Venture and Trevor Mayne, Biodiversity officer to a meeting on 17 October 2017 to explain the changes to be subject of this application. The planning department were invited to attend this meeting but could only do this via a formal pre-application approach.
- 4.2.2 At the meeting, Tanya confirmed that the extension of the quad bike area comprised development that would be likely to need both landlord consent and planning permission. Tanya accepted the apology from the Centre Manager that works had been carried out on this development without following the correct procedures. Tanya suggested that landlord's consent would be likely to be given for this extension to the quad bikes course and the siting of a new container for storage of equipment but this was only her view and not that of the planning department.
- 4.2.3 Trevor was concerned that tree, shrub and branch removal had taken place without any consents having been given by the Council. Kingswood stressed that they were sorry that this had taken place and will ensure that there are no recurrences in the future.
- 4.2.4 Trevor was keen to offer Brian practical advice about the management of the plantation woodlands on the site. The eastern section of the woodlands was identified as partly relict ancient woodland possessing more mature trees, including oak, and varied ground flora. Trevor was pleased that these were taped off and general access by visitors was prevented, thereby protecting and contributing towards their retention. Trevor suggested that a plan should be drawn up such that management advice can be prepared. If these were followed, this would hopefully benefit the long-term viability of the woodland areas and be beneficial for nature conservation. Trevor also suggested that

consideration be given to the planting of wildflowers at suitable locations around the site, using locally occurring species. Wildflower planting would contribute towards insect populations as well as adding to the visual appeal.

- 4.2.5 While Tanya and Trevor raised no particular objections to the development proposals, they did stress that theirs did not represent the view of the planning department.
- 4.2.6 Further to the meeting, the agent contacted Laura Bennett, Barnsley Council planning case officer to advise of the likely scope of this planning application. It was explained that Kingswood was keen to submit the application at the earliest possible opportunity and therefore agreed that a pre-application submission was likely to lead to delays. No significant objections were raised to proceeding in the absence of a pre-application submission.
- 4.2.7 From the explanation of what was proposed and the fact that the new reception building and staff room were merely replacing existing structures within the maintenance compound, it was considered there would be a net improvement in the appearance of this rear carpark. The extension of the quad bike course was largely concealed within the existing woodland so would not be apparent in the wider landscape. The proposed garage next to the pods and lodges would not be significant in the wider landscape. Laura could not foresee any significant objections to the proposals but this was obviously an officer view and would need to be subject to a full application.
- 4.2.8 The agent has also contacted Trevor Mayne, Barnsley Biodiversity Officer by telephone on 13 December to discuss the development proposals. Trevor advised that given that no further vegetation was to be removed to facilitate the development, the omission of an ecology report should not prevent the application from being validated.
- 4.2.9 However, in view of the loss of trees already carried out for the quad bikes extension, Trevor suggested that he may suggest that the existing woodlands be subject of further survey work to assess their nature conservation value and form the basis for devising future management recommendations. This could be attached as advisory note to any subsequent decision notice.

4.3 Consultation with neighbours

- 4.3.1 Dennis and Susan Sampson, the owners of Dentwait, Carr Head Lane were consulted on 12 December through a visit from Brian Kitson, Peak Venture Centre Manager and Richard Butler, Kingswood Property Manager. The detailed proposals comprising new reception, staff room, extension to quad bikes and other ancillary buildings were explained. Also, that the existing 4 containers housing the reception and staff room would be removed as this temporary consent was lapsing in May 2018. The Sampsons were pleased that they would no longer have to look out at the 4 green containers at the end of their garden and they had no objections to the new proposals.
- 4.3.2 Margaret White, owner of The Moorlands, Carr Head Lane was also consulted on 12 December by a visit from Brian and Richard. Margaret had no objections to the proposals. She did however raise concerns over: the speed of vehicles travelling along Carr Head Lane; and the fact that coaches are sometimes parked temporarily on Carr Head Lane outside her property with engines running. Assurances were given that this should not be happening and that coach drivers will be informed that they are not to park on Carr Head Lane and should this happen in the future, Margaret should contact Peak Venture to report this such that action can be taken to prevent recurrences.
- 4.3.3 David Brown, owner of The Old School House, was consulted on 20 December 2017 by a visit from the centre manager. Having had all the development proposals explained to him, Mr Brown confirmed that he had no objection to these proposals.

5.0 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 A summary of the potential effects is provided below.

5.2 Social and Economic Benefits

5.2.1 The proposed development is required for Kingswood to continue running the Peak Venture centre. Without a reception facility and staff room, the centre will not be able to function effectively, visitors will not receive an effective 'meet and greet' function on arrival and ultimately this will reduce the appeal of the centre. As such, the proposed development is essential to the operation of the centre.

5.2.2 The extension to the quad bikes course has already taken place so the application is retrospective in this regard. The surfacing of the quad bike course has yet to be completed and until this happens the course is not being used. If consent is granted, and the course is completed, the extended course together with the 2 storage/maintenance containers will provide an enhanced facility for visitors to the centre, helping to widen its appeal and sustain its future viability.

5.3 Ecology

5.3.1 Trees and shrubs have already been felled to allow for the extension of the quad bikes course. It is uncertain how many trees and shrubs were removed in May 2017 to facilitate the extension but it is understood that these were mostly young willow and sycamore trees.

5.3.2 The habitats within the plantation woodland which have been lost are small in area (8 x 24 metres) and comprise a small percentage of the area of wider plantation woodland remaining. Kingswood is happy to consider the advice given by Trevor Mayne regarding management of the woodlands in the future.

5.3.3 The proposed reception building and staff room is to be located on the existing maintenance compound. This existing part of the site has low habitat value.

- 5.3.4 Consideration will be given to the planting of native species of wild flowers along the edge to the car park to contribute towards habitat creation and add to the visual appeal of the car park.

5.4 **Landscape and Visual**

- 5.4.1 The biggest beneficial landscape and visual impact from the development proposals will be the loss of the 4 containers, which will be removed in accordance with the current temporary planning consent by May 2018. These containers comprise a detractor in views from Dentwait and The Moorlands and their removal will result in landscape and visual benefits for the residents at these 2 properties.
- 5.4.2 The replacement of the maintenance containers and compound by a new larch clad modular reception building, together with a new staff room screened off by new 2.5m high larch fencing, will provide an enhanced appearance to the carparking area and improved first impressions for visitors to the centre.
- 5.4.3 The extension of the quad bikes course element of this application is retrospective, the tree removal having taken place in May 2017. This tree removal is not visible from any points outside the Kingswood site. The proposed storage containers at the quad bikes course are in part of the site which is hidden from surrounding views and would not be evident to the wider public.
- 5.4.4 The proposed garage/shed would be seen adjacent to 2 existing small structures (a shed and garage whose repositioning was approved through the pods/lodge consent) and be of very low prominence adjacent to the approved pods and lodge development.

5.5 **Transport**

- 5.5.1 The proposed development would not result in any changes to the vehicle movements associated with Kingswood's Peak Venture Centre.
- 5.5.2 Swept path analysis plans (ref 1958-04-006 & 007) have been prepared to demonstrate that visiting coaches will continue to be able to manoeuvre around the rear carpark in a safe and efficient manner without compromising the safety of pedestrians.

5.6 **Site Drainage**

- 5.6.1 A review of the Environment Agency Flood Map data has confirmed that the site is located within Flood Zone 1 and thus there are no flood risk issues.
- 5.6.2 Given that the reception building and staff rooms are merely replacing existing maintenance containers with no increase in hard impermeable surfaces, the proposed development would have a negligible impact upon surface water run-off rates.
- 5.6.3 Considering the quad bikes extension and other small ancillary buildings, rainwater from the proposed structures would run off to the surrounding grassed area and infiltrate into the ground. As such, the proposed development would not result in an increased risk of flooding elsewhere.

6.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1.1 This planning application relates to the construction of a new reception building, staff room, extended quad bikes course and additional storage container and garage/shed adjacent to the approved pods and lodges site.
- 6.1.2 The proposed reception building is required to replace an existing reception and staff room for which temporary consent lapses in May 2018. The extended quad bikes course will provide part of the suite of activities available to visitors to the centre. The storage/maintenance containers at the quad bikes course are required as part of that activity.
- 6.1.3 The detailed appraisal set out above considers the proposed development against the National Planning Policy Framework and the relevant Statutory Development Plan policies contained in the Barnsley Core Strategy and the saved policies of the Barnsley Unitary Development Plan.
- 6.1.4 It is apparent from the assessment that the proposal is in accordance with local and national policy on development in the Green Belt. It has also been demonstrated that the proposed development is either in conformity with, or supported by, all other relevant facets of the planning policy context.
- 6.1.5 The proposed new reception building and staff room will replace an existing maintenance compound in a highly visible part of the site which all visitors see on first arrival. The replacement of a maintenance compound by these new buildings with larch cladding will create vastly improved first impression of the site for visitors, contributing towards the success of the centre.
- 6.1.6 The proposals help to contribute to the sustainability of the centre and enable it to continue to deliver the benefits it provides.