

Your ref: 76256  
Our ref: Larkstone  
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Planning Application 76256 - Temporary Structures and Parking for use in conjunction with the adjacent Watersports centre at Larkstone.

This paper seeks to address a number of matters raised in the consultation process for the application to create additional temporary accommodation to support the new watersports hub at Larkstone, Ilfracombe.

After over 10 years since the first conceptual plans for the watersports hub centre were initiated, the centre is now well advanced in construction having received funding support from Central Government and is due to complete in March 2023.

The Watersports hub facilities were designed for and remain sufficient for the usage of the local community clubs, the operation being supported by a café operator on the first floor, which provides a commercial element benefitting from this outstanding location of the centre.

The watersports hub facilities provide internal and external storage areas for three local watersports clubs who have been on board since the outset. There are also communally accessible toilets and showers for the club users. The site area has been put to its maximum capacity, with external areas to allow for the manoeuvrability of watersports boats and equipment, with a new slipway into the intertidal habitat. The site is restricted by the nature of its topography. For clarity, the main site is not in a fenced compound, there is a public right of way running through it, which has been closed off during construction, but will be re-opened when construction is complete.

However, the title of the project, a Watersports Centre, did not actually give accommodation or access to the public and other users who want to access organised watersports activities from the site.

There was no consideration of the hub being used for commercial operators and there was never any consideration of public access changing areas. The site of the hub is at maximal usage and there is no vacant space within the site boundary to allow for any further facilities or storage. The reference to commercial operators reflects the needs of local businesses who provide watersports activities which are open to the public, local residents and groups to book and take part in organised watersports activities under safe instruction.

Whilst the slipway and access to the water will be publically available at all times, at no charge, the use of this underused parking area to enhance the watersports facility presents an opportunity for organised and co-ordinated watersports to be available

from this site for the public, visitors to Ilfracombe and North Devon, as well as community, educational and social groups.

There is no intention of replacing these temporary structures with permanent structures. Fences are by definition 'temporary structures'. Below this carpark are water storage tanks belonging to South West Water which are overflows for the adjacent water treatment plant. This will always prevent any foundations being dug in this area.

This car park is underused when viewed over a 12 month period. Larkstone carpark is directly adjacent to the site and Hillsborough carpark is in very close vicinity. Both of which are available for local residents to use. Encouraging greater use of the currently underutilised Hillsborough and Larkstone carparks will reduce the volume of traffic on Marine drive and the harbour generally.

The parking area relevant to this application has now been out of use for two years, being the contractor's compound for the development site of the centre. In the main season, parking in this area was predominantly used for those travelling by sea to Lundy. Parking has been satisfactorily re-accommodated in Larkstone and Hillsborough Car Parks. Taking parking away from the Harbour helps to ease congestion.

Marine Drive is not an adopted public roadway, but is a one way access road on private land with a speed restriction already in place of 5MPH. There will be a dedicated pedestrian crossing incorporated in this area to further promote pedestrian safety.

The demand for use of these proposed facilities beyond the interest of the three clubs included on the main site, has exceeded all expectations. There is serious interest being shown from the Devon Scouts association and they will be one of the users of this complex. We have also been contacted by the Faculty Manager for Lifestyle Industries and Head of Outdoor Adventure, Faculty of Academic Studies at PETROC with a view to utilising this complex for some elements of their courses.

In addition to this, two watersports operators have come forward, one having been displaced from another site in North Devon, to offer organised watersports to the public.

One of the operators, as mentioned in consultee responses has been operating from a caravan situated in the main Harbour Compound on the Cove in previous years. Allowing this one operator to utilise the carpark for their caravan, makes no allowances for other commercial operators to use these facilities. Rather than restricting the facility to one operator, we have been open and transparent in wanting to open the opportunity up to other parties to enable diversification of the activities being available to local people and the tourist industry, which is so important to the town. Rather than showing favouritism or a monopoly.

The caravan used by this operator is not used as a changing facility. It is only used as kayak storage. Customers currently change on the harbour side and this does

not allow for any privacy or safeguarding considerations for children to change. This caravan will be removed from the harbour once this proposed complex is complete.

The wildlife trigger document is correct as completed. The correct answer to each section was reviewed and confirmed.

No additional lighting will be used on this project.

The four storage units will be green living roofed and this is part of the specification for these units.

A 2.4 high fence is the recommended height for a security fence for its intended purpose. This fence will help to prevent vandalism and make the area secure, whilst also ensuring that any safeguarding requirements for children and youths are addressed. These fences will only be around the compound and will not affect or change any public access to the general area.

As stated above there will be free and always available public access to Larkstone Cove beach. As this cove is within harbour authority, the 1994 swimming bylaw is in place which prohibits swimming within the harbour jurisdiction without written permission of the harbour Master.

However, organised swimming groups will have the necessary permissions and access to these facilities.

No car parking spaces will be designated for any watersports hub or cafe staff. The parking within the proposed complex is solely for the operators who have to transport equipment, mostly on trailers, for which there is little available parking elsewhere.

There will be no toilets or showers provided on this complex. Only two dry changing areas. The toilets and shower in the main watersports building will be available to those using the organised activities

The kayak storage on the harbour will not be moved to this location. The additional kayak storage racks are to facilitate the commercial operators should they be required. No numbers of kayaks to be stored has been discussed. The storing of the kayaks in a horizontal rack as opposed to vertically was always a consideration.

The visual appearance of kayaks stored vertically against the fence is the proffered option of the conservation officer.

This carpark has never been intended as a turning point. Marine drive is currently only a one way access from the harbour to Larkstone Lane.

The gig trailers will not use this area. They will access the site via Larkstone lane thus avoiding any congestion or use of Marine drive

Dedicated changing rooms within a secure area meets the safeguarding requirements of both the scouts, PETROC and any further educational groups or establishments who require use of the Hub.

The site notices which give reference to this Planning Application have been displayed in line with Planning Requirements. The Planning Process enables community engagement in the consultation process which is the reason for the preparation of this paper.

There has been no intention to deceive local residents with this proposal. The scheme proposed seeks to support this publically funded £3.2 million facility by providing accommodation to enable local people across North Devon and tourists visiting this area to be able to enjoy safely organised watersports activities from this site.

The Watersports Centre itself is effectively a community facility for local clubs, with the café above supporting the viability of the site. The addition of the current proposal will help support the whole facility moving forward, in terms of its maintenance and maximising its use, therefore making it more sustainable and deliverable in the longer term.