



HOW

Planning and Environmental Advisers

**CONSULTATION RESPONSE STATEMENT
PROPOSED LEISURE DEVELOPMENT
AT MONEYSTONE PARK, WHISTON
ON BEHALF OF LAVER LEISURE (OAKAMoor LIMITED)**

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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Statement has been prepared by HOW Planning on behalf of Laver Leisure (Oakamoor) Limited ('Laver Leisure') as part of a supplementary submission to Staffordshire Moorlands District Council (SMDC). It relates to outline planning application ref. SMD/2014/0682 which is proposing a high quality leisure development at the former Moneystone quarry, Whiston.
- 1.2 This Statement has been prepared in response to representations submitted to the Council's statutory consultation exercise following the submission of a comprehensive planning application to SMDC in October 2014. It should be read in conjunction with the original application and the accompanying Environmental Statement (ES) Addendum.
- 1.3 Detailed responses are provided to the key comments received by SMDC from Oakamoor Parish Council (OPC) (section 3), Kingsley Parish Council (KPC) (section 4), Churnet Valley Conservation Society (CVCS) (section 5), Whiston Action Group (WAG) (section 6) and representation letters received from local residents (section 7). For ease of reference the key issues raised in the consultation responses have been grouped together where necessary.

Key Matters

- 1.4 A number of consultation responses received by SMDC have focused on four key matters. These are:
- Highways;
 - Ecology;
 - The Approved Restoration Plan; and
 - The Solar Building Company's Solar Application.
- 1.5 As such, a summary of Laver Leisure's response to each matter is provided upfront in this Statement.

Highways

- 1.6 A Transport Assessment and Travel Plan (ES Chapter 13 'Transport and Access') have been submitted as part of the ES to assess the potential impacts of the scheme in

highways terms. It is important to note that the scheme has been reviewed by the Highways Authority (Staffordshire County Council) and no objections have been raised subject to the imposition of appropriate conditions.

Highway Capacity

- 1.7 The capacity of the existing local road network has been previously assessed by the Local Authority (SMDC) during the development of the Churnet Valley Masterplan (CVMP). SMDC appointed Atkins Ltd Highway Consultants to produce a Transport Study in order to review the potential transportation and highway issues associated with all sites listed in the CVMP area. The Atkins Transport Study demonstrated for the Moneystone Quarry site that the traffic generation for 250 holiday lodges plus a 100 bed hotel on this site – (please note that a hotel does not form part of the application proposals) can be considered relatively low, and concluded that it would not lead to any notable congestion issues.

Trip Generation

- 1.8 The Transport Assessment, submitted in support of the planning application, has considered the traffic generation associated with the development during the peak August holiday season, for Lodge visitors, day visitors and staff. Outside of the peak holiday season, the traffic generation associated with the development would be less.
- 1.9 The calculations, which are based on evidence obtained from comparable types of leisure developments around the country, show that during the peak season, the expected maximum traffic generation over a full weekday, Monday to Friday, would be 188 vehicles arriving to site and 182 vehicles departing site per day. During a peak weekend, the expected maximum trip generation would be 375 arrivals and 375 departures over the full day. This traffic generation would be spread over the full day period.

The expected maximum traffic generation over a one hour period during the weekday morning and evening peak hours would be 103 arrivals and 52 departures during the morning peak hour (8am to 9am) and 52 arrivals and 103 departures during the evening peak hour (5pm to 6pm). During a Saturday, the maximum peak hour (5pm to 6pm) would generate 67 arrivals and 163 departures. It should be noted that calculated trip generation should be viewed as robust as a 20% contingency was applied. A capacity assessment has been carried out at the A52/Whiston Eaves Lane

junction, which demonstrates that the junction would operate with significant reserve capacity during a 2022 future year assessment. The Transport Assessment therefore demonstrates that the traffic generation associated with the proposed development would not have a material detrimental traffic impact on the A52/Whiston Eaves Lane junction.

Signage Strategy

- 1.10 The signposted and advertised route to Moneystone Park will be via Whiston Eaves Lane and the A52. On the website, visitors will be asked to ignore Sat Navs and vehicles will be discouraged from turning right towards Oakamoor or Moneystone. In order to secure this the Highway Authority has suggested the following condition which states:

"The development hereby permitted shall not be commenced until an off-site traffic management scheme comprising, a 30mph speed limit on the A52 at the junction with the C0165, Whiston Eaves Lane and a signage scheme detailing the permitted routeing for all traffic accessing and leaving the Park has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority."

In addition the existing 7.5 tonne weight restriction, except for access, immediately south of the site on Eaves Lane will remain in place, meaning that coaches, buses and HGVs will not be able to turn right out of Moneystone Park and will not travel along Carr Bank and Eaves Lane to the south of the site. This form of traffic management was in place for many years during the operation of the former quarry via signage within the site (which are still in place) and the system worked without any issues as regards HGV's/ traffic arriving or leaving the quarry.

- 1.11 The potential for 'driver delay' (i.e. journey times) has been considered. Taking into account existing traffic conditions, including those related to Alton Towers, the Traffic Chapter of the EA identifies that the development would have a 'negligible' impact. In conclusion, the traffic impact on local villages and towns in the vicinity, such as Whiston, Oakamoor, Froghall, Alton or Cheadle, would be minimal.

Junction Improvement

- 1.12 Accident statistics dating back to when the quarry was fully operational, which involved a substantial number of daily HGV movements, as well as cars and smaller commercial vehicles, demonstrates that there is not an inherent road safety issue with the existing A52 junction with Whiston Eaves Lane. At present the visibility splay at the junction 2.4m back from the give way line is 30m to the left and 34m to right, which is below current design standards set out in Manual for Streets for a speed limit of 40mph (visibility splay should be 63m in both directions for a 40mph speed limit). As part of the proposed development and as agreed with the Highway Authority, works to the existing junction would be carried out to improve visibility at the junction and a Traffic Regulation Order would be implemented to reduce the speed limit of the A52 to 30mph.

Ecology

- 1.13 Chapter 9 'Ecology' of the ES addresses the potential impacts of the proposed development on flora and fauna. This has been supplemented with additional reports and appendices submitted as part of the ES Addendum at Chapter 9. A key element of the ecological assessment has been the consideration of the development proposals with respect to the Approved Restoration Plan which was a requirement of Condition 35 of Planning Permission SM.96/935. The assessment describes the potential direct and indirect impacts of the proposals and sets out the avoidance, mitigation and compensation measures proposed to address any ecological impacts.

Ecology Surveys

- 1.14 Extensive ecological data has been collected from a range of ecological surveys including:
- Phase 1 Habitat Survey;
 - Detailed Vegetation Survey;
 - Water Vole Habitat Assessment;
 - Reptile Survey;
 - Amphibian Survey;
 - Breeding Bird Survey;
 - Badger Survey (confidential);
 - Otter Survey;

- Crayfish Survey;
- Bat Survey; and
- Tree Survey.

1.15 Further to discussions with the SCC Ecology Officer the following information is also submitted as part of the ES Addendum:

- Outline Construction Ecological Management Plan (CEcMP);
- Outline Habitat Management Plan (including integrated wildlife habitat plan); and
- Ecological Survey Data.

Whiston Eaves SSSI

1.16 The Whiston Eaves SSSI is located adjacent to the southern edge of Quarry 3 with all development proposals located outside the designated area. The potential impact of the proposals on the SSSI have been assessed in Chapter 9 'Ecology' of the ES. The ecological assessment concludes that no impacts as a result of increasing visitor pressure are envisaged as the network of new and existing footpaths divert around or away from the site. Overall, the proposed scheme will have a negligible impact on the SSSI.

Ecology Summary

1.17 No objections have been raised by Natural England or Staffordshire Wildlife Trust and all matters identified by the SCC Ecology Officer have now been resolved. The proposed development is acceptable in ecological terms and will provide an overall improvement in habitat across the site.

Restoration

- 1.18 A restoration scheme to discharge condition 35 of planning permission SM.96/935 was submitted to SCC in November 1999 and was subsequently approved by SCC in January 2001. Amendments to the approved restoration scheme were submitted by Sibelco UK to SCC in 2009. The amended restoration scheme for the site was approved with conditions by delegated decision on the 16 October 2009. This approval required the submission of an updated restoration plan to satisfy points raised in the approval letter.
- 1.19 In July 2010 Laver Leisure acquired Moneystone Quarry from Sibelco UK. To address the conditions of the delegated approval a revised Restoration Masterplan was submitted to SCC by Laver Leisure and was approved at SCC's Planning Committee on 6 March 2014 (LPA ref. SM.96/935/122 M D4). The restoration works have been ongoing at the site for some time and to date Laver Leisure have invested significant amounts of money in implementing the restoration scheme. The earthworks associated with the restoration plan are now largely complete in accordance with the approved restoration plan as confirmed following site visits by SCC Officers
- 1.20 It is important that the Council has regard to the extensive economic, social and environmental benefits the proposed development would deliver above and beyond that proposed by the approved restoration plan. The proposals would contribute to delivering the Council's vision for enhancing the role of Staffordshire Moorlands as a tourism and leisure destination, and would deliver many economic benefits which will have a significant and positive impact on the local economy.
- 1.21 The proposed development will have an impact on flora and fauna within the site boundary. However, standard mitigation techniques will be implemented to avoid potential effects during construction and species interests will be incorporated into the long term management objectives of the site. As such, the proposals will have a beneficial impact on the existing woodland and retained habitats on site and the provision of new habitats on site will have a beneficial impact on protected species such as bats, birds, amphibians and reptiles. A detailed analysis of the Residual impacts on ecology is presented at 'Chapter 9: Ecology' of the ES.

Solar Application – SMD/2014/0432

- 1.22 The Solar Building Company's planning application proposing the construction of a solar photovoltaic farm (ref. SMD/2014/0432) was refused by SMDC on 5th March 2015. The refusal does not impact upon the proposals at Moneystone Park as the applications are not linked. As such Laver Leisure's application should be judged on its own merits and based on the information submitted by HOW Planning in October 2014.
- 1.23 The application acknowledges that permission had not been granted for the solar application and therefore a connection to the solar power generation system has not been assumed. An extract from the Energy Strategy prepared by the Consultants WSP for the leisure application (October, 2014) states:

*"An application for a solar farm has been submitted on land adjacent to the site and subject to progress of the application it may be possible to connect to the site. This would allow for a significant supply of renewable energy to the site however planning has not been granted and connection therefore has not been assumed. All matters related to the detailed energy strategy are reserved for future determination in the detailed design stage of the development."*¹

- 1.24 Requests by local residents for Laver Leisure to submit additional information (i.e. revised site plan, revised ecology report, updated ES, new energy data, new sustainability information or new reports on any aspect of the solar farm application) are therefore not justified.

¹ WSP (October, 2014) Energy Strategy Proposed Leisure Development at Moneystone Park, Whiston

2 SUMMARY OF FEEDBACK RECEIVED AS PART OF SMDC'S STATUTORY CONSULTATION EXERCISE

- 2.1 The outline planning application (ref. SMD/2014/0682) was validated by SMDC on 20 October 2014. The Council carried out a statutory consultation exercise on the application between 20 October and 10 November 2014. An extension of time was granted to Kingsley and Oakamoor Parish Councils by SMDC until January 2015 to allow Members additional time to review the submitted information and to prepare their consultation response.

Statutory Consultee Responses

- 2.2 The Council has consulted a number of statutory consultee organisations and stakeholders and to date the following consultee organisations have submitted formal representations to SMDC.
- SMDC Arboriculture – No objection subject to conditions;
 - SMDC Spatial Planning – No objection subject to conditions;
 - SMDC Environmental Protection – No objection subject to conditions;
 - SMDC Housing – No objection; and
 - SMDC Economic Development – No objection;
 - SMDC Conservation – No objection;
 - SCC Highways – No objection subject to conditions;
 - SCC Minerals – No objection subject to conditions;
 - SCC Ecology – No objection subject to conditions;
 - SCC PROW – No objection;
 - SCC Archaeology – No objection;
 - Staffordshire Wildlife Trust – No objection;
 - Natural England – No objection subject to conditions;
 - Environment Agency – No objection subject to conditions;
 - Historic England – No objection subject to conditions;
 - Severn Trent Water – No objection subject to conditions;
 - Kingsley Parish Council – Objection; and
 - Oakamoor Parish Council – Objection.

- 2.3 Technical matters raised in relation to the proposed leisure scheme by the statutory consultee organisations have been addressed in full by Laver Leisure through the application submitted in October 2014 and supplementary information accompanying this Statement including the ES Addendum. In light of this all technical matters have now be resolved and there are no outstanding objections from any statutory consultee organisation (with the exception of OPC and KPC) or internal consultee departments at SMDC or SCC.

Non-Statutory Consultee Responses

- 2.4 A number of non-statutory responses to the proposed development have been received by the Council in both support and objection. These have been taken into account by Laver Leisure and a response is provided to key themes in sections 5, 6 and 7 of this Statement.

3 LAVER LEISURE'S RESPONSE TO OAKAMoor PARISH COUNCIL

3.1 SMDC has received two consultation representations from Oakamoor Parish Council (OPC). A response is provided to the key issues raised by OPC below.

OPC Comment 1: Traffic and Road Safety

3.2 OPC states:

"Traffic

It is clear that this is a major concern for the parishioners of Oakamoor and in the view of OPC, for good reasons:

- *Safety of Drivers: Access to, and egress from, Moneystone Quarry is via a narrow lane, and from the Oakamoor Village, negotiation of a 1 in 5 hill (one of the steepest in the country) and blind bends is necessary. The road was clearly not designed to accommodate more than light use.*
- *The large increase in vehicle numbers and the change of dynamic of the type of driver the majority of drivers being unfamiliar with the route who will be challenged with negotiating the existing road width, the steep incline, and the acute bends, (exacerbated in severe winter weather, when the road can remain ungritted and snow uncleared for days), will seriously compromise the safety for vehicle occupants.*
- *Additionally, the proximity of the site to Alton Towers which may have informed the applicants decision to progress the development in this location will generate further traffic on Carr Bank. We are aware of the applicants assertions that signage will direct traffic from Moneystone to Alton Towers via the A52. We are equally aware that drivers will ignore advisory signage, and rely on in car Satellite Navigation to direct them via the shortest route, via Carr Bank, and Farley Road (already an RTA hotspot). OPC are unaware of any provision for road widening, straightening or levelling, and therefore believe that as a result of the*

above, the development will pose unacceptable dangers to motorists using this stretch of road.

- *It should be noted that OPC are aware of three accidents on Carr Bank in the last month.*
- *Safety of Cyclists and Pedestrians: The terrain of the Churnet Valley and particularly the Oakamoor area attracts high (and growing) numbers of both visiting and local cyclists and walkers. Given the aforementioned access road features, OPC believe that the proposal will seriously compromise the safety of these groups.*
- *Safety of Horse Riders: We understand that the site neither contains, nor connects with any bridleways. Riders would therefore be forced to utilise the same public highways ie Whiston Eaves Lane and Carr Bank. Again, given the features of this road, OPC believe that this will create significant dangers to persons on horseback.*
- *Traffic impact on parishioners quality of life: With the continuing exponential growth of Alton Towers, Whiston Eaves Lane / Carr Bank is being increasingly used by visitors (who typically are unfamiliar with the terrain) and workers (who are often racing against the clock) as a rat run to this attraction. This is creating justified anxiety for parishioners who reside on this road. The development of another large attraction, to which access / egress can only be via Whiston Eaves Lane / Carr Bank will obviously increase numbers of vehicles being driven by those unfamiliar with the challenging road conditions both during construction and on completion of the development. This will only further diminish the quality of life for the occupants of dwellings sited on these roads."*

3.3 SMDC received a response from SCC Highways Department on 3rd February 2015 which confirmed that no objections were raised on highway grounds subject to conditions. In terms of road safety at the junction of Whiston Eaves Lane and the A52, the Highways Authority has proposed the following condition:

"The development hereby permitted shall not be commenced until an off-site traffic management scheme comprising, a 30mph speed limit on the A52 at the junction with the C0165, Whiston Eaves Lane and a signage scheme detailing the

permitted routeing for all traffic accessing and leaving the Park which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved traffic management scheme shall thereafter be implemented prior to first use of the development."

- 3.4 There have been extensive discussions held between Laver Leisure's transport consultant and Paul Hurdus (former SCC Highways Officer)/ Dale Arthur (SCC Infrastructure Development and Improvement Manager).
- 3.5 On 15 January 2015 Laver Leisure submitted a Designer's Response to the Road Safety Audit and Quality Audit in relation to drawing PB1608/SK001 Revision B, showing a right turn ghost island facility at the A52 Junction with Whiston Eaves Lane. For reference, the Road Safety Audit and Quality Audit are included as Appendix G and H of the Transport Assessment (ES Volume 3).
- 3.6 A number of items were raised in the audits and from the Designer's Responses. These matters have either been addressed or can be addressed as part of the detailed design. This approach is standard practice and is acceptable to the Highways Authority.
- 3.7 The proposed highway works would provide a significant improvement to the visibility splay to the left of the junction. At present the visibility splay at the junction 2.4m back from the give way line is 30m, which is not in accordance with Manual for Streets for a speed limit of 40mph (visibility splay should be 63m for a 40mph speed limit). The visibility splay to the left would be increased to 45m as part of the proposed highway works and a TRO would be implemented to reduce the speed limit of the A52 to 30mph, which would result in a visibility splay that would be more than that required by Manual for Streets (40m for speed limit of 30mph). It is considered that this will improve road safety for residents.
- 3.8 With regard to traffic impact, it is acknowledged that, in comparison terms, there would be a significant percentage increase in traffic during the peak hour periods on Whiston Eaves Lane, associated with the proposed development. Trip generation associated with the proposed development is summarised in table 1 (paragraph 3.14 of this Statement). It should be noted however that the A52 and Whiston Eaves Lane are quiet traffic roads. With reference to Figures 1 and 2 of the Transport Assessment, it can be seen that the surveyed traffic flows on the A52, immediately

west of the junction with Whiston Eaves Lane, has a two-way traffic flow of 118 during the weekday morning peak hour and 108 during the weekday evening peak hour. The two-way traffic flows on Whiston Eaves Lane is 29 during the weekday morning peak hour and 56 during the weekday evening peak hour. Clearly any increase in traffic on these roads, in percentage terms, could be considered significant, although the combined existing traffic and development traffic combined is still low.

Trip generation

3.9 In terms of trip generation associated with the proposed development, it is important to note that in addition to the Transport Assessment submitted in support of the planning application, Atkins, instructed by SMDC and SCC, produced a Transport Study for the CVMP, dated 30 July 2013 which assessed all of the proposed sites in the Masterplan area. For the Moneystone Quarry site, Atkins calculated a trip generation for 250 lodges and a 100 bed hotel.

3.10 The Atkins Report at paragraph 6.30 states:

*"The trip generation work showed that based on there being 250 holiday lodges and a 100 bed hotel, expected trip rates would be 35 departures in the AM peak, and 32 arrivals. In the PM peak, there would be 38 arrivals and 33 departures. Therefore, the trip rates are can be considered relatively low for this site."*²

3.11 Paragraph 6.32 states:

*"No significant issues were noted on the other highway access routes to Moneystone Quarry, namely to the A52 via Blakeney Road and to the B5417 via Eaves Lane. The latter has a steep gradient entering the village of Oakamoor."*³

² Atkins (July, 2013) Churnet Valley Masterplan: Transport Study, para 6.30

³ Atkins (July, 2013) Churnet Valley Masterplan: Transport Study, para 6.32

3.12 Although the current proposals do not include a 100 bed hotel, the trip generation calculated in the Transport Assessment shown in table 1 below is significantly higher than what Atkins calculated, to ensure a robust assessment was undertaken.

3.13 The type of development proposed is not common, such as residential, foodstore or office, and therefore the use of the Trip Rate Information Computer System (TRICS), which is a recognised industry standard for predicting trip generation for development, was not considered appropriate in this case. The trip generation used in the Transport Assessment was based on evidence at comparable sites, which was prepared by Christie & Co, who are specialists in the leisure business. In order to provide further robustness, Royal HaskoningDHV added a 20% contingency to the trip generation prepared by Christie & Co. Please see the trip generation comparison below.

3.14 Table 1 – Trip Generation Comparison

Consultant	Weekday AM Peak Hour			Weekday PM Peak Hour			Saturday Peak Hour		
	Arrivals	Departures	Totals	Arrivals	Departures	Totals	Arrivals	Departures	Totals
Atkins	32	35	66	38	33	71	40	34	75
RHDHV	103	52	155	52	103	155	67	163	230
Difference	+71	+17	+89	+14	+70	+84	+27	+129	+155

Source: Atkins trip generation extract from Transport Study for the Churnet Valley Masterplan, Table 4.2 – Trip Generation
RHDHV trip generation extracted from Transport Assessment. Table 8. Peak Hour total Vehicle Generation of Proposed Moneystone Quarry Leisure (inc. 20% Contingency Trips)

Atkins Transport Study for the Churnet Valley Masterplan is available at:
<http://www.staffs Moorlands.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/pages/Churnet%20Valley%20Transport%20Study%20V1.4%20with%20Appendices.pdf>

OPC Comment 2: Compliance with the Core Strategy and CVMP

3.15 OPC states:

"Conformance to the Churnet Valley Masterplan Principles:

Principle 1: 'Ensure that communities are at the heart of the Churnet Valley'

Recently OPC held an open day for Parishioners to better understand the application. A questionnaire prepared by the Parish Council was completed by 90% of attendees. Of those who completed the questionnaire, 90% were NOT in favour of the development.

If SMDC are to truly conform to the principles of the Churnet Valley Masterplan, then the Parishioners overwhelming view; that the development is inappropriate, should carry sizable weight in the decision making process.

Principle 2: Respect, enhance and protect the positive aspects of the Churnet Valley:

"by sustaining and enhancing the existing qualities and assets of the Churnet Valley which make the area unique"

"by ensuring that future development responds to and is sympathetic with the environmental, ecological and landscape limits and makes appropriate provision for the management of land and features for nature conservation and heritage and the enjoyment of areas of wildlife and geological interest"

"by ensuring the nature and scale of development is appropriate to its locality this may mean limited or no development is appropriate for parts of the Valley".

- *The most positive aspects of the Churnet Valley are: its natural beauty, its tranquillity, its flora & fauna, its physical and geological assets, and its pretty small villages / settlements which intersperse the natural landscape.*
- *To sustain and enhance the natural assets obviously requires careful management of visitor numbers. The proposed development will in one fell swoop double the human habitation of the Southern end of the valley from (and including) Oakamoor to Whiston villages. This will, undoubtedly, dramatically reduce the tranquillity of the surrounding countryside, diminish its natural beauty and potentially negatively impact its flora and fauna. It neither responds to, nor is it sympathetic to the environmental, ecological or landscape limits of its surroundings.*
- *As previously outlined, many of the roads in and around Moneystone and Oakamoor suffer from very high traffic levels as a result of Alton*

Towers. Carr Bank & Whiston Eaves Lane remain relatively peaceful, and as a result, form part of the quiet countryside which is seen as such a positive aspect by residents, and the very reason visitors are attracted to this area.

It is the view of Oakamoor Parish Council, that the positive aspects of the Churnet Valley must be respected and protected, and that this development runs counter to the aims of this principle.

Given that in the Churnet Valley, the "Family Fun" offer already (in terms of visitor numbers) completely overwhelms the "Countrysiders" segment, and that recorded in the CV Masterplan, the Countrysiders are considered to be the predominant target visitor group, it stands to reason, that no further development of this sector is appropriate for this part of the valley.

Principle 3: 'Support local enterprise and create local employment opportunities'

- *Interpreting the CV Masterplan as it is intended, the proposed development is clearly not 'local enterprise'.*
- *The unemployment rate in 2013.14 in the Staffordshire Moorlands was 4.1% , compared with a national average of 7.5%. The number of person out of work in the Churnet ward in 2011 (latest available figures) was 24.*
- *The type of jobs created will broadly mirror those at Alton Towers.*
- *The 2012/13 Annual Monitoring Report identifies the need for higher skilled jobs in the Staffordshire Moorlands.*

OPC believes that the real employment benefits for "local" people are negligible.

Principle 4: 'Improve accessibility and connectivity': "by addressing traffic hotspots"

As previously outlined in (1), Oakamoor is already suffering substantially increased levels of traffic due to the continuous expansion of Alton Towers. This development will undoubtedly create a "traffic hotspot" in Oakamoor, for which the applicant is unable to proffer any workable solutions.

Principle 5: 'Deliver Quality & Sustainable Tourism'

"by facilitating the development of the Churnet Valley as a visitor destination whilst respecting the environment"

"by promoting increased tourism and economic prosperity without causing harm to essential qualities of landscape, ecology, heritage and remoteness that the Churnet Valley is recognised for"

"by promoting a year round visitor offer and dispersing visitors to increase benefit to the local economy by focusing on quality rather than quantity"

"by giving preference to incremental improvements which support existing businesses"

OPC asserts that the proposed development is inconsistent with all of the above requirements of Principle 5."^{eq}

3.16 In respect of the provisions of Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, it is necessary to bear in mind the High Court decision *R v Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council ex parte Milne* [2000]. Mr Justice Sullivan in considering this case specifically looked at the question of accordance with the

Development Plan as a whole concluding that a proposal does not have to accord with each and every policy within the Development Plan:

*"...In the light of that decision (City of Edinburgh Council v The Secretary of State for Scotland [1997]) I regard as untenable the proposition that if there is a breach of any one policy in the Development Plan the proposed development cannot be said to be 'in accordance with the Plan'. Given the numerous conflicting interests that Development Plans seek to reconcile: the needs for more housing, more employment, more leisure and recreational facilities, for improved transport facilities, the protection of listed buildings and attractive landscapes etc., it would be difficult to find any project of any significance that was wholly in accord with every relevant policy in the Development Plan. Numerous applications would have to be referred to the Secretary of State as a departure from the Development Plan because one or a few minor policies were infringed, even though the proposal accords with the Development Plan considered as a whole. It does not have to accord with each and every policy therein."*⁴

3.17 Chapter 6 of the SPS submitted in October 2014 assessed the proposals against the relevant planning policy contained in the Development Plan. Notwithstanding the above, it demonstrated that the application proposals fully accord with all the relevant policies of the Development Plan; most notably Core Strategy policies SS1, SS1a, SS6c, SS7, E3, R1, DC3 and NE1 as well as with all other general development management policies; Joint Waste Core Strategy policy 1.2, and 'Saved' Minerals Local Plan policy 5. Overall, the application is in full accordance with the Development Plan.

3.18 The CVM contains up to date planning guidance to supplement the policies contained in the Core Strategy. It is a significant material consideration which should be afforded considerable weight in the determination of the planning application.

⁴ City of Edinburgh Council V Secretary of State for Scotland and Others

- 3.19 The CVM identifies Moneystone Quarry as an opportunity site for a leisure development which could comprise up to 250 new lodges, a central hub and a range of indoor and outdoor facilities. The proposals have been prepared to fully align with the CVM and have been informed by a suite of technical assessments contained in the ES submitted in October 2014, specifically the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment and the Ecology Assessment.
- 3.20 Chapter 7 of the SPS assessed the proposals against the guidance contained within the CVM and demonstrates that the proposals fully accord with the requirements of the SPD, specifically the development strategy and the general development principles for the site.

OPC Comment 3: Local Opposition

- 3.21 OPC states:

"Meeting the needs of the Tourism offer in the Churnet Valley

- *The Churnet Valley Masterplan SPD (Sustainable Tourism and the Masterplan Principles section 5.1.18) highlights the importance of the visitor group 'Countrysiders' ' In summary, the focus of the Masterplan should be around attracting 'Countrysiders', with or without children, who best fit the offer and are most likely to be attracted by a rural destination, with a distinctive and quality offer.....*
- *The Churnet Valley Masterplan SPD (Glossary section 11.0.1) defines the term 'Countrysiders': Visitors primarily coming for a combination of experiences – activities, discovery / sightseeing, and rest and relaxation. Outdoor activities will be the predominant activity, but the natural environment / scenery will be a key underpinning appeal, [they] will however undertake a range of activities while staying in the area including heritage and natural history and will have a propensity to travel around / explore. They will be staying for an additional holiday / short break – typically in independent accommodation (B&B, self catering) – typical length of stay will be 2 to 3 nights or 6 to 7 nights. Demographically they will primarily be middleaged couples – travelling from a wide area. The Countrysiders are the main backbone of staying visitors to the Moorlands and most closely aligned with the visitor profile of the wider Peak District.*

It is the view of OPC that the offer contained in this application, does not fulfill this criteria. Moreover and more disconcerting the development would have a negative impact on the numbers of 'Countrysiders' wishing to visit the area, due to the impact whether by traffic, site noise, or sheer numbers of people concentrated in the Southern end of the valley (saturation) on the 'rest and relaxation' of the targeted visitor group.

If Countrysiders are seen in the Churnet Valley Masterplan as "the main backbone of staying visitors" then the impact of any development which potentially obstructs or negates achievement of this aim should be given very, very careful consideration."

- 3.22 OPC states that a questionnaire prepared by the Parish Council was completed by attendees at a recent open day and that 90% were not in favour of the development proposals. However, the validity of this claim cannot be confirmed as Laver Leisure has not had sight of the questionnaire. A copy of the questionnaire has been requested by Laver Leisure. Once this has been reviewed additional comments will be provided. Furthermore, it is understood that certain parishioners/ households have submitted more than one representation to the Parish Council which may have skewed the findings. Despite this, it is evident from the public consultation and from responses received through the statutory consultation process that there is local support for the scheme in terms of job creation and the creation of new facilities, particularly among those of working age.

OPC Comment 4: The Site

- 3.23 OPC states:

"Site:

*The NPPF clearly states that "land that has been developed for minerals is not "Previously Developed Land" , therefore, the Quarry is **not a brownfield site**. The quarry was located due to the presence of silica in the area.*

No other large scale industry would have been granted permission to operate in this location. Similarly, now economically removable reserves of silica have been exhausted, we believe that Moneystone Quarry should be viewed no differently than an unsullied countryside location.

- *There remains an extant restoration plan which we understand is still not complete. It is the view of OPC, that before any site development proposal is considered by SMDC the restoration plan should be completed."*

3.24 The site is classified as a previously worked Greenfield site which has been identified as an opportunity site in the adopted CVMP for a high quality leisure development. The CVMP was subject to significant public consultation and is based on a robust evidence base.

OPC Comment 5: Restoration Plan

3.25 OPC states:

"Conformance to the Adopted 'Staffordshire Moorlands Core Strategy'

The Churnet Valley is identified as an area for sustainable tourism and rural regeneration, and SS7 clearly outlines fundamental principles within this aim:

- *"Any development should be of a scale and nature and of a high standard of design which conserves and enhances the heritage, landscape and biodiversity of the area and demonstrate strong sustainable development and environmental management principles. The consideration of landscape character will be paramount in all development proposals in order to protect and conserve locally distinctive qualities and sense of place and to maximize opportunities for restoring, strengthening and enhancing distinctive landscape features."*

OPC assert that not only, does the proposed development does not support any of these principles, it is in fact contradictory to the underlying tenet contained within this statement.

The Spatial Strategy for the Staffordshire Moorlands states:

"In the smaller villages there will be limited development only, principally for local housing needs and rural diversification, whilst the countryside areas outside market towns and villages, including hamlets and other small settlements, will be subject to strict control over development with an emphasis on meeting essential rural needs, promoting environmental enhancement including landscape and biodiversity, and on encouraging appropriate economic diversification and tourism. In order to facilitate development 'Infill Boundaries' will be defined for the smaller villages within which appropriate development would be allowed. Major developed areas in the countryside will also be identified where an appropriate range of uses would be permitted to support rural needs.

Given that Oakamoor and Whiston are categorised as 'Small Villages' OPC would encourage SMDC to view the proposed development within the context of the above statement."

- 3.26 A restoration scheme to discharge condition 35 of planning permission SM.96/935 was submitted to SCC in November 1999 and was subsequently approved by SCC in January 2001. Amendments to the approved restoration scheme were submitted by Sibelco UK to SCC in 2009. The amended restoration scheme for the site was approved with conditions by delegated decision on the 16 October 2009. This approval required the submission of an updated restoration plan to satisfy points raised in the approval letter.
- 3.27 In July 2010 Laver Leisure acquired Moneystone Quarry from Sibelco UK. To address the conditions of the delegated approval a revised Restoration Masterplan was submitted to SCC by Laver Leisure and was approved at SCC's Planning Committee on 6 March 2014 (LPA ref. SM.96/935/122 M D4). The restoration works have been ongoing at the site for some time and to date Laver Leisure have spent significant sums of money in implementing the restoration scheme. The restoration works are now largely complete in accordance with the approved restoration plan and this has been confirmed by SCC Officers, following site visits. Dialogue with SCC monitoring Officers on the progress of the restoration works is ongoing.

3.28 It is important that the Council has regard to the extensive economic, social and environmental benefits the proposed development would deliver above and beyond that proposed by the approved restoration plan. The proposals would contribute to delivering the Council's vision for enhancing the role of Staffordshire Moorlands as a tourism and leisure destination, and would deliver many economic benefits which will have a significant and positive impact on the local economy.

3.29 The Economic Development Officer at SMDC in her consultation response of 29th April 2015 broadly supported the proposed development and the economic benefits it would bring to the local area stating:

"Firstly, I would like to express my broad support for this development and I agree with statement (7.30) that the proposals outlined will support the overarching principles of the Churnet Valley Masterplan including "deliver(ing) quality and sustainable tourism" through the provision of :

- *increasing overnight stays - which will lead to greater support to wider economy- through the conversion of day to staying visitors;*
- *Extend the season of visitors to Staffordshire Moorlands*
- *Improve accommodation offer in terms of range of accommodation on offer"*

3.30 The developer has positively engaged with the authority's Economic Development team, along with other local stakeholders focused on employment and skills development. The developer is committed to agreeing an Employment & Skills Charter with the local authority which will seek, wherever possible, to enable as many local people as possible to benefit from the jobs and training opportunities created at Moneystone Park. The Charter will include a number of specific measures and once agreed, this will be publicised further. The developer will also commit to measures designed to enable local businesses and local suppliers to benefit from available construction and operational contracts.

- 3.31 The proposed development will have an impact on flora and fauna within the site boundary. However, standard mitigation techniques will be implemented to avoid potential effects to species during construction and species interests will be incorporated into the long term management objectives of the site. As such, the proposals will have a beneficial impact on the existing woodland and retained habitats on site and the provision of new habitats on site will have a beneficial impact on protected species such as bats, birds, amphibians and reptiles. A detailed analysis of the Residual impacts on ecology is presented at 'Chapter 9: Ecology' of the ES.

OPC Comment 6: National Planning Policy Framework - Sustainability

- 3.32 OPC states:

"Staffordshire Moorlands Core Strategy SS7 states: "Sustainable tourism is tourism which takes account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, balancing the needs of visitors, the economy, the environment and host communities. Tourism development must not be at the expense of the special qualities of the Churnet Valley which draw so many people to the area. A very sensitive approach to the provision and expansion of facilities and accommodation will therefore be required to ensure that it is of an appropriate scale and design and compatible with the nature of the local area and enhances the heritage, landscape and ecology of the Churnet Valley"

OPC believe that SMDC should be commended in recognising the special qualities of the Churnet Valley within the Core Strategy and CV Masterplan documents. The challenge now for SMDC regarding this planning application, is to support the rhetoric with appropriate complementary actions. OPC believe that the proposed development, would be best described as " Of inappropriate scale and design and in compatible with the nature of the local area and diminishes the heritage, landscape and ecology of the Churnet Valley"

In reviewing the Operation of the National Planning Policy Framework, the Communities and Local Government Committee recently highlighted the following: [A recurring concern in our evidence was that greater emphasis was being given to the economic dimension of sustainable development than to the environmental and social ones.

It is the view of OPC, that SMDC have tacitly supported the outline proposals created by the applicant from its inception, whilst maintaining an outward impression of a balanced, open minded, and impartial approach.

OPC assert that SMDC have actually been influenced too heavily by the economic dimension, without due consideration being given to the environmental and social impact of such an outsized development.

OPC request that SMDC review their approach to this application, with a greater emphasis on an equitable and consistent balance between the three facets of sustainable development as outlined in the NPPF. On completion of this we would postulate that the negative impact on the social and environmental facets would far outweigh the perceived economic benefits."

3.33 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications. The NPPF at paragraph 7 indicates that there are three dimensions to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. An assessment of the application proposals against the three dimensions of sustainable development as defined in the NPPF is provided in Chapter 8 of the SPS submitted in October 2014. It states:

"The proposals will deliver significant economic, social and environmental benefits which should be afforded considerable weight in favour of the grant of planning permission.

Economic Benefits

- *Creation of 230 FTE construction jobs in year 1 followed by 25 in years 2 and 3 during construction phase;*
- *Anticipated construction cost of £18m of which approximately 25% will benefit local contractors;*

- *Creation of 250 FTE on-site jobs once operational supporting a range of occupations. Given the nature of the roles available at the development and the flexible working hours required it is anticipated that that the number of actual on-site jobs could be in the region of 375, comprising 125 full time and 250 part time;*
- *Creation of 78 additional FTE jobs off-site elsewhere in the District and in the wider area as a result of the proposed development's operational impacts;*
- *Generation off-site expenditure in the District for staying visitors of approximately £1.03m per annum;*
- *Reduction in unemployment, particularly youth unemployment, in the local area;*

Social Benefits

- *Accessibility to an extensive range of indoor and outdoor activities at 'the Hub' by the local community;*
- *Accessibility to the proposed services within the hub by the local community which will enhance the ongoing vitality and viability of local villages;*
- *Extension of the local footpath, cycleway and bridleway network which will enhance the accessibility of the site; and*
- *Delivery of educational opportunities at the visitor centre covering:*
 - **Quarrying History** – *The quarrying history of the site and background to the geology in the area;*
 - **Silica Sand** – *The use and importance of silica sand in modern technology;*
 - **Sustainable Technologies** – *Focussing on the adjacent solar farm demonstrating how the energy is produced and where it goes; and*
 - **Wildlife and Ecology** – *Remote recording/ 'spy cams' showing protected habitats and local fauna and flora.*

Environmental Benefits

- *Ecological compensation and enhancement measures will be implemented at the site. The on-going management of these elements will be incorporated into the long term management plan and will include the following:*
 - *Planting of species rich hedgerows to the north west of the application boundary. This should include the planting of native berry species;*
 - *Woodland management in form of coppicing and thinning of selective species including Turkey Oak within Key Wood;*
 - *Scrub clearance and management of species rich MG5 grassland in quarry 1;*
 - *The management of moderate value/high potential grassland in quarry 1, land to the west of the application site;*
 - *Low value grassland to be enhanced land to the west of the application site and Ashbourne Hey SBI;*
 - *Existing pond enhancement within Key Wood and Frame Wood in form of scrub thinning/management; and*
 - *A bat and bird box scheme within Key Wood and the remaining Black Plantation.*
- *When development is complete at the site 63.23 ha of habitats will be brought into positive long term management for wildlife. This includes:*
 - *12.58 ha of woodland management (Churnet Woodlands Ecological Action Plan);*
 - *14.93 ha of grassland management and restoration (Species Rich Farmland Ecological Action Plan);*
 - *34.03 ha of habitat within the approved restoration plan should largely be retained;*

- *Other habitats to be created, managed and enhanced include 1080m of hedgerow plantings, 1.35 ha of habitat mosaic to be managed (outside of the approved restoration plan area) and pond enhancement; and*
 - *20.57 ha of the approved restoration plan will be retained elements to create attractive habitats for wildlife such as bare ground, low fertility grassland and retention of developing scrub and grassland habitats.*
- *The development would not result in any adverse impacts on the adjacent SSSI or SBI.*
 - *The site is a former quarry requiring restoration and would represent an efficient use of the land which has previously been worked.*
 - *The application proposals would have an acceptable impact on the local highway network. Safe and suitable access can be achieved for all people.*
 - *There are no designated or non-designated heritage assets within the site. The application proposals will not result in any adverse impacts on existing heritage features or archaeological assets.*
 - *Mitigation is proposed to remove contamination risk and as such there would be no harm to visitors at the application site.*
 - *The development would not result in any adverse noise or air quality impacts.*
 - *There are no designated or non-designated heritage assets within the site. The application proposals will not result in any adverse impacts on existing heritage features or archaeological assets."*

3.34 At the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. For decision-taking this means (HOW emphasis in bold):

- **"approving development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay; and**

- *where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out-of-date, granting permission unless:*
 - *any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole; or*
 - *specific policies in this Framework indicate development should be restricted.*⁵

3.35 Chapter 9 of the SPS demonstrates that the scheme proposals fully accord with paragraph 14 of the NPPF and there is a presumption in favour of this development because:

- The application proposals fully accord with the Development Plan and therefore should be granted without delay;
- Furthermore granting planning permission for the proposed development will not result in any adverse impacts;
- The development constitutes sustainable development in accordance with the policies contained in the NPPF when taken as a whole;
- The development will deliver a series of important economic, social and environmental benefits;
- The benefits that will be delivered by the application proposals significantly and demonstratively outweigh the impacts which have been assessed not to be adverse; and
- There are no specific policies in the Framework which indicate that the development should be restricted.

⁵ National Planning Policy Framework, DCLG (March 2012) page 4, paragraph 14

Summary

- 3.36 In summary, a robust Transport Assessment has been undertaken by the Applicant as well as a transport study for the CVMP by SMDC and SCC. Whilst there will be an increase in vehicles on the local highways network, best practice mitigation measures will be employed and no significant adverse effects are predicted. Furthermore, SCC Highways has expressed no objections to the proposed development following the implementation of conditions. The development is therefore considered suitable on the grounds of transportation and access and should be recommended for approval.
- 3.37 The application proposals fully accord with all the relevant policies of the Development Plan as well as with all other general development management policies. The CVMP identifies Moneystone Quarry as an opportunity site for a leisure development which could comprise up to 250 lodges, a central hub and a range of indoor and outdoor facilities. The proposals have been prepared to fully align with the CVMP and have been informed by a suite of technical assessments.
- 3.38 The proposed scheme has received both local opposition and support. All opposition comments have been addressed via input into the design of the proposals or concerns addressed via the comprehensive technical assessments which have been submitted in support of this application. Furthermore, all statutory consultees have no objections to the proposed development following the implementation of conditions.
- 3.39 The site has been allocated as an opportunity site in the CVMP. As such, the Council's assessment process will have validated the site's suitability, sustainability and viability for the site's vision and proposals. Therefore, the site is considered suitable for the proposed development and should be recommended for approval with immediate effect.
- 3.40 The Supporting Planning Statement submitted in October 2014 provides a comprehensive assessment of the proposed development against the relevant policies and guidance set out within the NPPF. The Statement concludes that the proposals will deliver significant social, economic and environmental benefits which are fully in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development.

4 LAVER LEISURE'S RESPONSE TO KINGSLEY PARISH COUNCIL

- 4.1 SMDC received a consultation response from Kingsley Parish Council (KPC) on 17th February 2015. A response is provided on the key issues raised by KPC below.

KPC Comment 1: Scale of the Development

- 4.2 KPC states:

"Size and scale of the development: In February 2012 Kingsley Parish Council had previously recommended the site could be reasonably and proportionately developed as an outdoor activities centre with up to 50 lodges. The present proposal for 250 lodges is wholly excessive and is not reasonable or proportionate. (Majority decision on a vote)."

- 4.3 KPC has proposed that a maximum of 50 lodges is a suitable scale of development although the rationale for this figure is not provided. Laver Leisure considers that the delivery of 50 lodges would be commercially unviable and would not deliver the significant range of benefits proposed.

- 4.4 Paragraph 7.6.5 and figure 7.4 'Moneystone Quarry Concept Plan' of the CVMP identify a number of uses considered appropriate at Moneystone Park. These include:

"Holiday accommodation – low impact holiday lodges in Zones 1 and 2. Limited development in Zones 4 and 5. Maximum of 250 holiday lodges in total"⁶

- 4.5 A maximum of 250 low impact lodges are proposed across the site. Low impact lodges are proposed in zones 1 and 2 and limited development is proposed in zones 4 and 5. Lodges within zones 4 and 5 have been sensitively located to minimise their impact. The location of the lodges has been informed by the technical assessments contained in the ES and ES Addendum, specifically the LVIA and ecology assessments.
- 4.6 Overall, the proposed development has been sensitively designed to ensure that it is compatible with the surrounding area and is appropriate in quality, scale and

⁶ Staffordshire Moorlands (March, 2014) Churnet Valley Masterplan Supplementary Planning Document, page 95

character. The level of development proposed fully accords with the adopted guidance confirmed in the CVMP.

KPC Comment 2: Traffic / Highway Safety

4.7 KPC states:

"Traffic / Highway Safety: Access to the site is via Carr Bank / Oakamoor, Blakeley Lane / Moneystone or Whiston Eaves Lane / Whiston. The proposals envisage the main access to the site being via Whiston Eaves Lane. Carr Bank and Blakeley Lane are quiet minor rural country lanes wholly unsuitable for additional tourist traffic. Whiston Eaves Lane is totally inadequate for the proposed level of traffic travelling to and from the site and would place an intolerable burden on Whiston residents."

4.8 SMDC received a response from SCC Highways Department on 3rd February 2015 which confirmed that no objections were raised on highway grounds subject to conditions. In terms of road safety at the junction of Whiston Eaves Lane and the A52, the Highways Authority has proposed the following condition:

"The development hereby permitted shall not be commenced until an off-site traffic management scheme comprising, a 30mph speed limit on the A52 at the junction with the C0165, Whiston Eaves Lane and a signage scheme detailing the permitted routeing for all traffic accessing and leaving the Park which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved traffic management scheme shall thereafter be implemented prior to first use of the development."

4.9 There have been extensive discussions held between Laver Leisure's transport consultant and Paul Hurdus (former SCC Highways Officer)/ Dale Arthur (SCC Infrastructure Development and Improvement Manager).

4.10 On 15th January 2015 Laver Leisure submitted a Designer's Response to the Road Safety Audit and Quality Audit in relation to drawing PB1608/SK001 Revision B, showing a right turn ghost island facility at the A52 Junction with Whiston Eaves

Lane. For reference, the Road Safety Audit and Quality Audit are included as Appendix G and H of the Transport Assessment (ES Volume 3).

- 4.11 A number of items were raised in the audits and from the Designer's Responses. These matters have either been addressed or can be addressed as part of the detailed design. This approach is standard practice and is acceptable to the Highways Authority.
- 4.12 The proposed highway works would provide a significant improvement to the visibility splay to the left of the junction. At present the visibility splay at the junction 2.4m back from the give way line is 30m, which is not in accordance with Manual for Streets for a speed limit of 40mph (visibility splay should be 63m for a 40mph speed limit). The visibility splay to the left would be increased to 45m as part of the proposed highway works and a TRO would be implemented to reduce the speed limit of the A52 to 30mph, which would result in a visibility splay that would be more than that required by Manual for Streets (40m for speed limit of 30mph).

KPC Comment 3: Road Safety at the junction of Whiston Eaves Lane with the A52

- 4.13 KPC states:

"Additional Objection

....Our concern primarily is around road safety at the junction of Whiston Eaves Lane, Whiston, with the A52 and the danger that may occur if the reports submitted in support of the planning application are accepted in their present form.

We would wish to emphasise that as Parish Councillors we have very good knowledge of this location and the risks presented to traffic using the junction.

We ask that you consider as a matter of urgency the new independent Traffic Assessment prepared by Paul Mew Associates (Traffic Consultants) to be considered noting the new expert opinion in particular with regard to:

1) Mitigation to improve sight lines.

2) Apparent lack of speed surveys

3) Apparently incorrect design criteria used in the reports supporting the planning application.

We consider that these are sufficient grounds to refusal the planning application"

4.14 Laver Leisure's Transport Consultant has reviewed Paul Mew Associates Traffic Assessment which was commissioned by local residents and makes the following observations.

4.15 With regard to traffic impact, it is acknowledged that, in comparison terms, there would be a significant percentage increase in traffic during the peak hour periods on Whiston Eaves Lane, associated with the proposed development. Trip generation is summarised in table 1 shown on page 14 of this Statement. It should be noted however that the A52 and Whiston Eaves Lane are quiet traffic roads. With reference to Figures 1 and 2 of the Transport Assessment, it can be seen that the surveyed traffic flows on the A52, immediately west of the junction with Whiston Eaves Lane, has a two-way traffic flow of 118 during the weekday morning peak hour and 108 during the weekday evening peak hour. The two-way traffic flows on Whiston Eaves Lane is 29 during the weekday morning peak hour and 56 during the weekday evening peak hour. Clearly any increase in traffic on these roads, in percentage terms, could be considered significant, although the combined existing traffic and development traffic combined is still low.

4.16 Furthermore, although the quarry is no longer in operation, it should be noted that HGVs previously used the A52/Whiston Eaves Lane junction to access the site. Although as agreed with Paul Hurdus that Royal HaskoningDHV would not use the trip generation associated with the quarry as the baseline position for traffic impact purposes, Whiston Eaves Lane can clearly accommodate an increase in traffic flows and is suitable for large vehicles, from the junction with the A52 to the site access.

South of the site access, there is a 7.5t weight restriction, except for access which will remain.

- 4.17 Regarding the existing A52/Whiston Eaves Lane junction, it is acknowledged that the existing layout is sub-standard in terms of visibility splays. The A52 is currently subject to a 40mph speed limit and the exiting visibility splays, 2.4m back from the give way line, are 34m to the left and 30m to the right. Although the junction is currently sub-standard, however, it should be noted that no accidents occurred during a 5 year period, between 1 April 2009 and 31 March 2014 (this was the latest information available when producing the Transport Assessment). Furthermore, during part of this period, the site was still operating as a quarry when slow moving HGVs were entering and exiting the junction. In conclusion, the accident history does not indicate an inherent road safety issue with the layout of the junction before Laver Leisure's improvements are implemented.
- 4.18 As part of the development, highway works at the A52/Whiston Eaves Lane junction would be provided to improve the existing situation and a Traffic Regulation Order would be promoted by Staffordshire County Council to reduce the speed limit to 30mph along this section of the A52. This will improve road safety for local residents.
- 4.19 In terms of relevant design guidance, Manual for Streets 2 "Wider Application in Principle", states at paragraph 1.2.1:

*"MfS1 changed the way we approach the design of construction, adoption and maintenance of urban streets. The principle changes to practice, as set out below, form the basis of this document which considers the wider highway network"*⁷

⁷ Manual for Streets 2, The Chartered Institute of Highways and Transportation (January 2011) page 007, paragraph 1.2.1

4.20 And with regard to the A52, bullet point 2 under paragraph 1.2.1 states:

"Emphasising a collaborative approach to the delivery of streets. Many busy streets and rural highways require a 'non-standard' approach to respond to context..."⁸

4.21 Paragraph 1.3.4 states:

*"The application of MfS advice to all 30mph speed limits as a starting point is in keeping with MfS1."*⁹

4.22 Clearly MfS is therefore applicable to this situation. Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) was produced for the design of trunk roads and motorways. As Paul Mews Associates acknowledge, the A52 is a non-trunk road and therefore the design standards contained within DMRB do not apply to the A52.

4.23 In conclusion, the proposed highway works and the reduction of speed limit to 30mph would provide a significant improvement compared with the existing situation. In addition the introduction of a right turn lane and the addition of a 30mph speed limit will provide a significant improvement for the visibility splay to the left, which would be over that required by MfS.

4.24 On 3rd February 2015 SMDC received a response from the SCC Highways Officer which confirmed that there were no objections on highway grounds subject to conditions. It terms of road safety at the junction of Whiston Eaves Lane and the A52 the highways authority has proposed the following condition:

"The development hereby permitted shall not be commenced until an off-site traffic management scheme comprising, a 30mph speed limit on the A52 at the junction with the C0165, Whiston Eaves Lane and a signage scheme detailing the permitted routeing for all traffic accessing and leaving the Park which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The

⁸ Manual for Streets 2, The Chartered Institute of Highways and Transportation (January 2011) page 007, paragraph 1.2.1

⁹ Manual for Streets 2, The Chartered Institute of Highways and Transportation (January 2011) page 008, paragraph 1.3.4

approved traffic management scheme shall thereafter be implemented prior to first use of the development."

Summary

- 4.25 In summary, the proposed development would not generate a significant level of traffic during the morning and evening peak August holiday season. An assessment of the A52/Whiston Eaves Lane junction was carried out in the Transport Assessment, which demonstrates that the development traffic would have no material traffic impact on the existing junction.
- 4.26 Laver Leisure however acknowledge that the existing A52/Whiston Eaves Lane is below standard in terms of current junction design standards and are therefore committed to providing improvement works at the existing junction and funding a Traffic Regulation Order for the Highway Authority to promote a 30mph speed limit along this section of the A52. The proposed improvements have been agreed with Staffordshire County Council, as Local Highway Authority.
- 4.27 In terms of signage strategy the development would promote on the Website and marketing leaflets the route to and from the site via the A52 and Whiston Eaves Lane. A signage scheme directing traffic to and from the development would also be agreed with the Local Planning Authority prior to occupation.

5 LAVER LEISURE'S RESPONSE TO CHURNET VALLEY CONSERVATION SOCIETY

- 5.1 SMDC has received a number consultation responses from the Churnet Valley Conservation Society (CVCS) through Secretary Claire Skitt. A response to the key issues raised is provided below.

CVCS Comment 1: Preferred Option for the Prosperity of the Churnet Valley

- 5.2 CVCS states:

"We are all in favour of bringing more jobs to the area and have voted for AONB status for The Churnet Valley, as a means to achieve this. As you may know, although the meeting with Howard Davies of the Association of AONBs with Cllr Sybil Ralphs and many interest groups and businesses, including Totally Locally, may have taken place before you came into your office, on the 13th June 2014, the Council has voted to support the application for AONB status for the Churnet Valley. AONB provides funding and support for appropriate development commensurate with a landscape equal to the Peak District and worthy of AONB status. The figure given was for every £1 put in there would be an £8 return".

- 5.3 The CVCS's preferred option for the Churnet Valley is for it to be designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). However, the area is not currently, or close to being, designated as an AONB. Indeed, SMDC in its AONB Assessment Paper (January 2012) summarises the key issues of designation including that (HOW emphasis in bold):

*"Natural England has a discretionary power which it will use if it is considered appropriate and desirable to designate an AONB. **They have no plans to designate more at present.**"*

- 5.4 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states that decisions should be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. This planning application must therefore be assessed against the adopted Development Plan and any relevant material considerations, of which CVCS's future aspirations for AONB designation is not one.
- 5.5 Notwithstanding the above, there are many examples of sensitively planned leisure developments similar to this scheme in AONB's and National Parks throughout the

UK. Laver Leisure consider that Moneystone Park will enhance the potential for the Churnet Valley achieving AONB status by regenerating a former quarry and delivering significant enhancements to landscape features and planting.

- 5.6 It is also important to note that should the Churnet Valley be designated as an AONB in the future then the economic benefits stated (i.e. £1 put in, £8 return) would still be generated and coupled with the increased local spend associated with Moneystone Park would cumulatively generate significant benefits to the local economy.

CVCS Comment 2: Preferred Business Development for the Quarry

- 5.7 CVCS states:

"All in all, the preferred Option in the Masterplan consultation, to promote AONB status and a Peak Park similar style of business growth was desired by the locals and also by visitors from far and wide who were canvassed informally, and who come here from far and wide to walk along the old Railway track from Oakamoor to Denstone, and hive off through Dimmingsdale.

We invite you to come and look, to walk with your family or friends along these tracks and in Dimmingsdale to see the potential for the valley. As an additional piece of information, please look at what Oakamoor has to offer: <http://oakamoor.org> and could benefit from AONB status. The quarry could be a natural area, as illustrated in the booklet, using the extant pathways that walkers use already, it would be a nature attraction and should support small businesses on the site where buildings exist, the Hub could allow small businesses similar to Peak Park businesses, cafes, shops etc.

The accommodation planned, however is outsized for the surrounding villages, countryside and roads."

- 5.8 Further to Laver Leisure's response above, it has been demonstrated in Chapter 7 'Socio-economic' of the ES that staying visitors could generate just over £1 million per year of additional spending in the local area. It is anticipated that the development, in part through visitor spending, use of local supply chains and wages, will contribute to the delivery of a further 78 full time equivalent jobs elsewhere in the District.

CVCS Comment 3: Holiday Village Accommodation is Excessive for the Area

- 5.9 CVCS states:

"This Laver Leisure holiday village will house 250 lodges, a minimum of 500 people, or closer to 1,000 at a time. The stated aim on HOW Planning's website is 90-100,000 a year. This is far bigger than our village communities and roads can bear."

- 5.10 Paragraph 7.6.5 and figure 7.4 'Moneystone Quarry Concept Plan' of the CVM identify a number of uses considered appropriate at Moneystone Park. These include:

"Holiday accommodation – low impact holiday lodges in Zones 1 and 2. Limited development in Zones 4 and 5. Maximum of 250 holiday lodges in total"¹⁰

- 5.11 A maximum of 250 low impact lodges are proposed across the site. Low impact lodges are proposed in zones 1 and 2 and limited development is proposed in zones 4 and 5. Lodges within zones 4 and 5 have been sensitively located to minimise their impact. The location of the lodges has been informed by the technical assessments contained in the ES and ES Addendum, specifically the LVIA and ecology assessments.

- 5.12 Overall, the proposed development has been sensitively designed to ensure that it is compatible with the surrounding area and is appropriate in quality, scale and character. The level of development proposed fully accords with the adopted guidance confirmed in the CVMP.

¹⁰ Staffordshire Moorlands (March, 2014) Churnet Valley Masterplan Supplementary Planning Document, page 95

CVCS Comment 4: Benefit to the Local Economy of this Development is Negative

5.13 CVCS states:

"The benefit to the local economy will be negative. Already, as you may have found out, B&Bs and pubs in the area have either closed or are barely eeking out a living. This is owing to the growth of Alton Towers facilities and the deals they are increasingly offering year on year, draining money out of the local economy. If our valley is to become a corridor straddling two theme park sized developments, there will be no hope of retaining its existing natural status, and will be poorly used countryside with clogged roads. This holiday village development of Laver Leisure's is geared to retain visitors with their expenditure within the confines of its borders, as envisioned by the Hub. With Alton Towers doing the same, there can be no truthful assertion that this new development will benefit the local economy."

5.14 Chapter 7 'Socio-Economic' of the ES clearly demonstrates that the proposed development will enhance local economic prosperity and increase opportunities for local employment: The proposed development will:

- Create an estimated 230 FTE construction jobs in year 1 followed by 25 in years 2 and 3 during the construction phase;
- Require a mix of on-site works and off-site pre-fabrications and supply chain activities with works lending themselves to local procurement/ recruitment including ground preparation and land remediation; basic civil engineering works; construction of the hub building and other facilities and site landscaping;
- Based on a ratio of 1.2 FTE jobs per lodge create 250 FTE on-site jobs once operational supporting a range of occupations. Given the nature of the roles available at the development and the flexible working hours required it is anticipated that that the number of actual on-site jobs could be in the region of 375, comprising 125 full time and 250 part time;

- Reduce unemployment, particularly youth unemployment, which is afforded a high priority by the Council;
- Generate off-site expenditure in the district for staying visitors of approximately £1.03m per annum;
- Create 78 additional FTE jobs off-site elsewhere in the District and in the wider area as a result of the proposed development's operational impacts.

5.15 In broader terms the proposed development of Moneystone Park could serve as a catalyst for further investment in the local area further increasing economic prosperity and opportunities for employment. Indeed, the CVMP Sustainability Appraisal identifies that Moneystone could create:

"opportunities for local businesses, suppliers and contractors" and "new jobs in the area"¹¹.

5.16 The Economic Development Officer at SMDC in her consultation response of 29th April 2015 broadly supported the proposed development and the economic benefits it would bring to the local area stating:

"Firstly, I would like to express my broad support for this development and I agree with statement (7.30) that the proposals outlined will support the overarching principles of the Churnet Valley Masterplan including "deliver(ing) quality and sustainable tourism" through the provision of :

- *increasing overnight stays - which will lead to greater support to wider economy- through the conversion of day to staying visitors;*
- *Extend the season of visitors to Staffordshire Moorlands*
- *Improve accommodation offer in terms of range of accommodation on offer"*

¹¹ Final Churnet Valley Masterplan Sustainability Appraisal, SMDC, page 48 (March 2014)

- 5.17 The developer has positively engaged with the authority's Economic Development team, along with other local stakeholders focused on employment and skills development. The developer is committed to agreeing an Employment & Skills Charter with the local authority which will seek, wherever possible, to enable as many local people as possible to benefit from the jobs and training opportunities created at Moneystone Park. The Charter will include a number of specific measures and once agreed, this will be publicised further. The developer will also commit to measures designed to enable local businesses and local suppliers to benefit from available construction and operational contracts.

CVCS Comment 5: Jobs for the Churnet Valley

- 5.18 CVCS states:

"AONB and small business support would be more suitable, as you are familiar with in the Peak District. In this way families could develop sustainable living businesses and create more opportunities for local services: plumbers, electricians, carpenters, boiler-men etc. to flourish, with many small businesses providing on-going work.

Unemployment in the Churnet Ward is 52 people. The 230 construction jobs will undoubtedly go to contractors from outside the area. The remaining jobs, as with Alton Towers, would most likely be sourced from migrant labour where minimum wage payments are lower than for local labour. It is possible that some jobs may be obtained by some locals, probably on zero hours contracts, also as with Alton Towers, offering employment on peak days and months and none on other days. This is hardly a recipe for aiding local residents to a prosperous sustainable living. This is why we support an AONB approach to job improvement in the area."

- 5.19 Firstly, it is important to note that CVCS's comparison with Alton Towers is inaccurate. The proposed development is an all year round offer which will cater to countryside residents. The proposals will create a range of employment roles, diversifying the existing rural job market.

CVCS Comment 6: Traffic Increase will Destroy AONB Status

5.20 CVCS states:

"Our principal concern, as you may have gathered already, is the traffic down these roads. An estimated 90-100,000 visitors a year will bring 500-900 cars a week down these little roads. We already have a traffic problem on the Alton Towers side of the valley. With this large holiday village proposed by Laver Leisure at Moneystone on the other side of the park, we will be criss-crossed by holiday traffic along the most vulnerable roads where accidents, write-off, scrapes and flip-overs are part of current problems. Car clogging and tail backs getting stuck on these roads is also a potential danger to residents and visitors with Emergency vehicles unable to attend to accidents and emergencies."

- 5.21 The traffic impacts associated with the proposed development at Moneystone Park are considered acceptable by the Highway Authority. The proposals would not prejudice any future application for AONB status.

CVCS Comment 7: The Future Enlargement of this Development

5.22 CVCS states:

"We know Laver Leisure from Google and their experience up until now has been establishing acres of caravan sites. This development clearly has to be a commercial venture for them and will need essentially to expand their commercial value year on year. We have the experience of Alton Towers having had a cap placed on the number of visitors to this area, and that cap having been vastly over ridden, presumably in the interest of the financial survival and growth of the consortia who own the Towers.

We anticipate future applications to increase the number of lodges or even to bring in static caravans to be buried behind their woods. They will want to increase their business as the years go by. This can only bring more traffic and problems to the valley."

- 5.23 Whilst, CVCS presumes to understand Laver Leisure's commercial model it has no evidence to support its view that the site would need to be expanded in the future. The planning application boundary (edged red) for the proposed scheme is shown on drawing ref. PL1088.M106 Rev 2. The application as proposed must be judged on its own merits and decisions based on the information provided.

- 5.24 Laver Leisure is not proposing a larger leisure development and if an extension is proposed in the future then a new separate planning application will be required and members of the community will have the opportunity to review and comment on this application.

CVCS Comment 8: The Churnet Valley will become a De-facto Tourism Corridor

- 5.25 CVCS states:

"The concept of a Tourism Corridor was rejected by the Independent Government inspector, Mr Patrick Whitehead and removed from the Masterplan as being inappropriate for this area.

If, however, this scale of development is allowed through Planning, with Laver Leisure siting itself 'conveniently located near to other attractions', the Churnet Valley will have become a de-facto Tourism Corridor. This is surely unacceptable, especially in the light of SMDC support for AONB status application currently in progress".

- 5.26 CVCS note that the Inspector overseeing the Examination of the Staffordshire Moorlands Core Strategy modified the document to remove reference to a tourism corridor. No reference is made in the CVMP to a tourism corridor. However, the adopted Core Strategy policy SS7 Churnet Valley Area Strategy' identifies the Churnet Valley as **"an area for sustainable tourism and rural regeneration"**. Moneystone Quarry is identified as an opportunity site for the creation of a 'high quality new tourism and leisure destination' in the CVMP.

CVCS Comment 9: Sustainable Development

5.27 CVCS states:

"We are calling for sustainable development. this is what the Minister for Planning, Greg Clark MP describes as: 'Sustainable means ensuring that better lives for ourselves doesn't mean worse lives for future generations'. In this instance we do not think that this will bring better lives event for ourselves. Certainly as the Moneystone Holiday Village grows to fulfil Laver's increasing financial profitability, our future generations will be brought up in an extended theme park, which is not what sustainability is aimed towards achieving."

5.28 The definition of sustainable development quoted by CVCS i.e. *"Sustainable means ensuring better lives for ourselves doesn't mean worse lives for future generations"* is not the definition promoted by national guidance.

5.29 The NPPF is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications. The NPPF at paragraph 7 indicates that there are three dimensions to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. An assessment of the application proposals against the three dimensions of sustainable development as defined in the NPPF is provided in Chapter 8 of the SPS submitted in October 2014 and presented at paragraph 3.30 of this Statement. It concludes that the proposals will deliver significant positive economic, social and environmental benefits which should be afforded considerable planning weight in the determination of the planning application.

CVCS Comment 10: Better Consultation

5.30 CVCS states:

"We would have wished for a Scoping process or a Site Allocation meeting with residents, to have taken place before the expensive submission of Laver Leisure's plans was made, placing the Council in a compromising situation for independently assessing the consequence to the Churnet Valley of this development."

- 5.31 The Council has undertaken significant consultation on both the Core Strategy and CVMP. Numerous representations were made to both documents by CVCS which were taken into consideration. It is considered that SMDC has exceeded its duty to consult with the local community in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2010.

6 LAVER LEISURE'S RESPONSE TO WHISTON ACTION GROUP

- 6.1 SMDC has received a number of consultation responses from Whiston Action Group (WAG). A response to each of the key issues raised is provided below.

WAG Comment 1: Secret Meetings between Laver Leisure and SMDC

- 6.2 WAG states:

"The failures referred to below affects the human rights of those entitled to make representations and protect their rights under the Human Rights Act to a family life. The actions of the SMDC planning officers in entering into a prolonged and secret series of meetings with the applicants from approximately 2009 up to the present day and a refusal to disclose the details of those meetings amount to a denial of essential information that undermines the human rights of residents who would wish to make informed decisions about the present application and the linked application SMD/2014/0432."

Pre-Application Discussions

- 6.3 Early pre-application engagement with LPAs, particularly in relation to large scale schemes, is encouraged by the NPPF, Planning Practice Guidance and the Council's Statement of Community Involvement (SCI).
- 6.4 Paragraph 190 of the NPPF states:

"The more issues that can be resolved at pre-application stage, the greater the benefits. For their role in the planning system to be effective and positive, statutory planning consultees will need to take the same early, pro-active approach, and provide advice in a timely manner throughout the development process. This assists local planning authorities in issuing timely decisions, helping to ensure that applicants do not experience unnecessary delays and costs."¹²

- 6.5 It is normal practice for pre-application discussions with the Council to remain confidential as disclosure of information at an early stage would prejudice Laver Leisure's commercial interests and could inhibit the provision of advice from the

¹² National Planning Policy Framework, DCLG (March 2012) Page 45, Paragraph 190

Council during the early stages of the planning process. This approach fully accords with the exemptions set out in the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

- 6.6 All submitted planning application documents, with the exception of confidential pre-application meeting minutes, are publicly accessible on the Council's website and on deposit at Moorlands House, Leek to enable residents to make an informed decision on the development proposals. The Council has carried out its Statutory consultation exercise on the application documents which lasted for a longer period than the statutory requirement of 21 days. A further round of consultation will also take place in relation to this suite of supplementary information.

Planning Performance Agreement

- 6.7 The use of Planning Performance Agreements (PPAs) is promoted by the Government through national guidance as a way of achieving a faster and more effective application process.¹³ The PPG provides the following guidance on the use of PPA's:

"A planning performance agreement is a project management tool which sets timescales for actions between the local planning authority and an applicant. It should cover the pre-application and application stages but may also extend through to the post-application stage. A planning performance agreement provides greater certainty and transparency in the process for determining a large and/or complex planning application, and can help to ensure that a clear and efficient process is in place for dealing with an application. They encourage joint working between the applicant and local planning authority and can also help to bring together other parties such as statutory consultees. A planning performance agreement is agreed voluntarily between the applicant and the local planning authority prior to the application being submitted, and can be a useful focus of pre-application discussions about the issues that will need to be addressed."¹⁴

Planning performance agreements need to be agreed in the spirit of a 'memorandum of understanding'. They are not intended to be legally binding contracts, unless there is a specific statement to the contrary in the planning

¹³ National Planning Policy Framework, CLG (2012) page 46, paragraph 195

¹⁴ Planning Practice Guidance Paragraph: 016 Reference ID: 20-016-20140306

performance agreement itself. A planning performance agreement should be publicly available, so that the agreed process and timescale are transparent.”¹⁵

- 6.8 The PPA agreed between Laver Leisure and SMDC was drafted in accordance with national guidance and is a publicly available document.

WAG Comment 2: The application is in breach of the provisions of the SMDC Core Strategy and the Churnet Valley Master Plan.

- 6.9 Paragraph 7.6.5 and figure 7.4 ‘Moneystone Quarry Concept Plan’ of the CVM identify a number of uses considered appropriate at Moneystone Park. These include:

“Holiday accommodation – low impact holiday lodges in Zones 1 and 2. Limited development in Zones 4 and 5. Maximum of 250 holiday lodges in total”¹⁶

- 6.10 A maximum of 250 low impact lodges are proposed across the site. Low impact lodges are proposed in zones 1 and 2 and limited development is proposed in zones 4 and 5. Lodges within zones 4 and 5 have been sensitively located to minimise their impact. The location of the lodges has been informed by the technical assessments contained in the ES and ES Addendum, specifically the LVIA and ecology assessments.
- 6.11 Overall, the proposed development has been sensitively designed to ensure that it is compatible with the surrounding area and is appropriate in quality, scale and character. The level of development proposed fully accords with the adopted guidance confirmed in the CVMP.

WAG Comment 3: The Application is governed, inter alia, by the provisions of the Aarhus Convention Treaty and its direct applicability in English Law under European Law, specifically in relation to any issues of the environment and/or health and is not so compliant.

- 6.12 The Aarhus Convention establishes a number of rights of the public (individuals and their associations) with regard to the environment. The Parties to the Convention are

¹⁵ Planning Practice Guidance Paragraph: 023 Reference ID: 20-023-20140306

¹⁶ Staffordshire Moorlands (March, 2014) Churnet Valley Masterplan Supplementary Planning Document, page 95

required to make the necessary provisions so that public authorities (at national, regional or local level) will contribute to these rights to become effective. The Convention provides for:

- the right of everyone to receive environmental information that is held by public authorities ("access to environmental information"). This can include information on the state of the environment, but also on policies or measures taken, or on the state of human health and safety where this can be affected by the state of the environment.
- the right to participate in environmental decision-making. Arrangements are to be made by public authorities to enable the public affected and environmental non-governmental organisations to comment on, for example, proposals for projects affecting the environment, or plans and programmes relating to the environment, these comments to be taken into due account in decision-making, and information to be provided on the final decisions and the reasons for it ("public participation in environmental decision-making");
- the right to review procedures to challenge public decisions that have been made without respecting the two aforementioned rights or environmental law in general ("access to justice").

6.13 The Freedom of Information Act 2000 enables the right to receive environmental information. Applicants are entitled to obtain this information within one month of the request and without having to say why they require it **unless** the information sought is exempt (i.e. it contains commercially sensitive information). All information submitted in support of the application is available to the public and therefore the application accords with the Aarhus Convention.

WAG Comment 4: The site is also a 'Special Landscape Area' and when restored in accordance with the extant restoration plan will be a green field site.

6.14 A comprehensive Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment was undertaken, based on an agreed scope, as part of the ES (Chapter 8 'Landscape and Visual'). The assessment evaluates the significance of potential landscape impacts and where

necessary proposes suitable mitigation. Overall, it concludes that the operational development will have a negligible to minor/moderate beneficial effect. The findings of this assessment have been accepted by SCC Officers.

- 6.15 For the purposes of undertaking the ES, the site has been classified as a Greenfield site. Whilst it is greenfield it has previously been worked and the scheme proposals will provide ecological benefits above and beyond that proposed by the restoration plan approved in March 2014.

WAG Comment 5: To grant the present application would be, or would inevitably result in, a breach of the Development and Management Principles set out in the provisions of paragraphs 8.1, 8.2, 8.3 and 8.4 of the CVMP

- 6.16 The CVMP sets out key principles and guidance to ensure that future development proposals reflect the aims of the Masterplan. The proposed developments conformity with these principles is set out below.
- 6.17 Paragraph 8.1 'Natural Environment' of the CVMP states that, *"the protection and enhancement of the natural beauty of the Churnet Valley is the overriding requirement for any development....Proposals and associated infrastructure measures should not be detrimental to the sensitive ecology and geology of the area. Opportunities should be sought to ensure the management of land for nature conservation and the enjoyment of areas of wildlife and geological interest and to create links between the sites of nature conservation."*
- 6.18 A comprehensive Ecological assessment has been submitted as part of the ES. The results of the assessments confirm no adverse impacts on ecology within or adjacent to the site, following the implementation of best practice mitigation measures. During both the construction phase the majority of habitats, and bats, birds, amphibians and reptiles will be subject to beneficial impacts of the proposed development. Whilst in the long term the majority of impacts to flora and fauna will be beneficial. The impacts of the proposals are strictly in accordance with the guidance principle set out within Paragraph 8.1 of the CVMP and no objections have been raised by Natural England, SMDC or SCC.

- 6.19 Paragraph 8.2 'Heritage' of the CVMP states that, *"the area's designated heritage assets (listed buildings, scheduled ancient monuments and conservation areas) and its non-designated heritage assets shall be protected and maintained in a state of good repair and enhanced wherever possible..... All development proposals affecting any heritage assets will be the subject of an impact statement and measures taken to minimise any adverse impact on their special significance."*
- 6.20 An archaeological and heritage assessment has been undertaken as part of the ES. The results of the assessment found no impacts on designated or non-designated archaeological or heritage assets.
- 6.21 Paragraph 8.3 'Sustainable Tourism' of the CVMP states that, *"The provision of high quality all year round tourism opportunities is a key requirement of any proposal for new or extended tourist facilities and services. Businesses and communities are encouraged to work together to benefit their local area by improving the tourism offer. The aim is to help develop healthy, sustainable communities, who will benefit from the positive knock on effects of increased tourism to their area throughout the year."*
- 6.22 The proposals and operation of the development have been designed in strict accordance with the CVMP and to meet a clearly identifiable demand for overnight lodge accommodation within Staffordshire. During the construction and operation of the development, strong relationships will be built with local communities and businesses to provide employment and service opportunities to develop healthy, sustainable communities.
- 6.23 Paragraph 8.4 'Sustainable Transport' of the CVMP states that, *"All proposals should aim to support more sustainable means of transport within and into the Churnet Valley and seek to change visitor perceptions of how they can travel around the Churnet Valley by increasing transport choices for those wishing to visit attractions and facilities and, where appropriate, providing facilities to enable visitors to park up and travel from key points by more sustainable travel means, and through measures to manage access and movement and encourage off-site exploration by non-motorised means."*

6.24 A comprehensive Travel Plan has been produced by Royal Haskoning (August, 2014) to consider the existing accessibility of the site and provides an overview of the measures that will be put in place to encourage and support use of sustainable travel modes. The Travel Plan provides a Framework to meet a series of sustainable travel objectives:

- Measures to promote more sustainable transport choices;
- Measures to promote accessibility by non-car modes of transport;
- Measures to reduce the need to travel, especially by car; and
- Minimise traffic generated by development to achieve the Modal Split Targets.

Summary

6.25 In summary, a comprehensive application has been submitted, including an ES, which covers all technical matters of relevance. It has been demonstrated through this submission that the proposed development accords with the development and management principles set out in the CVMP, notably at paragraphs 8.1 'Natural Environment', 8.2 'Heritage', 8.3 'Sustainable Tourism' and 8.4 'Sustainable Transport'.

7 LAVER LEISURE'S RESPONSE TO THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

- 7.1 This section responds specifically to representations made by the local community. It includes responses to issues raised by Mr Paul Housiaux who has submitted 10 no. separate representations to SMDC covering a range of issues.

Local Resident Comment 1: Environmental Impact Assessment

- 7.2 This representation relates to the EIA Scoping Report submitted in July, 2014 before the final application was submitted in October 2014. The red edge boundary of the site has been revised as part of the Scoping process. As such, the water bodies have now been included as part of the technical assessments in support of this planning application. Please refer to the ES and ES Addendum accompanying this report for a detailed review of the scope and methodologies for each technical assessment.

Local Resident Comment 2: Moneystone Quarry lies within land designated as Special Landscape Area (8 December)

- 7.3 The fact that Moneystone Quarry lies within a Special Landscape Area is not a reason for refusal. Chapter 8 'Landscape and Visual' of the ES submitted in October 2014 provides an assessment of the scheme in landscape terms and concludes that the operational development will have a negligible to minor/moderate beneficial effect. No objections from any statutory consultee organisations or informal SMDC or SCC consultation have been received in respect of this matter.

Local Resident Comment 3: The development site lies outside the settlement boundary of (Moneystone and) Whiston in open countryside and within a Special Landscape Area. There is no policy support for new dwellings in locations such as this.

- 7.4 There are no residential dwellings proposed as part of this scheme. Furthermore, the site has been allocated as a key opportunity site for leisure based tourism development in the CVMP.

Local Resident Comment 4: Policy also expects new tourist accommodation to be located within settlement boundaries. Outside of such locations policy

states that development should be closely related to existing tourist development

- 7.5 The CVMP identifies Moneystone Quarry as an opportunity site for a leisure development which could comprise up to 250 new lodges, a central hub and a range of indoor and outdoor facilities. The proposals have been prepared to fully align with the CVMP and as such the location of the development is considered entirely appropriate in planning policy terms.

Local Resident Comment 5: The development is effectively for a new settlement

- 7.6 No permanent dwellings are proposed at Moneystone Park. Furthermore, there will be restrictions placed on the number of days the lodges can be occupied for annually which would be secured by planning condition. The proposals are for a high quality leisure development in line with the provisions of the CVMP which would not constitute a new settlement.

Local Resident Comment 6: Location of the development is inappropriate

- 7.7 The proposals have been developed in strict accordance with the CVMP site allocation, and Development and Management Principles. In addition to the development being in strict accordance with policy, the supporting technical and environmental assessments have confirmed that no significant adverse impacts will arise in the long term. As such the location of the proposed development is considered suitable, sustainable and viable.

Local Resident Comment 7: SMDC Planning Officer Conflict of interest

- 7.8 A local resident requested that SMDC planning officer should have no further involvement in the determination of the planning application due to a perceived conflict of interest. Whilst no conflict exists the Council has confirmed that Mark Lynch (High Peak Borough Council) will determine the application on a consultant planner basis.

Local Resident Comment 8: Validity of the CVMP

- 7.9 SMDC formally adopted the CVMP as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) on the 26th March 2014 following an extensive community consultation exercise. The SPD was not subject to challenge during the 6 week judicial review period and is therefore a material consideration in the determination of the planning application.

Local Resident Comment 9: Impact on the former Whiston Eaves Hall including stable block and outbuildings

- 7.10 The following comments have been drafted by Dr. Mark Adams (Archaeological Services Manager, NML) in response to an email to SCC and various other parties written by Mr. D. Walters (dated 11 Jan 2015) in respect to Laver Leisure's proposals. Mr. Walters' email is primarily concerned with the now demolished Whiston Eaves Farm stables, the site of which now lies within the quarry boundaries and raises a number of issues with regard to the archaeological assessment conducted for the application and the treatment of the stables since their dismantling. Unless specified otherwise paragraph numbers below refer to Mr Walter's email. All references to stables below are to Whiston Eaves Farm stables, dismantled 1998-2006 and formerly situated to the south of Eaves Lane.
- 7.11 Whilst the author was aware of the fate of the materials from the stables at the time of preparing the report it was not the function or the intent of NML's report, which is included within the ES, to comment upon the stored building materials or the reconstruction of the stables.
- 7.12 Paragraph 2 states that "...part of the actual original grade 2 listed stable block was [discovered] in situ in December last year...". However, it is perhaps not too surprising that a short section of masonry in an overgrown wall was missed on a short site visit when it was only recently seen by someone perhaps familiar with the site and the area's history over a long period of time. Furthermore, it was chosen not to include the former stables site in NML's walkover for reasons detailed below. Whilst it is conceivable that the masonry described by Mr. Walters formed part of the stables there are also good grounds to suspect that this represents the only small surviving portion of the site; these too are detailed below.

- 7.13 Paragraph 7 seems to imply that dismantling of the stables was not monitored archaeologically or that this was not conducted to an appropriate standard. In fact the dismantling was monitored by Colin Hayfield (an independent archaeologist with no connection to NML who had no involvement with the project) and a report, 'Whiston Eaves Stable-Block, Nr. Staffordshire; Structural Recording 1998-2006' submitted to the Staffordshire HER.
- 7.14 The report states (p.9) that "*Numerous visits to the site were made to monitor the process of dismantling of the buildings. This produced few new revelations about the buildings....*" and includes photographic evidence to support this statement (For example, Plate 3a which seems to show dismantling by hand in progress). The project appears to have been conducted to a professional standard and to have adequately met the requirements of the brief. Therefore at the time of writing the ES we had no reason to doubt that the site had been cleared and it was consequently a very low priority on any subsequent walkover.
- 7.15 Furthermore, Colin Hayfield made no recommendations in his report for further work on the stables site and there appears to have been no planning condition to conduct such work imposed. Therefore it would be reasonable to assume that there was no requirement for further archaeological intervention, for example a watching brief, prior to the commencement of quarrying operations and that this presumption should extend to Laver Leisure's proposals. It should also be noted that the report presents a convincing case that the stables had been constructed on a new site in c. 1808 and that there was therefore little potential for earlier deposits within the site bounds which would be the normal trigger for additional fieldwork on a project of that type.
- 7.16 The building is also recorded on the Staffordshire Historic Environment Record as having been '...dismantled between 1998 and 2006.'
- 7.17 In summary, there was abundant documentary evidence obtained in the early stages of producing the ES for Laver Leisure that the stables had been dismantled and the site destroyed by quarrying or related activities. It is conceivable that Mr. Walters has indeed located a short section of walling belonging to the stables along their former frontage to Eaves Lane. In my opinion it is likely that this was probably left by the contractors to protect the frontage to the road and does not provide significant

evidence of the extensive survival of below ground remains within the former quarry workings (see below).

- 7.18 Paragraph 13 seems to imply that the walkover survey did not take place or was not to an appropriate standard. This would seem based largely upon the following piece of text within Chapter 10 of the ES:

"Particular attention was paid to ploughed areas to which access could be gained with the aim of gathering any artefactual evidence."

- 7.19 The implication in Mr. Walter's email could be rebutted by a more careful reading of the full technical report which does not mention any ploughed areas. At worst this is a minor editorial issue in the ES, the text of which might have been better phrased as:

"The aim was to give particular attention to ploughed areas to which access could be gained with the aim of gathering any artefactual evidence No such areas were present and the landscape around the quarry is dominated by pasture and woodland."

- 7.20 The Technical Appendix details the areas of pasture and woodland in the hinterland of the quarry.

- 7.21 The stables site was not included within the walkover because:-

1. It lay within the limits of the quarry.
2. It was entirely reasonable from the documentary evidence discussed above to assume that the site had been destroyed.
3. The documentary evidence provided no evidence for any activity on the stables site prior to 1808.
4. At the time of the walkover survey some of the areas of pasture surrounding the site lay within Laver Leisure's proposed site boundary and it was decided to focus upon these as the areas of greatest archaeological potential/threat.

- 7.22 The final lines of Paragraph 13 imply that the HLC data supplied by the Staffordshire HER does not reflect quarrying operations since 2006. This is not the case and Archaeology Services supply a copy of Figure 2 from the technical appendix to support this. The figure clearly shows a greyed out area over the quarry extension.
- 7.23 Paragraph 14 features a detailed description of the section of walling alleged to be part of the stables and presents a case for this being part of the structure of the stables remaining in situ. Archaeology Services accept the walling seen may be part of the stables, indeed Colin Hayfield's report suggests that this is likely, but do not believe that its presence proves the existence of extensive remains from the stables within the quarry boundary.
- 7.24 Dr Adams has had no access to the aerial photographs mentioned in Mr Walters' email but current aerial photographs show the areas covered by what appear to be mature trees and from memory the area is heavily overgrown. Mr Walters is correct that there seems to be room between the road and the limit of the quarry workings, in the space now occupied by the bund, for the foundations to the stables to survive. However, the foundations of the stables are likely to have been shallow and the construction of the bund will have involved the use of a bulldozer or similar plant following dismantling of the stables. This may well have involved a top soil strip and these earth moving operations are likely to have resulted in extensive disruption/damage to the foundations of the stables which survived dismantling (precisely why archaeological excavation is commonly recommended in advance of such operations) and that little now survives other than in a narrow section parallel to the current boundary wall. These are not considered to significantly encroach onto the site, and not be of any great archaeological significance.
- 7.25 Paragraph 16 states that the report (presumably the ES or the Technical Appendix) "... *claims to have carried out extensive field work*". At no point is such a claim made, the technical report is quite explicit that fieldwork was confined to a walkover of the area around the site and that the quarry itself was not visited because there was ample documentary evidence that any sites within its bounds had been destroyed.

Local Resident Comment 10: Compliance with the Core Strategy and CVMP

- 7.26 Please refer to Laver Leisure's response at paragraphs 6.9-6.11 and 6.16-6.24 of this Statement.

Local Resident Comment 11: Impact on the Local Highway Network

- 7.27 Please refer to Laver Leisure's response at paragraph 3.2-3.14 of this Statement.

Local Resident Comment 12: As recently as 8/12/14 the application demonstrated failings giving rise to environmental concerns. A check as of the date of these representations (28/1/15) fails to demonstrate that concerns raised by environmental officers on the issues set out below have been remedied or addressed

- 7.28 The Council received a consultation response from the SMDC Environmental Protection Officer (EHO) on 8th December 2014 which raised no objection to the scheme subject to the imposition of appropriate planning conditions.

Local Resident Comment 13: The noise and vibration assessment submitted on behalf of the applicants is deficient

- 7.29 The Noise and Vibration Assessment submitted by Laver Leisure as part of the ES (Chapter 15 'Noise') has been reviewed by the Council's EHO who raises no objection subject to appropriate Conditions being attached to the application.

Local Resident Comment 14: There is clear potential for disruption and annoyance to occupants of nearby residential properties from the effects of vibration. The application fails to provide any or any adequate advice on the mitigation of the effects of vibration

- 7.30 SMDC's EHO has suggested to the following condition in terms of vibration which will make the application acceptable in planning terms:

"Before building works commence on the site, where the level of vibration exceed 1 min/sec RMS, a scheme to minimise the effects of that vibration shall be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority."

Local Resident Comment 15: The effects of this development on the extant light levels and the effects of artificial and additional lighting on wildlife species such as the resident bats, badgers and little and barn owls have not been considered either at all or adequately

- 7.31 Lighting has been considered as part of the Ecology assessment, and subject to the implementation of best practice at the detailed design stage, no significant adverse impacts are anticipated on sensitive ecological receptors. SMDC's EHO has suggested to the following condition in terms of lighting which will make the application acceptable in planning terms:

"The proposed developments should not be brought into use until full details of proposed external illumination, including position, design, hours of use and details to demonstrate that it will not increase the pre-existing illuminance at adjoining light sensitive locations when in operation, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Development shall thereafter be undertaken in accordance with the approved details."

Local Resident Comment 16: The application leaves entirely out of account the highly toxic and carcinogenic nature of the 'soil' at the development site

7.32 This comment is entirely misleading. In relation to soil contamination the Council's EHO in their response of 8 December 2014 stated:

"The site is a former sand quarry / processing plant operated by WBB minerals and may contain several sources of contamination relating to this use (acidic tailings etc). An Environmental assessment desk study (Abbeydale BEC Report 418040EA) encompassing a provisional contamination risk assessment, was submitted as Part of the Environmental Statement, prepared by the applicant (Chapter 11 ground condition section).

The report is considered to be a thorough assessment of all the possible risks associated with the site and tentative remediation proposals are proposed. It is agreed that it is unlikely that any identified contamination would ultimately be prohibitive to development, but that full and detailed intrusive ground investigation will be required to investigate (and remediate) the identified possible pollution linkages. Contamination Conditions are therefore recommended."

7.33 Suitable conditions have been proposed by SMDC which state:

"2. Contamination

Development should not commence until a further risk assessment has been completed in accordance with a scheme to be agreed by the Local Planning Authority to assess the nature and extent of any contamination on the site. The investigation and risk assessment shall be undertaken by competent persons and a written report of the findings shall be submitted and agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority prior to the commencement of the development. The report of the findings shall include;

- a) A further survey of the extent, scale and nature of any potential contamination;*
- b) A detailed risk assessment of all known site contaminants based on the potential risks to:*
 - Human health;*

- *Property (existing or proposed) including buildings, crops, livestock, pets, woodland, service lines and pipes;*
- *Adjoining land;*
- *Ground and surface waters;*

This must be conducted in accordance with DEFRA and the Environment Agency's 'Model Procedures for the Management of Land Contamination, CLR 11.

3. Submission of Remediation Scheme

If the risk assessment indicates that remediation is required, no development shall take place until a detailed remediation scheme to bring the site to a condition suitable for the intended use by removing unacceptable risks to human health, property (existing or proposed including buildings, crops, livestock, pets, woodland, service lines and pipes; buildings), adjoining land and ground and surface waters has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme must include:

- a) A remediation strategy giving full details of remediation objectives and remediation criteria;*
- b) A validation plan providing details of the data that will be collected in order to demonstrate that the all works set out in (a) are complete and identifying any requirements for longer-term monitoring of pollutant linkages, maintenance and arrangements for contingency action.*

The scheme must ensure that the site will not qualify as contaminated land under Part 2A of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 in relation to the intended use of the land after remediation.

4. Implementation of Approved Remediation Scheme

Prior to bringing the development into first use, a validation report demonstrating completion of the works set out in the approved remediation strategy and the effectiveness of the remediation shall be submitted to and approved, in writing, by the local planning authority. The report shall include results of sampling and

monitoring carried out in accordance with the approved validation plan to demonstrate that the site remediation criteria have been met. It shall also include any plan (a long-term monitoring and maintenance plan) for longer-term monitoring of pollutant linkages, maintenance and arrangements for contingency action, as identified in the validation plan, and for the reporting of this to the local planning authority.

5. Unexpected Contamination

In the event that contamination is found at any time when carrying out the approved development that was not previously identified it must be reported in writing immediately to the Local Planning Authority. An investigation and risk assessment must be undertaken in accordance with the requirements of condition 2, and where remediation is necessary a remediation scheme must be prepared in accordance with the requirement of condition 3 which is subject to the approval in writing of the Local Planning Authority.

Following completion of measures identified in the approved remediation scheme a verification report must be prepared, which is subject to the approval in writing of the Local Planning Authority in accordance with condition 4."

- 7.34 It is clear therefore that subject to the above conditions the planning application is acceptable in environmental terms.

Local Resident Comment 17: SMDC Environmental Officers have acknowledged that air quality at the development site is an issue that has to be resolved due to the sandy nature of the site and the effects of increased vehicular movement both in any development stage and any operation stage

- 7.35 An Air Quality and Dust assessment has been undertaken at the site to establish the baseline conditions and the potential impacts during the construction and operational phases of the proposed development. All construction impacts will be managed via the Construction Environmental Management Plan and through commonplace best practice mitigation measures. The ES concluded that the operational phase of the development will have a negligible impact on local air quality. On the 8th December 2014, the Council's EHO stated (HOW emphasis in bold):

"The primary air quality for the site is considered to be emissions of NOx and PM10 from increased vehicle movements and dust, notably during construction, due to sandy nature of the site.

As Part of the Environmental Statement, a dust and Air Quality section was submitted essentially encompassing an Air Quality Assessment and dust management plan/assessment? The report was produced by WSP and had involved consultation/liaison with this department with regard to AQ assessment.

*The Air quality assessment used ADMS-road dispersion model and determined negligible impacts due to increases in cars and HGVs at sensitive receptors. **This conclusion is accepted.***

The report also undertook a dust assessment and indicated that there is potential for some impact from dust emissions, though at this stage it notes that not all construction activities are known. Some mitigation measures are discussed and proposed, which as noted by the author could form the basis for a dust management plan (DMP) or construction management plan.

*In general these recommendations for the DMP are agreed but it can be the case that good "consultant" recommendations do not always translate to site management practices therefore the **requirement to produce a DMP is also conditioned.**"*

7.36 A suitable condition has been proposed by SMDC which states:

"7. Construction: Dust

Development should not commence until a full dust management plan and method to monitor the effectiveness for any proposed dust mitigation measures have been submitted and agreed in writing the Local Planning Authority. The dust management plan should be based on the submitted dust assessment/ mitigation methodologies submitted in Chapter 12 of the Environmental Statement and include specific measures for controlling dust on areas presumed to be contaminated.

Once agreed the approved plan should be adopted and adhered too through the development."

Local Resident Comment 18: 'A (further) risk assessment is required and should be completed in accordance with an agreed scheme to assess the nature and extent of contamination on the site'

- 7.37 The concerns have been addressed as part of the Ground Conditions assessment and any unforeseen contaminated land will be dealt with in accordance with the conditions set out in paragraph 7.33 of this Statement.

Local Resident Comment 19: As it is clear that top soil is necessary to reduce, diminish or remove the risk to the categories set out in paragraph 6 above, from the dust effects of carcinogenic silica sand, top soil will need to be imported to the site both to comply with the extant conditions for restoration of the site (the base line condition) and in respect of the proposed development

- 7.38 A reasonable planning condition has been suggested by the EHO and will be implemented on site, the condition is as follows:

"6. Importation of Soil/Material

No top soil is to be imported to the site until it has been tested for contamination and assessed for its suitability for the proposed development, a suitable methodology for testing this material should be submitted to and agreed by the Local Planning Authority prior to the soils being imported onto site. The methodology should include the sampling frequency, testing schedules, criteria against which the analytical results will be assessed (as determined by the risk assessment) and source material information. The analysis shall then be carried out and validatory evidence submitted to and approved in writing to by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason (common to 3-6): To ensure that risks from land contamination to the future users of the land and neighbouring land are minimised, together with those to controlled waters, property and ecological systems, and to ensure that the development can be carried out safely without unacceptable risks to workers, neighbours and other offsite receptors."

Local Resident Comment 20: The application does not demonstrate how it would ensure that residents/the public would be protected against noise, dust, odour and fumes

- 7.39 This is incorrect. A full ES has been prepared which includes Air Quality and Noise Assessments; these can be found at Chapters 14 and 15 respectively. The findings of the ES have been accepted by the Council's EHO subject to the imposition of suitable planning conditions.

Local Resident Comment 21: Incorrect red line boundary

- 7.40 Mr Housiaux refers to Rob Weavers letter dated 9 October 2014 which is in actuality the Council's formal EIA Scoping Opinion responding to Laver Leisure's EIA Scoping Request. In his review of the documentation he fails to read the Scoping Request and then compares the red line boundary contained in that document (Appendix 1 to the Scoping report) with the edged red planning application boundary plan (ref. PL1088.M106 Rev 2) submitted as part of the application.
- 7.41 Laver Leisure's application was submitted on 20 October 2014. Between the 9 October 2014 and 20 October alterations were made to the red line boundary following discussions with SMDC Officers at a progress meeting on 9 October 2014. The red line boundary was increased to include the waterbodies and also to make a connection from the highway to Black Plantation as requested by SMDC.

Local Resident Comment 22: In a letter of the 4/12/14 Natural England (NE) a statutory consultee has expressed some serious and environmentally relevant concerns about the application

- 7.42 In its letter of 4 December 2014 Natural England confirmed that it has no objection to the proposed development at Moneystone Park. All matters raised have been addressed through discussions with SCC Officers and are set out in the supplementary ecological information submitted as part of the ES Addendum.
- 7.43 The local resident wrongly refers not to Natural England's letter of 4th December 2014 but to its EIA Scoping Response letter issued on 2nd October 2014. The objective of this letter is for Natural England to set out the agreed 'scope' of the environmental assessment. Natural England stated the need for a full set of environmental information to be available for consideration prior to a decision being taken on

whether or not to grant planning permission. As such, active consultation between the client's ecologist, the Council and Natural England has been ongoing to identify site specific constraints and develop the scope of assessments and site design in accordance with the guidance from statutory consultees. All concerns and assessment methodologies are clearly set out in accordance with best practice guidance in 'Chapter 9: Ecology' of the ES.

Local Resident Comment 23: NE observes also that ' the main impact during the operation (of the proposed development) is likely to result from increased visitor pressure to the area'

- 7.44 Again, this comment refers to Natural England's Scoping response. Natural England has raised no objection to the planning application.

Local Resident Comment 24: NE have observed that 'two new cycle ways that run along the boundary of Whiston Eaves SSSI are proposed as part of this application. We have not been consulted as regards these new access routes. We understand these will be located outside of the SSSI itself but immediately adjacent to it. We would urge SMDC to ensure scale and materials of fencing the cycle ways themselves are appropriate....to avoid potential environmental impact on the pH of the soil within the SSSI...(and) would welcome an Ecological Management Plan to manage site visitor movement around the site'

- 7.45 The details of the proposed cycleways will be determined at the reserved matters stage. A Habitat Management Plan is submitted as part of this supplementary submission.

Local Resident Comment 25: NE have said that it would 'expect the application proposals to avoid loss of priority habitat when compared against the Approved Restoration Plan'

- 7.46 A comprehensive Ecological assessment has been submitted as part of the ES. The results of the assessments confirm no adverse impacts on ecology within or adjacent to the site, following the implementation of best practice mitigation measures. During both the construction phase the majority of habitats, and bats, birds, amphibians and reptiles will be subject to beneficial impacts of the proposed development. Whilst in

the long term the majority of impacts to flora and fauna will be beneficial. The detailed ecological assessment can be found at Chapter 9 of the ES.

Local Resident Comment 26: Cumulative Effects of the Application

- 7.47 As agreed with the Council, the scope of the Cumulative Impact Assessment is considered to be sufficient and need not include any other developments including the recently submitted planning application at the Copperworks.

Local Resident Comment 27: NE States that ' a full consideration of the implications of the whole scheme should be included in the ES. All supporting infrastructure should be included within the assessment'

- 7.48 The residual impacts, that is those impacts following the implementation of mitigation measures, can be found at Chapter 18 of the ES. All impacts during the operational phase of development range from negligible to minor beneficial. There are no significant adverse impacts associated with the proposed development, with the exception of Landscape and Visual impacts during the construction phase. However, these are inevitable due to site hoarding and construction screening.

Local Resident Comment 28: NE also advises 'that the potential impact of the proposals upon features of nature conservation interests and opportunities for habitat creation/ enhancement should be included within this assessment in accordance with appropriate guidance on such matters'

- 7.49 Please refer to 'Chapter 9: Ecology' of the ES which addresses this matter.

Local Resident Comment 29: NE notes that 'The application does not comply with S118 of NPPF concerning the account to be taken of biodiversity interests in planning applications and decisions'

- 7.50 This is incorrect. Page 4 of Natural England's response of 4 December states:

"The authority should consider securing measures to enhance the biodiversity of the site from the applicant, if it is minded to grant permission for this application. This is in accordance with paragraph 118 of the NPPF."

- 7.51 The proposed development fully accords with paragraph 118 of the NPPF and enhancements to the biodiversity of the site have been agreed with SCC and SMDC which will be secured by condition.

Local Resident Comment 30: NE also comments that 'Paragraph 118 of NPPF requires that potential Special Protection Areas, possible Special Areas of Conservation and any site as being necessary to compensate adverse impacts on classified or potential or possible areas of SPA and/or SCA'

- 7.52 Please refer to Chapter 9 'Ecology' of the ES which demonstrates that the proposals would not adversely impact any classified, potential or possible areas of SPA/ SCA. There have been no objections raised by SMDC and SCC on ecological grounds.

Local Resident Comment 31: NE comments that 'the environmental statement should include a full assessment of the direct and indirect effects of the development on the features of special interest within the Whiston Eaves SSSI and should identify such mitigation measures as maybe required in order to avoid, minimise or reduce any adverse significant effects'.

- 7.53 Please refer to the ES submitted in October 2014, in particular Chapter 9 'Ecology' which provides the information set out above. No objections have been raised by SMDC or SCC on the grounds of potential impacts on the SSSI.

Local Resident Comment 32: NE notes that ' large areas of Ancient Woodlands are located in close proximity to the development site.' Paragraph 118 of NPPF States ' Planning Permission should be refused for developments resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats, including ancient woodlands and the loss of aged or veteran trees found outside ancient woodlands unless the need for and benefit of the development in that location clearly outweighs the loss'

- 7.54 Laver Leisure are not proposing the loss of any Ancient Woodland as part of the proposed development nor will the scheme have any direct or indirect impact on any Ancient Woodland in the surrounding area. Please refer to Chapter 9 'Ecology' of the ES.

Local Resident Comment 33: Various statutory provisions and guidance apply to the application

- 7.55 Laver Leisure has addressed all relevant statutory provisions and guidance through the submission of a comprehensive planning application including an ES including the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2011.

Local Resident Comment 34: Section 41 of the Natural Environmental rural Communities Act 2006 and other provisions therein places a general duty on all public authorities, including SMDC as a LPA 'to conserve and enhance biodiversity'

- 7.56 Noted. Both SCC and SMDC have reviewed the planning application and no objections are raised. The scheme will not only conserve but enhance biodiversity at the site when compared to the approved restoration scheme.

Local Resident Comment 35: NE state that ' the ES should include details of: (a) any historical data of the site (b) 'the habitat and species present'. (c) 'the status of the habits and species, whether priority species or habitat. (d) again for reasons set out above the ES cannot and does not set out the 'direct and indirect effects of the development upon the habitat species'.(e) the ES cannot and does not give ' full details of any mitigation or compensation that might be required'

- 7.57 This relates to the EIA screening opinion provided by Natural England. Please refer Chapter 9 'Ecology' of the ES which sets out the direct and indirect potential effects of the proposals together with compensation and mitigation measures where appropriate.

Local Resident Comment 36: NE observe that 'air pollution remains a significant issue'

- 7.58 This is incorrect. Natural England has no objection to the proposed development in terms of air pollution. This is supported by SMDC's EHO who raises no objection on these grounds subject to the imposition of an appropriate condition.

Local Resident Comment 37: NPPF requires that 'the planning system should contribute to the enhancement of the natural environment by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures'

7.59 A full ES was submitted in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2011 based on a scope agreed with the Council and statutory consultees. The planning application fully accords with the provisions of the NPPF and ecological enhancement measures have been agreed with SMDC.

Local Resident Comment 38: Case law and Guidance has stressed the need for a full set of environmental information to be made available for consideration prior to a decision being taken on whether or not to grant planning permission

7.60 Please refer to Laver Leisure's response above.

Local Resident Comment 39: SCC footpaths department officials have commented over a period of years that the question of closure and /or re-routing and/or creating new footpaths across the development site must be resolved. It has not been resolved

7.61 Moneystone Park is intended to be a leading high quality outdoor pursuits centre within the Staffordshire Moorlands, open to local residents as well as visitors. As part of this offer, Laver Leisure is seeking to provide a facility which caters for walkers, cyclists and horse riders. Therefore, the proposals provide an excellent opportunity to create new footpaths, cycleways and bridleways across the site.

7.62 Within the detail of the planning application, the provision of footpaths, cycleways and bridleways is included in a number of reports, namely in the SPS at paragraphs 7.8, 7.42, 8.5 and 12.15 and also in Chapter 8 of the Design and Access Statement. Furthermore, the Parameters Plan (ref. PL1088.M110 Rev 2) identifies an area of retained landscape where footpaths, cycleways, bridleways and outdoor activities including associated structures, hard surfacing, access etc. are permitted.

- 7.63 Should outline planning permission be granted by Staffordshire Moorlands District Council, then details of the proposed footpaths, cycleways and bridleways would be submitted as part of future reserved matters applications. To this end, the SCC Countryside and Rights of Way Panel approved the making of an order to create a bridleway at Moneystone Quarry at its meeting on Friday 11 April 2014

Local Resident Comment 40: Compliance with Core Strategy Policy E3

- 7.64 Core Strategy Policy E3 'Tourism and Cultural Development' identifies that new tourism and cultural development will be assessed according to the extent to which it supports the local economy and promotes the distinctive character and quality of the District and enhances the role of Staffordshire Moorlands as a tourism and leisure destination having regard to the Area Strategies, including policy SS7 'Churnet Valley Area Strategy'. The proposals fully accord with the first part of policy because it would:

- Strongly support the local economy;
- Positively promote the distinctive character and quality of the District; and
- Enhance the role of Staffordshire Moorlands as a tourism destination having regard to the Churnet Valley Area Strategy.

- 7.65 In addition, the proposed development fully accords with the other requirements of the policy as demonstrated below.

New tourist and visitor accommodation, attractions and facilities should be developed in locations that offer, or are capable of offering, good connectivity with other tourist destinations and amenities, particularly by public transport, walking and cycling. They should normally be located in or close to settlements where local services, facilities and public transport are available or in areas specifically allocated for tourism development.

- 7.66 Moneystone Quarry is identified as an opportunity site for sustainable tourism in the adopted CVM. The SPD advises that the sites proximity to Alton Towers and other tourist attractions and its network of existing off-road paths are key opportunities associated with creating a high quality leisure development at Moneystone Park. Further details of the sites connectivity are set out in Chapter 15 'Transport and

Access'. A full assessment of the scheme proposals against the development principles identified in the CVM is provided in Chapter 7 of this Statement.

All development shall be of an appropriate quality, scale and character compatible with the local area, protect the residential amenity of the area, enhance the heritage, landscape and biodiversity of the area and shall not harm interests of acknowledged importance

- 7.67 The proposed has been sensitively designed to ensure that it is compatible with the surrounding area and is appropriate in quality, scale and character.
- 7.68 The position, scale and layout of the lodges and hub buildings have been informed by the LVIA assessment for the site, supported by photomontage and wireline views. Particular views from Whiston Eaves Lane and the area of plantation woodland, have been modelled as requested by the Council. These have demonstrated that there would be a negligible visual impact through the retention of planting and woodland around the lodges and screening bunding along the edge of Whiston Eaves Lane.
- 7.69 It has been demonstrated through the ES that overall the proposed leisure development would not harm and where practicable enhance heritage, landscape and biodiversity assets in the local area. In summary the application proposals fully accord with policy E3 of the Core Strategy.

Local Resident Comment 41: Greenfield/ Green Belt

- 7.70 The site is not located within the Green Belt. It does comprise greenfield land which has been identified as an opportunity site for a new leisure development in the CVMP. Importantly, the site has been extensively worked and engineered over recent times as part of the quarry operation and presents an opportunity to deliver a high quality and sustainable leisure development.

Local Resident Comment 42: Impact on local 'independent' businesses

- 7.71 As set out in Chapter 7 'Socio-Economic' of the ES it has been demonstrated that staying visitors could generate just over £1 million worth of additional spending in the area. In addition to the jobs created on-site, it is expected that the development will contribute to delivering a further 78 full time equivalent jobs elsewhere in the District.
- 7.72 Laver Leisure will work with local suppliers, including farmers, brewers and those involved in the local leisure industry. Laver Leisure will also promote local facilities, attractions, shops and shops through on-site visitor information and by brokering quality assurance deals with local pubs, restaurants and other services.
- 7.73 Overall, the proposals will have an overwhelming positive impact on the local economy and employment opportunities.

Local Resident Comment 43: Site should be restored to pasture/ in line with site restoration plan

- 7.74 A restoration scheme to discharge condition 35 of planning permission SM.96/935 was submitted to SCC in November 1999 and was subsequently approved by SCC in January 2001. Amendments to the approved restoration scheme were submitted by Sibelco UK to SCC in 2009. The amended restoration scheme for the site was approved with conditions by delegated decision on the 16 October 2009. This approval required the submission of an updated restoration plan to satisfy points raised in the approval letter.
- 7.75 In July 2010 Laver Leisure acquired Moneystone Quarry from Sibelco UK. To address the conditions of the delegated approval a revised Restoration Masterplan was submitted to SCC by Laver Leisure and was approved at SCC's Planning Committee on 6 March 2014 (LPA ref. SM.96/935/122 M D4). The restoration works have been ongoing at the site for some time and to date Laver Leisure have spent significant sums of money in implementing the restoration scheme. The restoration works are now largely complete in accordance with the approved restoration plan and this has been confirmed by SCC Officers.

- 7.76 It is important that the Council has regard to the extensive economic, social and environmental benefits the proposed development would deliver above and beyond that proposed by the approved restoration plan. The proposals would contribute to delivering the Council's vision for enhancing the role of Staffordshire Moorlands as a tourism and leisure destination, and would deliver many economic benefits which will have a significant and positive impact on the local economy.
- 7.77 The proposed development will have an impact on flora and fauna within the site boundary. However, standard mitigation techniques will be implemented to avoid potential effects to species during construction and species interests will be incorporated into the long term management objectives of the site. As such, the proposals will have a beneficial impact on the existing woodland and retained habitats on site and the provision of new habitats on site will have a beneficial impact on protected species such as bats, birds, amphibians and reptiles. A detailed analysis of the Residual impacts on ecology is presented at 'Chapter 9: Ecology' of the ES.

Local Resident Comment 44: Scale of the development

- 7.78 Paragraph 7.6.5 and figure 7.4 'Moneystone Quarry Concept Plan' of the CVMP identify a number of uses considered appropriate at Moneystone Park. These include:

"Holiday accommodation – low impact holiday lodges in Zones 1 and 2. Limited development in Zones 4 and 5. Maximum of 250 holiday lodges in total"

- 7.79 A maximum of 250 low impact lodges are proposed across the site. Low impact lodges are proposed in zones 1 and 2 and limited development is proposed in zones 4 and 5. Lodges within zones 4 and 5 have been sensitively located to minimise their impact. The location of the lodges has been informed by the technical assessments contained in the ES and ES Addendum, specifically the LVIA and ecology assessments.
- 7.80 Overall, the proposed development has been sensitively designed to ensure that it is compatible with the surrounding area and is appropriate in quality, scale and character. The level of development proposed fully accords with the adopted guidance confirmed in the CVMP.

Local Resident Comment 45: The development will be a 'holiday camp'

- 7.81 The proposed development will be a high quality leisure development comprising holiday lodges; a new central hub building (providing swimming pool, restaurant, bowling alley, spa, gym, informal screen/cinema room, children's soft play area, café, climbing wall and shop); café; visitor centre; administration building; maintenance building; archery centre; water sports centre; equipped play and adventure play areas; multi-sports area; car parking, and managed footpaths and cycleways set in attractive landscaping and ecological enhancements. The proposals would be far more than a 'holiday camp'.

Local Resident Comment 46: Potential future expansion of the development

- 7.82 The planning application boundary (edged red) for the proposed scheme is shown on drawing ref. PL1088.M106 Rev 2. The application as proposed must be judged on its own merits and decisions based on the information provided.
- 7.83 Laver Leisure is not proposing a larger leisure development and if an extension is proposed in the future then a new separate planning application will be required and members of the community will have the opportunity to review and comment on this application.

Local Resident Comment 47: Impact on Residential Amenity

- 7.84 The Restoration Plan and proposed development will result in a long term beneficial impact in terms of landscape character and visual amenity. Furthermore, as part of the proposals habitat management and enhancement measures will be employed which are effectively designed to incorporate a movement framework, enhances residents and tourists opportunity to move around the site and make use of the sites unique character.

Local Resident Comment 48: Compliance with Core Strategy, CVMP, NPPF, Aarhus Convention

- 7.85 Please refer to Laver Leisure's responses provided to the Churnet Valley Conservation Society and the Whiston Action Group.

Local Resident Comment 49: Secret meetings between developer and SMDC

7.86 Please refer to Laver Leisure's response at paragraph 6.2 of this Statement.

Local Resident Comment 50: Planning Performance Agreement

7.87 The use of Planning Performance Agreements (PPAs) is promoted by the Government through national guidance as a way of achieving a faster and more effective application process. The PPG provides the following guidance on the use of PPA's:

*"A planning performance agreement is a project management tool which sets timescales for actions between the local planning authority and an applicant. It should cover the pre-application and application stages but may also extend through to the post-application stage. A planning performance agreement provides greater certainty and transparency in the process for determining a large and/or complex planning application, and can help to ensure that a clear and efficient process is in place for dealing with an application. They encourage joint working between the applicant and local planning authority and can also help to bring together other parties such as statutory consultees. A planning performance agreement is agreed voluntarily between the applicant and the local planning authority prior to the application being submitted, and can be a useful focus of pre-application discussions about the issues that will need to be addressed."*¹⁷

7.88 Planning performance agreements need to be agreed in the spirit of a 'memorandum of understanding'. They are not intended to be legally binding contracts, unless there is a specific statement to the contrary in the planning performance agreement itself. A planning performance agreement should be publicly available, so that the agreed process and timescale are transparent."

7.89 The PPA agreed between Laver Leisure and SMDC was drafted in accordance with national guidance and is a publically available document.

¹⁷ Planning Practice Guidance, CLG, Paragraph: 017 Reference ID: 20-017-20150326

Local Resident Comment 51: Target Market

- 7.90 Moneystone Park is aimed at families and those who enjoy an outdoor active lifestyle. It is not intended that this will be a 'main' holiday destination, but instead is most likely to be used for second holidays and short breaks. The accommodation on offer will be of high quality and the rental prices will reflect this.

Local Resident Comment 52: Sustainability

- 7.91 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications. The NPPF at paragraph 7 indicates that there are three dimensions to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. An assessment of the application proposals against the three dimensions of sustainable development as defined in the NPPF is provided in Chapter 8 of the SPS submitted in October 2014 and presented at paragraph 3.30 of this Statement. It concludes that the proposals will deliver significant positive economic, social and environmental benefits which should be afforded considerable planning weight in the determination of the planning application.

Local Resident Comment 53: Special Landscape Area

- 7.92 A comprehensive Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment was undertaken, based on an agreed scope, as part of the ES (Chapter 8 'Landscape and Visual'). The assessment evaluates the significance of potential landscape impacts and where necessary proposes suitable mitigation. Overall, it concludes that the operational development will have a negligible to minor/moderate beneficial effect. The findings of this assessment have been accepted by SCC Officers.
- 7.93 For the purposes of undertaking the ES, the site has been classified as a Greenfield site. Whilst it is greenfield it has previously been worked and the scheme proposals will provide ecological benefits above and beyond that proposed by the restoration plan approved in March 2014.

Local Resident Comment 54: Deficiencies of the Environment Statement

- 7.94 It is unclear which particular element of the Environmental Statement is deficient. A comprehensive and robust approach has been undertaken for all technical assessments, and it should be noted that the ES has been prepared in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2011 and its findings have been accepted by all statutory consultees including SMDC and SCC Officers.

Local Resident Comment 55: Increased Crime

- 7.95 There is no evidence to suggest that the proposed development would generate increased crime in the local area.

Local Resident Comment 56: Increased Visitor Numbers

- 7.96 Professional research indicates that Moneystone Park will attract around 55,400 staying visitors per year – around 75% of those staying visitors are likely to stay for 3 to 4 days, with the remaining 25% staying for a week. In addition, research indicates that around 32,500 day visitors per year will visit Moneystone Park, including those people who live in the local area and wish to make use of the facilities on the site, such as the gym, spa or swimming pool.

Local Resident Comment 57: Employment not Needed

- 7.97 As demonstrated in Chapter 7 'Socio-economic' of the ES there is a significant need for employment locally. The proposed development would provide a range of employment opportunities and is supported by SMDC's Economic Development Officer.

Local Resident Comment 58: Crowtrees Farm

- 7.98 When purchasing the quarry from Sibelco, Laver Leisure also purchased the freehold interest in Crowtrees Farm, which formed part of the title. Crowtrees Farm had previously been sold some years ago by the then farm owners to Sibelco quarry operators at full market value. The purchase was made by Sibelco at the time to enable future redevelopment and expansion of the quarry. It was always envisaged by all parties that the farm would be redeveloped at some point, and the terms of the existing occupational agreement reflect this fact.

7.99 The recent planning application for an equestrian centre (ref. SMD/2014/0403) was submitted because of significant local demand for such a facility. However, this planning application has now been withdrawn. An equestrian centre does not form part of the Moneystone Park planning application.

7.100 As shown on the Habitat Management Plan no ecological mitigation/ off-setting is proposed at Crow Trees Farm.

Local Resident Comment 59: Inadequate Public Consultation

7.101 Laver Leisure places great importance on public consultation and has undertaken an extensive consultation exercise in accordance with the provisions of the Localism Act 2011, NPPF, PPG and SMDC's SCI. A detailed analysis of the consultation strategy is set out within the Statement of Community Involvement (HOW, October 2014).

7.102 In summary, the public consultation undertaken to date has included:

- **27 January 2011** - An introductory letter and invitation to a Neighbours Briefing/Stakeholder preview event, was sent to neighbours closest to the site. A phone number and email contact has been provided with each letter issued to the community to enable ongoing engagement. These residents were invited to a preview exhibition of the proposals at Whiston Village Hall on Tuesday 8 February 2011 between 7.30pm and 9.30pm.
- **27 January 2011** - An introductory letter and invitation to a Neighbours Briefing/Stakeholder preview event, was also sent to around 40 identified community stakeholders. Those identified were invited to the preview exhibition of the proposals at Whiston Village Hall on Tuesday 8 February 2011 between 7.30pm and 9.30pm and Wednesday 9 February 2011 between 2pm and 9pm.
- **27 January 2011** - An introductory letter and invitation to a Neighbours Briefing/Stakeholder preview event, was also sent to then ward councillor, Cllr Hilary Corby, Kingsley Parish Council and Oakamoor Parish Council. Those identified were invited to the preview exhibition of the proposals at Whiston Village Hall on Tuesday 8 February between 7.30pm and 9.30pm and Wednesday 9 February 2011 between 2pm and 9pm.

- **27 January 2011** – A media release was issued to local newspapers alerting them to the forthcoming exhibition and proposals.
- **8 February 2011** – The applicant held a preview event to brief immediate neighbours and community stakeholders at Whiston Village Hall between 7.30pm and 9.30pm.
- **9 February 2011** – The applicant held a consultation exhibition of the proposals for the general public at Whiston Village Hall between 2pm and 9pm.
- **14 February 2011** – A media release was issued to local newspapers post-exhibition regarding the initial response to the proposals.
- **21 February 2011** – A follow-up mailing was issued to the local community providing details of a dedicated website (www.moneystonepark.co.uk) and reiterating contact details for the consultation team. This letter was also issued to identified community stakeholders, and specifically to those who attended the exhibition.
- **14 March 2011** – A further mailing was issued to the local community providing details of the website again and a copy of the summary of the feedback received during the initial consultation in February was also enclosed.
- **6 April 2011** – A mailing was issued to the local community offering an update on the proposals. The letter highlighted the key areas the applicant was looking to amend following consultation: scale of the development, housing, holiday accommodation offer and highways and transport.
- **December 2011** – A follow-up mailing was issued to the local community providing an update on the scheme proposals and reiterating contact details for the consultation team.
- **7 July 2014** – A media release was issued to local newspapers, for publication after 10 July 2014, alerting them to the forthcoming exhibition of the revised proposals. This received prominent coverage in the Leek Post & Times and the Cheadle & Tean Times.

- **10 July 2014** – An invitation letter to an update public exhibition was hand-delivered to circa 300 properties in Whiston, Oakamoor and Moneystone. Recipients were given the opportunity to view proposals for the substantially revised scheme on Tuesday 15 July 2014 between 3pm and 7pm at Whiston Village Hall.
- **15 July 2014** – The applicant held an update public exhibition of the revised proposals on Tuesday 15 July 2014 between 3pm and 7pm at Whiston Village Hall.
- **Post Submission Consultation** - A dedicated project website has been available since March 2011 containing details of the proposals, revisions to the proposals and a means of contact. The website was updated in August 2014 with the latest proposals. Furthermore, a meeting was held with the SMDC Economic Development Officer on 21st May 2015.

7.103 All feedback received has been provided to the development team and the key issues raised have been considered in the planning application. As a direct result of feedback from the initial public consultation in 2011, a number of significant changes were made to the proposals, ahead of the Update Consultation event in July 2014.

7.104 Following the consultation event various update letters and leaflets have been distributed to those in the local area providing information on the progress of the planning application.

7.105 In summary, the consultation exercise undertaken by Laver Leisure is above and beyond that required in national guidance and SMDC's SCI.

Local Resident Comment 60: Caravans being allowed onto site

7.106 Laver Leisure has no intention of installing caravans at Moneystone Park. As is clearly stated in the planning application, Laver Leisure is proposing high quality wooden holiday lodges. There will be no caravans static or otherwise.

Local Resident Comment 61: Rail link to Alton Towers

7.107 There are no proposals to link the site to Alton Towers via a rail link.

Local Resident Comment 62: Grade II Listed stable should be rebuilt

7.108 Please refer to Laver Leisure's response at paragraph 7.10 of this Statement.

Local Resident Comment 63: Fire safety

7.109 The planning application has been submitted in outline with all matters reserved except for access. As such details of lodge orientation and building materials etc. will be determined at the reserved matters stage. The proposed access is suitable for emergency vehicles.

7.110 Notwithstanding the above, the development will be built to building regulation standards and would have to comply with fire safety requirements.

Local Resident Comment 64: Devaluation of Property

7.111 Devaluation is not a material planning consideration and it is not possible, through the planning process, to seek compensation for any loss of value of a property.

Local Resident Comment 65: Impact on the Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)

7.112 The Whiston Eaves SSSI is located adjacent to the southern edge of Quarry 3 with all development proposals located outside the designated area. The potential impact of the proposals on the SSSI has been assessed in Chapter 9 'Ecology' of the ES submitted in October 2014. The ecological assessment concludes that no impacts as a result of increasing visitor pressure are envisaged as the network of new and existing footpaths divert around or away from the site. Overall, the proposed scheme will have a negligible impact on the SSSI. This position is accepted by the county ecologist.

Local Resident Comment 66: GCN Survey Insufficient

7.113 In the context of this outline application, 2 survey visits are sufficient. A comprehensive baseline survey was carried out in 2010-2011 the update surveys were undertaken to confirm baseline conditions. This is in line with Natural England guidance¹⁸ which requests a 'walkover' at least should be undertaken within 3 months prior to submission of a licence application. The survey employed was beyond this scope and was used in the Ecological Impact Assessment which supports this outline application rather than a license application.

Summary

7.114 In summary, Laver Leisure has comprehensively responded to representations made by the local community, including Mr Housiaux, and considers that the proposed development is entirely acceptable in planning terms.

¹⁸ Great Crested Newt Mitigation Guidelines (Natural England 2001)

8 SUMMARY

- 8.1 This Statement has been prepared by HOW Planning on behalf of Laver Leisure (Oakamoor) Limited ('Laver Leisure') as part of a supplementary submission to Staffordshire Moorlands District Council (SMDC). It relates to outline planning application SMD/2014/0682 which is proposing a high quality leisure development at the former Moneystone quarry, Whiston.
- 8.2 This Statement has been prepared in response to representations submitted to the Council's statutory consultation exercise following the submission of a comprehensive planning application to SMDC in October 2014.
- 8.3 SMDC has consulted a number of stakeholders and to-date the following consultee organisations have submitted formal representations:
- SMDC Spatial Planning - No objection subject to conditions;
 - SMDC Environmental Protection - No objection subject to conditions;
 - SMDC Housing - No objection; and
 - SMDC Economic Development – No objection;
 - SMDC Conservation – No objection;
 - SCC Highways – No objection subject to conditions;
 - SCC Minerals – No objection subject to conditions;
 - SCC Ecology – No objection subject to conditions;
 - SCC PROW – No objection;
 - SCC Archaeology – No objection;
 - Staffordshire Wildlife Trust – No objection;
 - Natural England – No objection subject to conditions;
 - Environment Agency – No objection subject to conditions;
 - Historic England – No objection subject to conditions;
 - Severn Trent Water – No objection subject to conditions;
 - Kingsley Parish Council – Objection; and
 - Oakamoor Parish Council – Objection.

- 8.4 This Statement provides a detailed response to the key comments received by SMDC from Oakamoor Parish Council (section 3), Kingsley Parish Council (section 4), Churnet Valley Conservation Society (CVCS) (section 5), Whiston Action Group (WAG) (section 6) and the representation letters (section 7).
- 8.5 This Statement has addressed all issues raised by consultees and has, where necessary, provided additional information to address specific concerns.
- 8.6 Laver Leisure is committed to delivering a scheme that incorporates the views of stakeholders and the local community and has endeavoured to address, as far as possible, the concerns raised, whilst ensuring that the proposed development is viable, deliverable and fully policy compliant. It is therefore respectfully requested that SMDC grants outline planning permission.

This report has been prepared by HOW Planning LLP, with all reasonable skill, care and diligence. The scope of this report is subject to specific agreement and has been prepared solely for the benefit of our Client and should not be relied upon by any other party. Any third parties that use this information do so at their own risk. HOW Planning LLP accepts no responsibility for information contained within this report that has been independently produced or verified.

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