From:	Steve Massey
To:	Curley, Jane
Cc:	Planning Comments (SMDC)
Subject:	SMD/2020/0244 - Moneystone Quarry, Oakamoor - screening request for surface water outfall to Quarry 3 lake
Date:	09 June 2020 14:19:44

Jane

This application (SMD/2020/0244) is a screening request in relation to proposed construction of a surface water outfall at the south-west corner of the lake at Quarry 3, such proposal itself being made under planning application SMD/2019/0725, partly within and partly as an adjacent extension to the site of the core development of erection of a high quality leisure development etc granted outline planning permission under reference SMD/2016/0378.

The original core development under the 2016 outline permission is a "Schedule 2 development" for the purposes of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017, as it comprises a holiday village and associated developments outside urban areas and exceeds 0.5ha in site area (Paragraph 12(c) of the table at Schedule 2 to the Regs).

The currently proposed development (outfall) is itself a "Schedule 2 development" under Paragraph 13(b) of the same table, in that it comprises a change to or extension of an already authorised development listed in Paragraphs 1 to 12 of column 1 of that table, and as it is partly within Whiston Eaves SSSI (a sensitive site for the purposes of the Regs) the thresholds and criteria in column 2 of the table are not applied and all such Schedule 2 developments within or partly within a sensitive area should be screened.

In considering this, we are required to have regard to the selection criteria in Schedule 3 of the Regs. We should also take account of the Government's Planning Practice Guidance on Environmental Impact Assessment, and in particular in this case the Annex on Indicative Screening Thresholds (which are which are anyway not exceeded by the current outfall application – a factor pointing towards a conclusion that Environmental Impact assessment may not be required). My application of these factors and comments are confined to matters relating to potential impact on trees, woodlands, landscape and visual impact.

In terms of the Schedule 3 "Characteristics of development", the outfall proposal is a small site in comparison with the overall leisure park scheme. It comprises a relatively minor modification to existing landform to accommodate installation of a flat weir at the corner of Quarry 3 lake and to create a stone-lined valley channel to direct overflow water into the natural stream beyond to the south-west. Its location, design/appearance and function would be directly related to the wider leisure park already approved. The arboricultural report submitted with the planning application SMD/2019/0725 indicates that a small part of 2 groups of trees/scrub would need to be removed. Generally, however, impact on existing landscape features would not be of great significance and there would be opportunity for new/enhanced landscaping through implementation of a planting scheme and natural regeneration.

The outfall, in appearance and function, would be viewed in the context of the approved leisure park development, and the specific part of the overall site where the outfall is proposed is not in

prominent view, if visible at all, from viewpoints external to the site.

Although landscape and visual impacts would need to be taken into account as material considerations in the normal assessment and determination of the planning application, it is considered that such impacts would not be of such adverse significance as to require an Environmental Impact Assessment.

In terms of the Schedule 3 "Location of development" the outfall site extends partly within the boundary of Whiston Eaves SSSI, a sensitive area for the purposes of the Regs. The potential environmental impacts of the overall leisure park were addressed in an Environmental Statement (the "2016 ES") submitted with the outline planning application under the then-current Environmental Impact Regulations 2011; the 2016 ES was taken into account in determining that application, which was approved. The 2016 ES acknowledged that some drainage works would be necessary at the corner of Quarry 3 lake and may impact on (*i.e.within*) the boundary of the SSSI. However, it was considered that the designation features of the SSSI (neutral grassland) would be unaffected as the habitat at/around this corner of the lake comprises scrub, bare ground and secondary grassland. Impacts at that time arising from the assumed drainage works were assessed as negligible, and the current application SMD/2019/0725 simply puts forward the detailed design of this element of the overall development. It s considered that the proposed outfall would not have significant adverse effects on the landscape and visual interests of the SSSI nor indeed the wider site. The current proposal as a change or extension to the already approved scheme would not result in significant environmental effects on landscape or visual impact, and the absorption capacity of the natural environment in relation to landscape and visual issues is considered sufficient to avoid significant adverse effects.

The application site boundary for the outfall proposal is at one point within approximately 65m of a registered ancient semi-natural woodland site further to the south-west, which of course is a notable designation reflecting the status of such sites as being irreplaceable habitats, with national and local planning policies specifically aimed at preventing loss of or significant harm to ancient woodlands. However, whilst the potential impacts on the ancient woodland must be taken into account in determining the application, this is routine planning process, and since in this case it is difficult to foresee that construction of the outfall as proposed would have any impact on the ancient woodland, this does not in itself lead to a conclusion that a full Environmental Impact Assessment is required.

No landscapes of historic, cultural or archaeological importance would be affected by the outfall extension to the overall leisure park site. Whilst a Conservation Area was designated in nearby Oakamoor village in 2016, the proposed outfall application site has no visual connection with the Conservation Area and is therefore not seen from and would not affect the setting of the Conservation Area.

In terms of Schedule 3 "Types and characteristics of the potential impact" the magnitude of the visual effects of the outfall proposal would be small, and very localised in extent such that these

are unlikely to be noticeable from outside the leisure park site. From inside the site, the visual effects are unlikely to be significantly adverse. In cumulation with the already approved development, the proposed outfall is considered unlikely to lead to any significant additional or increased landscape and visual impacts. Under the normal planning process, there would be opportunity to secure additional new landscaping specific to the current change of use application site, which would further reduce any landscape or visual impacts. Further to this a detailed landscaping scheme is submitted with the outfall planning application SMD/2019/0725, proposing partly new planting and partly (and appropriately) natural regeneration within the SSSI.

Therefore with regard to potential impact on trees, woodlands, landscape and visual impact, whilst these are factors to be properly taken into account in determining the current application, I do not consider that the potential adverse effects on these material considerations arising from the development as changed or extended by the current application SMD/2019/0725 are likely to be of such significance as to conclude that this proposal should be an Environmental Impact Assessment development. Accordingly I advise that in relation to these matters, an Environmental Impact assessment is not required.

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