From: Curley, Jane
Sent: 23 June 2020 14:44
To: Planning Comments (SMDC)
Subject: FW: SMD/2020/0243 Moneystone Quarry - Buildings COU EIA screening

Categories:

From: Kate Dewey []
Sent: 23 June 2020 14:29
To: Curley, Jane
Cc: Steve Massey; Bayliss, Gillian; Swithenbank, Arne
Subject: SMD/2020/0243 Moneystone Quarry - Buildings COU EIA screening

SMD/2020/0243

Moneystone Quarry, Cheadle Road, Oakamoor, Staffordshire, ST10 2DZ

Screening request for Change of Use of Existing Buildings

0.93 hectares

Staffordshire Wildlife Trust has been asked to review the above application as part of a service level agreement with Staffordshire Moorlands District Council to provide ecology advice regarding planning and development management functions.

Documents reviewed:

- EIA Screening Report May 2020 by Avison Young
- Arboricultural Officer comments 09 June 2020
- Documents for change of use application SMD/2019/0716

SUMMARY

We consider an EIA would not be required for these proposals as a stand-alone project, in terms of biodiversity. However, further advice should be sought regarding the EIA guidelines in terms of assessing projects that are clearly extending, or are an integral part of, a larger scheme- in this case the wider quarry site which has been subject to EIA.

We have assessed the following headings within the EIA checklist and provide comments.

6. BIODIVERSITY (SPECIES AND HABITATS)
6.1 Are there any protected areas which are designated or classified for their terrestrial, avian and marine ecological value, or any non-designated / non-classified areas which are important or sensitive for reasons of their terrestrial, avian and marine ecological value, located on or around the location and which could be affected by the project? (e.g. wetlands, watercourses or other water-bodies, the coastal zone, mountains, forests or woodlands, undesignated nature reserves or parks. (Where designated indicate level of designation (international, national, regional or local))).

The application boundary is adjacent to part of Key Wood ancient woodland and Local wildlife Site. However, the proposals cover the building and existing car park, and do not appear to impact any areas close to the woodland.

Within the application site there is semi-improved grassland, scrub and ponds, but again, there appears to be no change proposed to these areas. The Proposed Site Plan does not show any features other than the buildings and car park. However no drainage or landscaping scheme has been submitted, so it is not possible to judge whether these areas may be affected.

We also understand that the retention of the existing car park would differ from the approved quarry restoration plan, which proposed 'open grassland' for this area. Therefore, landscaping/ habitat creation and management within the site would need to mitigate this loss compared to the baseline, and ensure the site provides the same habitat value as the restoration plan. It is not clear how this would be achieved, but it would appear to be possible within the site.

Overall we do not consider that the plans in themselves would cause impacts to nature sites or habitats of significance to require an EIA.

6.2 Could any protected, important or sensitive species of flora or fauna which use areas on or around the site, e.g. for breeding, nesting, foraging, resting, over-wintering, or migration, be affected by the project?

No evidence of bats has been found in the buildings, although there are some features with low potential for bats. Reasonable Avoidance Measures are proposed to avoid harm to any bats which may be found during works. Likewise, access points for birds were found, and precautions are proposed to avoid any nesting birds.

The two ponds on site, Pond 9 and 10, have previously supported great crested newts in 2010, although were not found in 2014 or 2016 surveys, and no further surveys have been conducted since then. Given that the proposals do not appear to impact these ponds, there would be a low likelihood of impacts to GCN, as long as RAMs were followed. Again, confirmation of landscaping plans will be required, however any necessary mitigation would appear possible.

The plans in themselves would not cause impacts to species of a significance to require an EIA.

12. CUMULATIVE EFFECTS

12.1 Could this project together with existing and/or approved development result in cumulation of impacts together during the construction/operation phase?

The outline permission for leisure development of the quarry, SMD/2016/0378, and subsequent reserved matters application ongoing (SMD/2019/0646), would result in development that would impact various habitats and species in common with those potentially present within this application site. If effective mitigation measures were to be employed within the wider site, this should not lead to a cumulative impact to receptors on this site that would warrant an EIA. However, the outline application was subject to an EIA, and the reserved matters details have not yet been agreed.

The Planning Practice Guidelines provide guidance on how applications extending, or integral to, other developments should be dealt with.

How should multiple applications be treated?

An application should not be considered in isolation if, in reality, it is an integral part of a more substantial development (Judgment in the case of R v Swale BC ex parte RSPB [1991] 1PLR 6). In such cases, the need for Environmental Impact Assessment must be considered in the context of the whole development. In other cases, it is appropriate to establish whether each of the proposed developments could proceed independently (R (Candlish) v Hastings Borough Council [2005] All ER (D) 178 (Jul); Baker v Bath & North East Somerset Council [2009] All ER (D) 169 (Jul)).

Paragraph: 025 Reference ID: 4-025-20170728

Proposed changes or extensions to Schedule 1 or Schedule 2 development

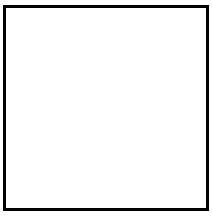
[Excerpt]
Changes or extensions to Schedule 2 development, which when considered with the existing development as a whole, may result in significant adverse effects on the environment, or which meet the thresholds or criteria set out in column two of Schedule 2, are also Schedule 2 development and require screening.
Paragraph: 033 Reference ID: 4-033-20170728

We feel that the application may need to be assessed in conjunction with the larger leisure development, unless it can be shown that it could proceed independently. We do not have sufficient expertise to advise further on this, and so would recommend the LPA seek specialist advice, if necessary, on this issue.

Regards,

Kate Dewey BSc (Hons) MCIEEM

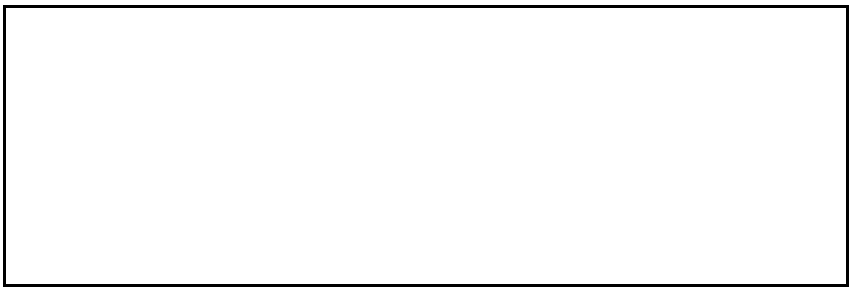
Senior Planning Officer

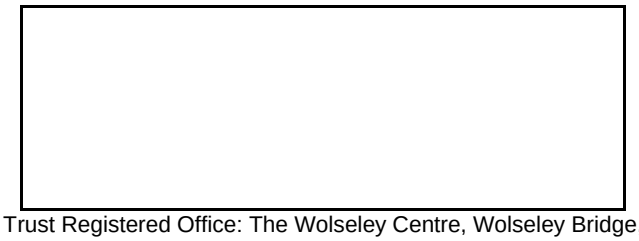


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Planning consultations- please send to planning@staffs-wildlife.org.uk

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