

Simon W. Baker B.Ed MBA MISPAL
Chief Executive

Dealt with by: Mr B. Haywood / Mr. A. Swithenbank

Our Ref: SMD/2017/0135

Direct Dial: 01538 395400 ext. 4924

Your Ref:

Date: 18th April 2017

Helen Packpahan
Regeneration
Staffordshire Moorlands District Council
Moorlands House
Stockwell St
Leek
ST13 6HQ

Dear Ms. Packpahan

Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Amendment) Regulations 2015 – Screening opinion.

FORMER RAILWAY LINE, BARNFIELD ROAD, LEEK

A formal screening opinion has now been undertaken in accordance with your letter application received on 2nd March 2017 which requested a formal screening opinion under regulation 5 of S.I 2015 No.1824 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (England and Wales) Regulations 2015 for the following development: -

Reinstatement of Leek to Leekbrook Railway Line

Having considered the details of the proposed development Staffordshire Moorlands Council is of the opinion that the application does not fall within Schedule 1 of the S.I. 2015 No.1824 which only includes construction of lines for long-distance railway traffic. However, it does fall within Schedule 2 development of S.I. 293 being Construction of railways (unless included in Schedule 1) where the area of the works exceeds 1 hectare, where EIA is not mandatory. Having therefore had regard to the characteristics of the development, its location and potential impact, the Local planning Authority does not consider that the proposal requires an Environmental Impact Assessment for the following reasons.

Physical changes in the locality (topography, land use, changes in water bodies, etc)

Although this is a significant development, given that the railway formation is already in place and the development involves only clearance and reinstatement of the track itself, the impact in terms of physical changes in the locality is not considered to be significant. This view is reached having regard to the fact that the changes would be permanent albeit reversible.

Traffic related impacts – Movements and Safety, Noise and Air Quality.



It is not considered that the proposal will be a significant traffic generator in this part of Leek. The station and associated carpark have already received a separate outline consent and this proposal involves only reinstatement of the track. Construction traffic would be minimal given the rail access.

The noise and air quality issues associated with traffic generation are also considered to be minimal and for the same reasons do not necessitate EIA.

Any noise / vibration / air pollution impacts associated with the railway are considered to be minimal given the heritage nature of the operation and the distance to sensitive receptors. These too could be dealt with through the normal planning application submissions and do not require EIA.

Infrastructure

Given the scale of the development, particularly when considered and the lack of any other similar developments proposed in the vicinity, it is not considered that there are likely to be significant impacts on schools, hospitals, transport links and other community infrastructure, which require EIA consideration.

Ecology and Nature Conservation

There is a likelihood of some impacts on habitats for protected species in and around the site but it is considered that these can be adequately addressed through normal protected species surveys and any recommended mitigation, particularly in view of the previous use of the site.

Flood Risk

Part of the site lies adjacent to a Flood Zone. However it is considered that the potential impacts of the development can be appropriately considered through the submission of a Flood Risk Assessment, particularly given that there is no change to the track formation / land levels and the site has previously operated as a railway. It is not considered that EIA is warranted on these grounds.

Conclusion

On the basis of the above, it is considered that the proposal is unlikely to have significant effects and an Environmental Impact Assessment will not be required.

The Council has considered other possible impacts and effects of the development including, Archaeology and Architectural Context, Contamination, ground and water quality, loss of agricultural land, harmful substances and waste generation, risk of accidents, social changes from introducing a new railway line, and the visual impact of the proposal. The Council does not consider that these are of such significance as to warrant environmental impact assessment. I have enclosed, for reference, a copy of a screening checklist document which has helped formulate this decision.

Yours Sincerely,

X *B.J. Haywood*

Signed by: Ben Haywood

On behalf of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council



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