

CHAPTER 8: LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL

Introduction

- 8.1 This chapter assesses the impact of the proposed development on the landscape and views. In particular, it considers the potential effects on landscape character, of both the site and surrounding area, and the potential visual effects on a number of selected viewpoints that are considered to represent the principal views of the development. The chapter assesses revised parameters set out within the Parameter Plan which accompanies this application (Figure 5.2).
- 8.2 The chapter describes the methods used to assess the impacts, the baseline conditions currently existing at the site and surroundings, the potential direct and indirect impacts of the development arising from potential landscape and visual effects, the mitigation measures required to prevent, reduce, or offset the impacts and the residual impacts.
- 8.3 The chapter is supported by a range of figures presented collectively at Appendix 8.1 and by photoviews and montages at Appendix 8.2. It has been written by Planit-IE.

Planning Policy Context

National Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Frameworkⁱ

- 8.4 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published on 27 March 2012. The key aim of the Framework was to make the planning system less complex and more accessible, to protect the environment, and to promote sustainable growth. At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. There are three dimensions to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. The environmental role is relevant to the purposes of this assessment, and requires that new development contributes to the protection and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment. In order to deliver sustainable development the following principles are relevant to the purposes of this assessment:

Good Design

- 8.4.1 Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning, and should contribute positively to making places better for people. The principle is therefore to optimise the potential of the site to accommodate development, and to create and sustain an appropriate mix of uses.

Promoting Healthy Communities

- 8.4.2 The NPPF promotes the protection and enhancement of public rights of way and access, and states that opportunities to provide better facilities for users, for example by adding links to existing rights of way networks including National Trails should be promoted.

Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

- 8.4.3 It states that the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, with local plans allocating land with the least environmental or amenity value.
- 8.4.4 In addition, the NPPF states that the re-use of land that has been previously developed (brownfield land) should be promoted, provided that it is not of high environmental value.
- 8.5 There is no agreed definition a 'valued' landscape as used in paragraph 109 of the NPPF, however case law (Stroud DC vs. Secretary of State and Gladman Developments Ltd [2015] EWHC 488) defines value as requiring the site, "to show some demonstrable physical attribute rather than just popularity". The site is not subject to any national landscape designations, and contains no demonstrably special, rare or notable landscape features, and therefore it is not considered to represent a 'valued landscape'.

Local Planning Policy

Staffordshire Moorlands District Council (SMDC) Core Strategyⁱⁱ

- 8.6 The Core Strategy was adopted on the 26th March 2014. The Key Diagram does not identify any qualitative landscape designations covering the site, or within the immediate surrounding area. The following elements of the Spatial Strategy, set out within the Core Strategy document are of relevance to this chapter:

SA4 Maintaining a Quality Environment and Special Places

- 8.7 Maintaining a quality environment and creating special places is a key theme of the strategy which underpins all of the other aims and is essential to enhancing the District's tourism role. In particular, local distinctiveness and protection of the District's unique landscape and settlement character will be a major consideration in all new development.

The following policies within the Core Strategy document relevant to the purposes of this chapter include:

SS6c – Other Rural Areas Area Strategy

- 8.8 Enhance and conserve the quality of the countryside by giving priority to the need to protect the quality and character of the area and requiring all development proposals to respect and respond sensitively to the distinctive qualities of the surrounding landscape.

SS7 – Churnet Valley Area Strategy

- 8.9 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 maximise opportunities for restoring, strengthening and enhancing distinctive landscape features.

DC1 – Design Considerations

- 8.10 All development shall be well designed and reinforce local distinctiveness by positively contributing to and complementing the special character and heritage of the area in line with the Council’s Design SPD. In particular, new development should:
- be of a high quality and add value to the local area, incorporating creativity, detailing and materials appropriate to the character of an area;
 - be designed to respect the site and its surroundings and promote a positive sense of place and identity through its scale, density, layout, siting, landscaping, character and appearance.

DC3 – Landscape and Settlement Setting

- 8.11 The Council will protect and, where possible, enhance local landscape and the setting of settlements in the Staffordshire Moorlands by:
- Resisting development which would harm or be detrimental to the character of the local and wider landscape or the setting of a settlement and important views into and out of the settlement as identified in the Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment;
 - Supporting development which respects and enhances local landscape character and which reinforces and enhances the setting of the settlement as identified in the Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment.

Churnet Valley Masterplan SPDⁱⁱⁱ

- 8.12 The Churnet Valley Masterplan SPD provides a comprehensive framework for future development in the Churnet Valley. It is explicit within the SPD that some change in character is inevitable as a result of the anticipated development. The policies relevant to the purposes of this chapter are summarised below.
- 8.13 The SPD identifies Moneystone as one of eight local character areas, within which Moneystone Quarry is identified as a key opportunity site which have or could play a key role in delivering the strategy. Key opportunities identified for the site include:
- Creation of a high quality new tourism and leisure destination;
 - Restoration of the quarry to a level which improves and enhances the quality of the landscape.
 - Off-site measures to minimize and mitigate any impact on the local highway network and improved walking, cycling and horse riding links.
- 8.14 The SPD states that; “the sensitivity of the landscape, biodiversity, heritage and access issues are major factors and the key focus should be on conserving and enhancing the landscape and biodiversity of the area through sensitive leisure development of an appropriate scale.”
- 8.15 The SPD states that, in terms of the landscape and visual impact of Moneystone Quarry, proposed development should:
- Ensure that any development is in-keeping with the scale and nature of the landscape character of the three sub areas within which it is located.
 - Ensure that any additional planting is of a nature that complements the informal wooded setting of the Dissected Sandstone Cloughs and Valleys and

relates to the existing woodland planting associated with the quarry. Woodland planting should aim to take on the form and character of the ancient and semi natural woodland which is typical of the landscape character type. This should avoid the introduction of incongruous woodland blocks within the landscape.

- Ensure that any future development is located in a way that does not impinge on the small scale landscape or the open, visible landscape and where they can be screened by existing vegetation or can be screened by appropriately located new planting.
- Ensure that any future development proposals give consideration to the openness and high visibility of areas outside of the core quarry and any development within these locations, where it can be justified, will be required to be low key and should be of a nature, character and style that is intrinsic to the character of the area.
- Development proposals to be subject to a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment and potential impacts on landscape need to be mitigated through sensitive design and a landscape strategy.

Approach

Assessment Methodology

- 8.16 The baseline assessment includes both a desk-based analysis and on-site field study and investigation. The desk study involved the collation and review of existing maps and written information about the site and the wider landscape beyond. The main sources of information are referenced at the end of the chapter, and include; Ordnance Survey plans, topographic survey information, aerial photographs, landscape character assessments and planning policy. This information provided the basis for an appraisal of the pattern and character of the site and its surroundings. It served to identify relevant planning policy and special designated areas, and highlighted potential receptors of landscape and visual impact.
- 8.17 A visual assessment for the site was carried out through a mix of desktop analysis and on-site observation. An initial desk study of the area, with reference to topographic data and aerial photographs, was used to determine the broad zones of visual influence (ZVI), i.e. areas of land that are visually connected to the site. The principal views of the site were determined in the field, with particular emphasis on checking potential visual receptor areas such as public footpaths, principal vehicular routes and residential areas. A total of 17 viewpoints have been assessed in this report. The viewpoint locations are consistent with the previous ES and ES Addendum submission, which were agreed with the Council as being a representative selection.
- 8.18 This assessment has been carried out with reference to the *Guidelines for Landscape & Visual Impact Assessment*^{iv} and the *Landscape Institute, Photography and Photomontage in Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment*^v.
- 8.19 Representative viewpoints were identified which were considered to be of particular significance in terms of providing a range of views of the site and where development would have the potential to affect their character and quality.
- 8.20 Photographs of each of the principal viewpoints were taken by a professional photographer using a fixed lens camera, at a height of 1.6m. The camera lens had a focal length equivalent to 50mm, i.e. similar to that seen with the naked eye. Where panoramic views were taken, the individual frames were stitched together in accordance with the Guidelines.

8.21 Photomontages or wireline views have been produced to illustrate the potential impact of the development. Where development is only partially visible, a combination of photomontage and wireline is used. The views illustrate the maximum building sizes as set out within the Parameter Plans in order to provide the 'worst case scenario', and where the parameter plan presents a wider area for the positioning of the main hub building, this is also shown as a wireline to test the multiple positions that the building could occupy.

Assessment criteria

8.22 The following assessment criteria were used to determine the significance of landscape and visual effects:

Landscape Value

8.23 In order to determine landscape sensitivity, an assessment of landscape value has been undertaken, in accordance with GLVIA guidelines, namely the consideration of:

Table 8.1: Criteria for determining landscape value

| Attribute | Description of criteria |
|-----------------------|--|
| Landscape Condition | Intactness of the landscape/condition of individual elements. |
| Scenic Quality | General appeal of the landscape to the senses. |
| Rarity | Rarity of landscape character areas, types or features. |
| Representativeness | Particular characteristic/feature/element considered a particularly important example. |
| Cultural Interest | The presence of wildlife or cultural heritage interest which contributes positively to the landscape. |
| Recreation Value | Evidence that the landscape experience forms an important part of recreational activity, eg. as established in guidebooks. |
| Wildness/Tranquillity | Evidence that a landscape is valued for its wildness/tranquillity. |
| Associations | Relevant associations with notable figures, such as writers or artists, or events in history that contribute to landscape value. |

8.24 An overall assessment has been made for each receptor, based on an overview of the assessments made using each of the above criteria, in terms of high, medium and low value. For example, an intact landscape in good condition, where scenic quality, tranquillity, and or cultural heritage features make a particular contribution to the landscape, or where there are important cultural or historical associations, is likely to be highly valued. Conversely, a degraded landscape in poor condition, with no particular scenic qualities or cultural interest is likely to be considered of only low landscape value.

Susceptibility of Landscape Receptors to Change

8.25 Susceptibility of landscape receptors to change has been assessed using the following criteria, with reference to the baseline conditions:

Table 8.2: Landscape Receptor Susceptibility for Change

| Attribute | Description of criteria |
|-----------|---|
| High | The landscape is such that changes in terms of the development proposed would be entirely at odds with the character of the local area, related to matters including pattern, grain, use, scale and mass. |
| Medium | The proposed development has a degree of consistency with the existing scale, pattern, grain, land use of the prevailing character, although mitigation may be appropriate to enhance assimilation. |
| Low | The development proposed is entirely consistent with the character of the local area, related to matters including pattern, grain, use, scale and mass. |

Landscape sensitivity

8.26 The assessment of landscape receptor sensitivity combines judgements on the susceptibility of the receptor to the specific type of development proposed and the value attributed to that receptor.

Baseline Visual Assessment

8.27 In terms of assessing the baseline sensitivity, a key factor to consider is the type of view and the number of users. Following on from this, the overall value of the view can be established. The type of view and the number of viewers are described in the following terms:

- Glimpsed (i.e. in passing)/Filtered/Oblique/Framed/Open Views; and
- Few/Moderate/Many Viewers

Value of Views

8.28 Visual receptors generally comprise users of public rights of way or other outdoor recreational facilities; and also, vehicle travellers who may be visiting, or living or working within the study area and their views at particular places. Only publicly accessible viewpoints have been considered for the purposes of this assessment, in accordance with the Guidelines.

8.29 The value attached to views has regard to a number of factors, including:

- recognition through planning designations or heritage assets; and
- the popularity of the viewpoint, its appearance in guidebooks, literature or art, on tourist maps and the facilities provided for its enjoyment.

8.30 The assessment of the value of views is summarised in Table 8.3 below, in terms of High, Medium and Low value. These criteria are provided for guidance only and are not intended to be absolute:

Table 8.3: Value attached to Views

| Value | Description of criteria |
|--------|---|
| High | Views from landscapes/viewpoints of national importance, or highly popular visitor attractions where the view forms an important part of the experience, or with important cultural associations. |
| Medium | Views from landscapes/viewpoints of regional/district importance or moderately popular visitor attractions where the view forms part of the experience, or with local cultural associations. |
| Low | Views from landscapes/viewpoints with no designations, not particularly popular as a viewpoint and with minimal or no cultural associations. |

Susceptibility of Visual Receptors to Change

8.31 The susceptibility of different types of people to changes in views is mainly a function of:

- the occupation or activity of the viewer at a given location; and
- the extent to which a person's attention or interest may therefore be focussed on a view and the visual amenity experienced at a given view.

8.32 The assessment of a visual receptor to change is specific to the proposed development. However the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment offers the following generic guidance as a starting point for the assessment:

Table 8.4: Susceptibility of Visual Receptors to Change

| Susceptibility | Description of criteria |
|----------------|---|
| High | Residents; People engaged in outdoor recreation, including users of public rights of way, whose attention is likely to be focussed on the landscape and on particular views; Visitors to heritage assets or other attractions where views of the surroundings are an important part of the experience; Communities where views contribute to the landscape setting enjoyed by residents; and Travellers on scenic routes. |
| Medium | Travellers on road, rail or other transport routes, where the view is moderately important to the quality of the journey. |

| | |
|-----|---|
| Low | <p>People engaged in outdoor sport or recreation, which does not involve appreciation of views;</p> <p>People at their place of work, where the setting is not important to the quality of working life; and</p> <p>Travellers on road, rail or other transport routes, where the view is fleeting and incidental to the journey.</p> |
|-----|---|

8.33 The Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment qualifies the above examples as follows:

“This division is not black and white and in reality there will be a gradation in susceptibility to change. Each project needs to consider the nature of the groups of people who will be affected and the extent to which their attention is likely to be focussed on views and visual amenity.” (page 114, paragraph 6.35).

Overall Visual Sensitivity

8.34 The assessment of receptor sensitivity combines judgements on the susceptibility of the receptor to the specific type of development proposed and the value attributed to that receptor.

Magnitude of Impact

8.35 The magnitude of the impact is measured in relation to the extent that changes affect the landscape character and features of the view, either in a positive, neutral or negative way. The following descriptions define the magnitude:

Table 8.5: Criteria for determining magnitude of impact

| Magnitude of Impact | Criteria |
|----------------------|--|
| High | Leads to a major alteration to key elements/features/ characteristics of the view and/or introduces elements considered to be totally uncharacteristic when set in the attributes of the receiving landscape. |
| Medium | Leads to a partial loss or alteration to one or more of the key elements/features/ characteristics of the view that may be prominent but may not necessarily be considered to be substantially uncharacteristic when set in the attributes of the receiving landscape. |
| Low | Leads to a minor loss of or alteration to one or more of the key elements/features/ characteristics of the view that may not be uncharacteristic when set in the attributes of the receiving landscape. |
| No change/negligible | Leads to a nil or very minor alteration to one or more key elements/features/characteristics of the view that are not uncharacteristic when set in the attributes of the receiving landscape. |

Significance Criteria

8.36 In determining the significance of the impact, account is taken of the sensitivity of the visual receptor, the importance of the view and the predicted magnitude of the impact. The impact is described in terms of either being beneficial, adverse or neutral, where the impact is clearly identifiable, and negligible where the impact is

not clearly identifiable. An assessment of either major or major to moderate is considered significant for the purposes of the EIA Regulations.

8.37 The following matrix is used to determine the significance of an effect:

Table 8.6: Matrix for determining effect significance

| | | Sensitivity of Receptor | | |
|-----------|-----------|-------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| | | High | Medium | Low |
| Magnitude | High | Major | Moderate to major | Moderate |
| | Medium | Moderate to major | Moderate | Minor to moderate |
| | Low | Minor to moderate | Minor to moderate | Minor |
| | No change | Negligible | Negligible | Negligible |

8.38 The following table contains definitions of the terminology used to define the significance of landscape and visual impacts.

Table 8.7: Criteria for determining effect significance

| Significance criteria | Description of criteria |
|-----------------------|---|
| Major beneficial | Substantial local scale or moderate to substantial regional scale improvement in landscape/views. |
| Moderate beneficial | Moderate local scale improvement in landscape/views. |
| Minor beneficial | Minor local scale improvements in landscape/views. |
| Negligible | No appreciable impact on landscape/views. |
| Minor adverse | Minor local scale adverse impact on landscape/views. |
| Moderate adverse | Moderate changes to landscape and views. Severe temporary adverse impact on landscape/views. |
| Major adverse | Substantial changes landscape/views. Permanent adverse impact on landscape/views. |

Baseline Conditions

8.39 This section describes the baseline conditions at the site and surrounding area as relevant to the purposes of this chapter.

8.40 Staffordshire County Council approved a Revised Restoration Plan for the site dated December 2013, as shown at **Figure 8.2**, approved at SCC planning committee in March 2014. This Revised Restoration Plan therefore forms the baseline against which the proposals will be assessed.

Landscape Character

National Landscape Character

8.41 National landscape character is set out in Natural England’s Character Map of England^{vi}. The new NCA profiles update the previously published Joint Character

Area (JCAs) and Countryside Character Area descriptions (1998-1999 by the Countryside Agency). The site and surrounding study area are covered by NCA 64 'Potteries and Churnet Valley', as shown on **Figure 8.1**, which extends from Madeley in the west to Mayfield in the east, encompassing the important regional town of Leek and the city of Stoke-on-Trent. Key characteristics of the NCA include:

- Strongly dissected hills and small plateaux, rising up to the Pennines and cut by major river valleys.
- Strong contrast between remote uplands, urban areas, sheltered wooded valleys and hillside pastures.
- Prominent Millstone Grit and Coal Measures ridges.
- Sprawling industrial towns of the Potteries forming a major conurbation.
- Extensive former industrial and extractive sites, many now reclaimed, intermixed with settlements and open land.
- Open moorland and rough grazing on higher ground.
- Rural settlement pattern of sheltered villages on low ground with hamlets, scattered farmsteads and cottages elsewhere.
- Brick and sandstone older buildings with tile and slate roofs.

8.42 The site lies within close proximity to a number of other Character Areas, including NCA 52, entitled "*White Peak*", which is located a short distance south of the site. This NCA's key characteristics include:

- Elevated limestone plateau dissected by steeply cut dales and gorges with rocky outcrops, screes and cave systems.
- Long, narrow shelter belts of broad-leaved trees on high ground and along lead rakes with semi-natural broad-leaved woodland along dale sides.
- Clear, fast-flowing rivers and streams in some dales; others are dry or seasonal.
- Nucleated villages and small towns connected by crest and valley roads.
- Improved farmland for intensive dairy farming characterised by small narrow fields, often of medieval origin, around many villages and large rectangular fields away from the villages, formed by white limestone, dry stone walls and walled up lead rakes (forming a combination of white walls and green grass).
- Mosaic of herb-rich grassland, woodland and scrub along dales.
- Lack of a unifying style of architecture for buildings and settlements due to the availability of two dissimilar rock types, limestone and 'gritstone' used either singly or in combination in various parts of the area.
- Large-scale limestone quarries creating major scars in limited places in an otherwise attractive landscape.
- Long-disused workings for limestone and ores, particularly lead rakes, provide features rich in ecological, historical and cultural interest.
- Features of special archaeological interest together with strong cultural heritage dating from the earliest prehistoric past.

8.43 National Character Area 53, entitled "*South West Peak*", lies a short distance to the north-west of the site, adjacent to Area 52. This NCA's key characteristics are as follows:

- Integrated mosaic of landform and vegetation patterns comprising tracts of wild expansive moorland with heather on hill tops and ridges and small-scale enclosed farmland, with herb-rich hay meadows and rushy pastures, in valleys.
- Area of upland flanked by lower hills to the south and west and indented by valleys that broaden to the west into gently undulating lowland as the rivers drain to the Shropshire, Cheshire and Staffordshire Plain.

- Isolated 'gritstone' edges provide a dramatic contrast to rolling uplands.
 - Long, uninterrupted views, from margins to upland areas and vice versa. Contained and intimate views around the foothills.
 - Fringes to the upland dissected by river valleys with fast-flowing streams which create an intricate ridge and valley landscape of distinctive pattern and character.
 - Economy of the area based on stock rearing (sheep and beef) with some dairy farming and grouse shooting on the moorland.
 - Intricate and distinctive field patterns often with historic associations. Gritstone walls at higher elevations and hedgerows at lower elevations, with holly prevalent in the lower valleys.
 - Farm buildings and villages built predominantly of local stone reflecting local geology and history.
 - Small, nucleated settlements with extensive dispersed farm landscape, commonly with distinctive and recognisable area of intake.
 - Remains of former coal mining activity.
8. 44 National Character Area 68, entitled "*Needwood and South Derbyshire Claylands*", lies a short distance to the south of the site. This NCA's key characteristics are as follows:
- Rolling, glacial till plateau rising to prominent wooded heights above the central valley.
 - Wide, shallow central valley.
 - Gently rolling landscape in the north, dissected by numerous small valleys.
 - Predominantly pasture with good hedges but some areas of more open arable with low hedges. Varied hedgerow patterns.
 - Historic parks and country houses.
 - Red brick and half-timber villages with sandstone churches.
- 8.45 Due to the large scale of the character area in relation to the limited scale and visual influence of the proposals within it, potential impacts on the key landscape characteristics and elements and overall integrity are likely to be negligible. NCA 52 'White Peak', NCA 53 'South West Peak', NCA 64 'Potteries and Churnet Valley' and NCA 68 'Needwood and South Derbyshire Claylands' will not be taken forward as landscape receptors in this assessment. Character changes are more appropriately discussed on a local level as discussed below.

Local Landscape Character Areas

- 8.46 The Churnet Valley Landscape Character Assessment 2011^{vii} was commissioned by SMDC to input into the emerging Local Development Framework (LDF) for the District, in particular the Churnet Valley Masterplan. The Churnet Valley Masterplan was adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) in March 2014. The SPD supports the LDF by identifying opportunities and measures to help regenerate the rural area based around sustainable tourism, in a manner which is sensitive to and enhances its important heritage, landscape and ecology. The CVM actively encourages high quality design in all new development, and design which respects the valued characteristics of the Churnet Valley in terms of its site context, including the wider setting, density, massing and scale, impact on close and distant views, impact on streetscape and materials. Moneystone Quarry is identified as an opportunity site, with potential for a new leisure development based around the restoration of the quarry. Appropriate uses identified include holiday accommodation in the form of low impact holiday lodges up to a maximum of 250 units.
- 8.47 The Landscape Character Assessment of the Churnet Valley has been developed

from the Staffordshire wide assessment, undertaken by Staffordshire County Council in 2001 The 'Planning for Landscape Change' Landscape Character Assessment Supplementary Planning Guidance and the subsequent Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment (2008) aims to inform the Core Strategy. The latest sections of the character areas are relevant to Moneystone Quarry and the proposals have been extracted and are outlined below. This study also outlines information on landscape opportunities, threats and development guidelines.

- 8.48 The Assessment identifies 6 broad character types, each with sub areas. The site falls within two Character Types and three Character Type Sub Areas, which are briefly described below;

Character Type 1: Dissected Sandstone Cloughs and Valleys

Sub Area 1A: Alton and Oakamoor

- 8.49 This Landscape Character Type Sub Area follows the main valley of the River Churnet and its tributaries to the north of Alton and south of Oakamoor. Key characteristics relevant to the Moneystone site are as follows:

- Deeply incised wooded valleys with narrow winding watercourses;
- Rocky outcrops;
- Stone buildings and walls;
- Sheep and cattle farming with smallholdings;
- Large broadleaf woodlands;
- Narrow sunken lanes with hedgebanks and tall hedges that limit views;
- Dominant views to higher ground.

Capabilities and sensitivities of the landscape to accommodate change

- 8.50 "*Planning for Landscape Change*" Supplementary Planning Guidance to Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Structure Plan identifies this landscape character type as locally very sensitive to the impacts of development and land use change. The Churnet Valley is identified as an area of active landscape conservation.

Landscape Change/Incongruous Landscape Features:

- 8.51 Alton Towers Resort and associated busy roads and realigned junctions;
- Stock proof fencing and deteriorating hedgerows;
 - More recent development with no reference to building character within the area.

Analysis of Character Sub Area

- 8.52 a) Strengths:
- Substantial woodland belts;
 - Stone vernacular to small settlements;
 - Very small- scale landscape associated with squatter enclosures;
 - Strong valley features with rocky outcrops;
 - Registered Historic Park and Garden at Alton Towers and extensive remnant historic parkland including Farley;
 - Focal points of Alton Towers and Alton Castle and key vantage points from high ground;
 - Open Access Land and network of Public Rights of Way;
 - The Staffordshire Way;
 - Sabrina Way Bridleway;
 - Denstone/Oakamoor Cycleway.

b) Weaknesses:

- More recent development with no reference to local vernacular or pattern;
- Alton Towers Resort has resulted in changes to the local road network increasing junction sizes, with busy roads which create access problems for local residents and businesses;
- Stock proof and chain link fencing providing uncharacteristic boundaries;
- Abandoned development at Cotton College.

c) Opportunities:

- Making better use of Open Access Land and network of paths and rights of way for walking and cycling;
- Encourage good farming practices to maintain/replant hedgerows;
- Forestry management schemes to maintain biodiversity and good quality woodland;
- Create viewing opportunities with signage and interpretation;
- Moneystone Quarry redevelopment as a potential recreation destination.

d) Threats:

- Erosion of hedgerows is creating a larger scale landform;
- Tourist hotspots could result in further significant demand for improved infrastructure, road improvements and car park facilities, which need to be well managed so as not to result in loss of key landscape features and erosion of the landscape structure;
- Moneystone Quarry redevelopment proposals may cause loss of small scale landscape features further eroding the character of the local landscape;
- Lack of woodland management will result in the loss of these notable features within the landscape.

Planning and Management Issues/Future Pressures

8.53 Part of the Moneystone Quarry Key Opportunity Site;

- Route of disused railway line;
- Busy roads;
- Modern agricultural practice resulting in change of landscape scale through enlarging field sizes;
- Stock proof fencing and deteriorating hedgerows;
- Loss of woodland – poor management practices;
- Tourism and recreation associated with Destinations Sites: Moneystone Quarry (in part).

Landscaping Planning Guidelines

8.54 Hedgebanks, which are significant local features, should be protected and maintained.

- Field boundaries should be retained, maintained and, in places, replaced to maintain the scale of the landscape. Stone walls or native hedgerows should be used as a means of enclosure dependent upon local character. Replacement of hedges and drystone walls by fencing should be discouraged.
- The grouping and form of new buildings should reflect the juxtaposition, scale, form, enclosure and materials of traditional local buildings characteristic of this area. The influence of the building style associated with the historic parkland at Alton Towers extends into adjacent settlements.
- New planting should take account of landform, landscape scale and small field pattern. Consideration should be given to the spatial relationship between

woodland blocks and open areas so that the rhythm of the landscape is not disrupted.

- Both broadleaves and conifer species occur in this landscape and new plantings should generally reflect this mix. However woodland plantings should follow best practice advice provided by the Forestry Commission. Care should be taken not to interrupt important views across the landscape in particular from higher ground towards Alton Towers and Alton Castle, from Farley and Oakamoor.
- The Key Opportunity Site at Moneystone Quarry is generally well screened from view. However redevelopment proposals should take into account the sensitive nature of the small-scale landscape in terms of its protection. Particular regard should be taken of woodland planting that may result in the infill of this small scale landscape and which can create an adverse impact on the landscape character.
- New broadleaved woodland planting could be used effectively to counteract the effects of fragmentation and isolation of ancient woodland although this must consider the context and form of the existing woodland, and due regard to small scale landscape and squatter enclosures.
- Development and new tree planting including that within the Key Opportunities Site of Alton Towers should take account of the setting of the Registered Parkland of Alton Towers and the extensive remnant historic parkland of Alton Park and Farley, of the setting of important buildings and of important local views. Any proposals for development or land use change which impacts upon the setting of an historic parkland must take account of the unique character of that designed landscape.
- Care should be taken not to introduce unnecessary urban features into the rural scene (e.g. signage, urban road kerbs) including Oakamoor, Alton and Farley, particularly as a result of the influence of Alton Towers Resort.
- The colour of prefabricated agricultural buildings should be determined taking careful account of position, predominant tones of adjacent vegetation, local materials and sky, so as to minimise the visual impact of the development.
- Squatter enclosures are very small in scale and should be protected from development and change.
- Small scale landscapes are generally sensitive to change and care should be taken to protect these areas from development and minimising the loss of landscape features and erosion of the vegetation structure which will result in change of scale.
- Encourage the use of Open Access Land, Public Rights of Way, cycleways, and bridleways through increased access, circular walks, and appropriate signage and interpretation which demonstrate a chosen 'house style' for the Churnet Valley. Existing old Carriage Ways through woodland, associated with Alton Towers, should be considered for restoration to provide recreational links from Cheadle to Alton Towers and the Churnet Valley.
- Rocky outcrops are a notable feature in this landscape character type sub area and should be retained and protected from development or change.
- Key viewing opportunities should be created supported by signage and interpretation.
- Consideration should be given with the development of any lodges for recreational development, taking careful account of position, loss of valuable woodland or creation of screen woodlands with regard to the sensitive landscape and existing woodland form, materials, and access, to prevent any visual impact of the development or new planting.
- Consideration should be given to providing recreational opportunities along the Sabrina Way Bridleway for long distance horse riding accommodation. This small scale form of development should be considered alongside all other landscape planning guidelines specific to this area.

Character Type 1: Dissected Sandstone Cloughs and Valleys

Sub Area 1b: Consall and Froghall

8.55 This Landscape Character Type Sub Area follows the main valley of the River Churnet and its tributaries through Froghall and Consall Forge. It lies between the sub areas of Alton and Oakamoor (1a), and Cheddleton and Longsdon (1c) and covers the southern section of Moneystone Quarry, south of Eaves Lane.

Key characteristics relevant to the Moneystone site are as follows:

- Fewer deeply incised wooded valleys;
- More smaller valley features;
- More open and undulating cloughs;
- Sheep and cattle farming with smallholdings;
- Extensive recreation facilities and historic features;
- Industrial development;
- Busy main roads;
- Views from higher ground.

Capabilities and sensitivities of the landscape to accommodate change

8.56 Planning for Landscape Change Supplementary Planning Guidance to Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Structure Plan, identifies this landscape character type as locally very sensitive to the impacts of development and land use change. The Churnet valley is identified as an area of active landscape conservation.

Analysis of Character Sub Area

- 8.57
- a) Strengths
- Substantial woodland belts.
 - Small scale landscape around Moneystone Quarry and Foxt.
 - Strong recreational and tourism opportunities associated with the Churnet Valley Railway, Caldon Canal, Consall Nature Park, Combes Valley Nature Reserve and the Staffordshire Way.
- b) Weaknesses
- Landscape sensitive to change from tourism pressures and lack of management.
- c) Opportunities
- Making better use of the network of paths and rights of way for walking and cycling could divert the concentration of activities away from one key area.
 - Increased forestry management.
 - Provision of design guidance for improved tourist facilities e.g. car parking etc
 - Moneystone Quarry redevelopment as a potential recreation destination.
- d) Threats
- The tourist attractions and destination sites result in pressures across the landscape through lack of appropriate facilities, investment and repairs.
 - Tourist hotspots could result in significant demand for improved infrastructure, such as road improvements and car park facilities, which could result in loss of key landscape features and erosion of the landscape structure.
 - Erosion of hedgerows is creating a larger scale landscape.
 - Lack of woodland management will result in the loss of these notable features within the landscape.

Key Planning and Management Issues

- 8.58 Moneystone Quarry Key Opportunity Site
- Busy roads
 - Stock proof fencing and deteriorating hedgerows
 - Loss of woodland – poor management practices
 - Tourist and recreation pressures associated with Destination Sites:
 - Moneystone Quarry redevelopment proposals

Landscape Planning Guidelines

- 8.59 Hedgebanks which are significant local feature should be protected and maintained.
- Field boundaries should be retained, maintained and, in places, replaced to maintain the scale of the landscape. Stone walls or native hedgerows should be used as a means of enclosure dependent upon local character. Replacement of hedges and dry stone walls by fencing should be discouraged.
 - The grouping and form of new buildings should reflect the juxtaposition, scale, form, enclosure and materials of traditional local buildings characteristic of this local area.
 - New planting should take account of landform, landscape scale and small field pattern. Consideration should be given to the spatial relationship between woodland blocks and open areas so that the rhythm of the landscape is not disrupted.
 - Both broadleaves and conifer species occur in this landscape and new plantings should generally reflect this mix. However woodland plantings should follow best practice advice provided by the Forestry Commission. Care should be taken not to interrupt important views across the landscape. These are generally contained views from within the valley or from higher ground. In particular from Froghall, Caldon Canal towpath, Churnet Valley Railway, and Public Rights of Way.
 - Parts of the Key Opportunity Site at Moneystone Quarry are generally well screened from views. However redevelopment proposals should take into account the sensitive nature of the small-scale landscape in terms of its protection. Particular regard should be taken of woodland planting that may result in the infill of this small scale landscape and which can create an adverse impact on the landscape character.
 - New broadleaved woodland planting may be needed to reinforce landscape structure and counteract the effects of fragmentation and isolation of ancient woodland.
 - Care should be taken not to introduce unnecessary urban features into the rural scene (e.g. signage, urban road kerbs), in particular where providing recreation facilities and new development at the Key Opportunity Sites.
 - The colour of prefabricated agricultural buildings should be determined taking careful account of position, predominant tones of adjacent vegetation, local materials and sky, so as to minimise the visual impact of the development.
 - Squatter enclosures are very small in scale and should be protected from development and change.
 - Small scale landscapes are generally sensitive to change and care should be taken to protecting these areas from development and minimising the loss of landscape features and erosion of the vegetation structure which will result in change of scale.
 - Encourage the use of Public Rights of Way through increased access, circular walks, and appropriate signage and interpretation which demonstrate a chosen 'house style' for the Churnet Valley.
 - Key viewing opportunities should be created supported by signage and interpretation.

Development within Moneystone Quarry Key Opportunity Site

- 8.60 Redevelopment proposals of Moneystone Quarry should be in-keeping with the scale and nature of the landscape character of the three sub areas within which it is located. Active workings of Moneystone Quarry are generally well screened from views.
- Redevelopment proposals should take into consideration the openness and high visibility of areas outside of the active quarry particularly around Whiston. Development within these locations should be low key and should be of a nature, character and style that are intrinsic to the character of Whiston.
 - Any housing development should create a contiguous link to Whiston to ensure a natural flow with the village core and be of a layout that reflects the traditional expansion of the village.
 - Additional planting should be of a nature that complements the informal wooded setting of the Dissected Sandstone Cloughs and Valleys and relates to the existing woodland planting associated with the quarry. Woodland planting should aim take on the form and character of the ancient and semi natural woodland which is typical of the landscape character type. This should avoid the introduction of incongruous woodland blocks within the landscape. Formal planting should be discouraged throughout the redevelopment proposals as it is out of character with the area. Redevelopment proposals should take into account the sensitive nature of the small scale landscape in terms of its protection. Particular regard should be taken of woodland planting that may result in the infill of this small scale landscape and which can create an adverse impact on this landscape character. Proposals should seek to reinforce and appropriately manage existing hedgerows and hedgerow trees.
 - Development proposals that encourage the use of static caravans and lodges in visible locations should be discouraged. Static caravans and lodges should be located where they do not impinge on the small scale landscape or the open, visible landscape and where they can be well screened by existing vegetation or can be screened by appropriately located new planting.
 - To minimise the impact of vehicle movements associated with this redevelopment and pressure to carry out visually intrusive road improvement, sustainable transport measures and practice should be considered such as the creating of off road cycle routes to this attraction and partnership working with Moorland and City Railway Ltd to extend local rail access. Necessary road improvements associated with the expansion of the facility should be in-keeping with the character of the area and avoid creating intrusive urban features. Roads within the site should be of a scale and nature that are not intrusive to the landscape character and should minimise hedgerow and tree removal.

Character Type 3: Dissected Sandstone Highland Fringe

Sub Area 3A: Ipstones and Whiston

- 8.61 This Landscape Character Type Sub Area lies between the Dissected Sandstone Cloughs and Valleys of the Churnet Valley (1a and 1b) and the Gritstone Highland Fringe that extends through into the Peak Park.

Key characteristics relevant to the Moneystone site are as follows:

- Steep sided valleys and rounded dissected landform;
- Narrow wooded stream valleys;
- Intact small to medium scale pastoral landscape;
- Fields hedge lined or bounded by dry stone walls;

- Scattered hedgerow trees;
- Stone built farmhouses;
- Narrow, steep and winding lanes;
- Wide and distant views.

Capabilities and sensitivities of the landscape to accommodate change

- 8.62 Planning for Landscape Change Supplementary Planning Guidance to Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Structure Plan, identifies this landscape character type as locally very sensitive to the impacts of development and land use change. It is identified as an area of landscape maintenance. This is one of few landscapes within Staffordshire that is identified in the Supplementary Planning Guidance as sensitive to woodland planting.

Analysis of Character Sub Area

- 8.63
- a) Strengths
- The small-scale landscape and squatter enclosure that reflect historic field patterns are particularly evident within this landscape.
 - Villages of Whiston and Foxt generally retain context and recent development respects local vernacular.
 - Views from high ground.
- b) Weaknesses
- Busy main roads.
- c). Opportunities
- Redevelopment proposals of Moneystone Quarry should provide recreational opportunities.
 - Extensive Public Rights of Way.
 - Management plans for field management.
- d) Threats
- Suburban influences on village character.
 - Erosion of field boundaries is creating a larger scale landform.
 - Tourist hotspots could result in further significant demand for improved infrastructure, road improvements and car park facilities, which need to be well managed so as not to result in loss of key landscape features and erosion of the landscape structure.

Key Planning and Management Issues

- 8.64 Part of the Moneystone Quarry Key Opportunity Site.
- Run down, isolated farmsteads.
 - Busy roads.
 - Large scale agricultural pressures.
 - Stock proof fencing and deteriorating hedgerows and dry stone walls.
 - Tourism and Recreation associated with Destinations Sites.

Landscape Planning Guidelines

- 8.65 The open character of the upland edge should be maintained.
- Field boundaries should be retained, maintained and, in places, replaced to maintain the scale of the landscape. Stone walls or native hedgerows should be used as a means of enclosure dependent upon local character. Replacement of hedges and dry stone walls by fencing should be discouraged.

- Improvements to run down and isolated farms and buildings should be encouraged but changes that detract from local character and over urbanise properties and their settings should be avoided
 - The grouping and form of new buildings should reflect the juxtaposition, scale, form, enclosure and materials of traditional farm buildings characteristic of this area.
 - There are limited opportunities for additional woodland planting. Planting should be generally restricted to the valleys where additional small scale plantings can reinforce the existing vegetation and landscape structure. Woodland plantings should follow best practice advice provided by the Forestry Commission.
 - The Key Opportunity Site at Moneystone Quarry is generally well screened from views. However redevelopment proposals should take into account the sensitive nature of the small-scale landscape in terms of its protection. This impacts on the setting of Whiston. Any housing development associated with Moneystone Quarry near to Whiston should be low key and should be of a nature, character and style that are intrinsic to the character of Whiston. Particular regard should be taken of woodland planting that may result in the infill of this small scale landscape and which can create an adverse impact on the landscape character.
 - Care should be taken not to introduce unnecessary urban features into the rural scene (e.g. excessive or inappropriate signage, urban road kerbs).
 - The colour of prefabricated agricultural buildings should be determined taking careful account of position, predominant tones of adjacent vegetation, local materials and sky, so as to minimise the visual impact of the development. The scale of these buildings should be minimised where possible to reflect the scale of the landscape. Planting may also be used to reduce visual scale.
 - Squatter enclosures are very small in scale and should be protected from development and change.
 - This character sub area has a large proportion of small-scale landscape. Small scale landscapes are generally sensitive to change and care should be taken to protecting these areas from development and minimising the loss of landscape features and erosion of the vegetation structure which will result in change of scale.
 - Encourage the use of Open Access Land, Public Rights of Way, and bridleways through increased access, circular walks, and appropriate signage and interpretation which demonstrate a chosen 'house style' for the Churnet Valley.
 - Consideration should be given to providing recreational opportunities along the Sabrina Way Bridleway for long distance horse riding accommodation with livery. This small scale form of development should be considered alongside all other landscape planning guidelines specific to this area.
 - Key viewing opportunities should be created supported by signage and interpretation.
- 8.66 Due to the sensitive nature and relatively large scale of Moneystone Quarry, which contrasts with the surrounding rural land use, character areas 1a, 1b and 3a will be taken forward as landscape receptors in this assessment.
- 8.67 Through consideration of the key elements relating to value, a landscape value of 'medium' has been assigned to the local landscape character areas which cover the site. The local landscape character areas are not fully intact landscapes (high value) when considered as a whole, due to previous quarrying activities for example, but neither does it represent a degraded landscape in poor condition (low value)
- 8.68 The susceptibility of the local landscape character areas has been assessed as 'medium' as the proposed development has a degree of consistency with the existing scale, pattern, grain, land use of the prevailing character. The

masterplan aims to integrate the proposals into the restored landscape and topography. This results in an assessment of 'medium' sensitivity overall for the local landscape character areas.

Non-Landscape Designations

Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)

- 8.69 The 4 Ha (10 acre) Whiston Eaves SSSI lies to the north of the disused railway line, between Key Wood and Ross Lane, and falls outside of the site boundary. The designation recognises the quality of the defined area in terms of its ecological value, and aims to protect these special qualities. The SSSI site encompasses a series of species rich meadows with areas of herb rich fields, areas of orchid and areas of woodland.

Site of Biological Interest (SBI)

- 8.70 A designated SBI lies to the south-west of the site at Rake Edge, and encompasses a similar type of habitat as found within the SSSI. The designation recognises the site's local importance as one of the best remaining areas of semi-natural habitat in the county in terms of naturalness, diversity or rarity of species or communities.

Green Belt

- 8.71 A substantial area of Green Belt covers the western half of the Local Plan area. The eastern fringes of the Green Belt extend to Kingsley Holt, approximately 0.76 miles (1.22km) beyond the western site boundary. Green Belt is a policy and land use designation used to retain areas of largely undeveloped land separating neighbouring urban areas, it is not a landscape designation. The Moneystone Quarry site itself lies outside of the Green Belt.
- 8.72 The SSSI and SBI designations lie immediately adjacent to the site boundary and are therefore considered to be landscape receptors which have the potential to be impacted upon as part of the proposed development, albeit that the designations relate to their ecological interest.
- 8.73 Any potential impacts on ecology will be considered within chapter 9 of the ES.

Listed Buildings

- 8.74 Little Eaves Farm and Barn are located at approximately 0.3 km to the west of the former quarry entrance and will be carried forward as a landscape receptor due to the potential impacts on their setting by the development. Whiston Eaves Farm and stables are shown as listed buildings on the English Heritage National Heritage List for England but were demolished to make way for the quarry extension 3.
- 8.75 There are a number of other listed buildings and structures within Oakamoor to the south-east, and Whiston to the north-west. However, lack of intervisibility means that they are not considered to be receptors within this assessment.
- 8.76 Any impacts on heritage assets will be assessed within Chapter 10 of the ES.

Public Rights of Way

The Staffordshire Way

8.77 The Staffordshire Way is a long distance recreational route through Staffordshire. It connects to other long distance routes including the Cheshire Gritstone Trail, the Heart of England Way and the North Worcestershire Path. The route starts at Mow Cop Castle on the gritstone hills on the edge of the Peak District in North Staffordshire and finishes in the south-west of the county at the dramatic sandstone ridge of Kinver Edge. The path lies to the south-west of the site, within the low lying River Churnet river valley, and follows a roughly north-east/south-west axis. The 47.5 miles (76.4) section between Rushton Spencer, near Congleton on the edge of the Peak District, to Cannock Chase south-east of Stafford, which includes the section of route closest to the site, forms part of the European Path. The European, or E2 path, is a 4850km long-distance footpath that runs from Galway in Ireland to France's Mediterranean coast, via Scotland, England, The Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg and France. It is one of a network of European long-distance paths.

8.78 Any visual connections between the site and the Staffordshire Way would be of significance due to the status of the route. However, low ground levels and the relatively wooded character of the river valley mean that the Staffordshire Way is not identified as a receptor within this assessment.

Staffordshire Moorlands Walks

8.79 Staffordshire Moorlands Walks are a series of 16 self-guided walks defined by Staffordshire District Council through the Staffordshire Moorlands. The site lies within close proximity to "Route 11: Woods and Ways – Oakamoor". The route starts at Carr Wood near Oakamoor, within close proximity to the site's south-eastern boundary. The approximately 3 mile route heads north, crossing Eaves Lane/Carr Bank before continuing up Blakeley Lane. At Upper Cotton, the route heads south along a more elevated public footpath to reconnect to the start point.

8.80 The route has the potential for visual connections into the site and has therefore been identified as a receptor within this assessment.

Local Public Rights of Way, Cycleways and Bridleways

8.81 The site is surrounded by comprehensive network of public footpaths, bridleways and cycle routes as shown on **Figure 8.5**. A public footpath currently enters the site at the main quarry site entrance, and forms a connection to Key Wood to the south. The footpath is largely separated from the quarry, but at points along the route a positive pedestrian experience has been severely compromised by quarrying activities.

8.82 A second public footpath passing through the site forms a connection between The Staffordshire Moorlands Walks route/Carr Wood and Crowtrees. The route is rural in character, passing through grazing land with clearly defined field boundaries. Glimpsed views of upper elements within the quarry processing plant are visible, and along with noise associated with the processing activities give a good indication of the nearby quarrying activities from this route.

8.83 The Sabrina Way is a long distance route (203 miles) primarily for horse riders that links bridleways through five counties, starting in Derbyshire, running south through Staffordshire and linking with the Staffordshire Moorlands Challenge Walk and The Staffordshire Way, and finishing in Oxfordshire.

8.84 The National Cycle Network includes some 12,600 miles of walking and cycling routes throughout the UK. Proposed National Route 54 of the Network will run from Stourport, near Kidderminster, to Derby. The section of the route within

close proximity to the site is part of the White Peak Loop, a section of Route 54, which starts in Derby, passes through Cromford in the Peak District and back to Derby. The route is currently open in part, and includes the section on the Old Churnet Rail line between Oakamoor and Denstone.

- 8.85 Due to their proximity to the site, local routes have been identified as potential receptors within this assessment.

Topography

- 8.86 The wider topography, as shown on **Figure 8.6**, surrounding the site is dramatic, with considerable level changes. The low-lying river valley cuts through the area on a roughly north-west/south-east axis. Ground levels rise sharply away from the river to the north-east, and form a steep ridge on the fringes of the Peak District National Park. The quarry occupies a relatively low/intermediate level in the wider topographic context.
- 8.87 Several of the surrounding settlements, including the nearest small town of Cheadle, lie in the low-lying river valley due to the more even ground levels. Whiston and Ipstones to the north/north-west lie on slightly higher ground, along with more outlying settlements to the north-east.
- 8.88 The topography of the site has been drastically altered by the mining activities that have been carried out on the site over the course of the last 50 years. The site is broadly 'tiered' with Quarry 2, to the north of Eaves Lane, at the highest level, and Quarries 1 and 3, and the main processing plant at a lower level. South of the processing plant, ground levels fall steeply to the River Churnet. The farmland and countryside to the east and west of the quarry is characterised by rolling ground levels, incised by steep-sided valleys, which fall in the general direction of the River Churnet to the south-west of the site. Ground levels within the site will be remediated as part of the implementation of the Revised Restoration Plan, which forms the baseline for this assessment. Additional minor modifications to ground levels will be required to implement the proposed development therefore topography at site level has been identified as a receptor within this assessment.

Tree Cover

- 8.89 The site contains areas of woodland, which is typical of the wider regional landscape character, featuring a deeply incised wooded valley and narrow watercourse to the west. The woodland varies in character, with both broadleaved and coniferous, plantation and semi-natural woodland present on the site. Areas of broadleaved semi-natural woodland are largely located in the more undisturbed parts of the site, such as around the extreme perimeters of the site, along Eaves Lane, and south/south-east of the site in the vicinity of the River Churnet. Around the quarries themselves there are extensive areas of woodland and dense scrub to create screening of views. Areas of broadleaved plantation woodland provide screening around the southern and eastern edges of the processing plant, and extend along the southern edge of Eaves Lane. The ecological assessment report provides a broad assessment of the value of the woodland across the site. In addition a Tree Survey is provided in Appendix 9.2 for reference. Tree cover has therefore been identified as a receptor within this assessment. The baseline for the site is as detailed within the approved Restoration Plan (**Figure 8.2**).

Visual Analysis

- 8.90 The majority of the 3 quarries and quarrying activities are currently well concealed from most public views through careful positioning in the landscape, favourable topography and screening by tree cover. The nature of the quarrying activities means that the quarries themselves are located at lower ground levels to the immediate surrounding context. Therefore tree cover, in the form of existing woodland and areas of plantation, successfully screens many potential views of the quarries. In addition, landscape bunding around Quarry 3 provides screening of much of this quarry from Eaves Lane.
- 8.91 In close proximity to the Appeal Site publically accessible views are highly localised, largely as a result of the character context described above, with the visual perception of the Site described as follows:

Quarry 1 (located to the south)

- i. To the north – filtered and elevated views are available from limited sections of Eaves Lane. The lane is flanked by a stone wall, woodland planting with scattered Holly understorey and is mostly used by vehicles travelling between Whiston and Oakmoor. The former Quarry 1 processing area and the retained buildings are visible as part of a sequence of glimpsed transient views and, it is evident that even with restoration underway that the landscape in this locality has been significantly altered. Filtered skyline views south are also available to the distant rising land associated with Hawksmoor Wood (see Photoviewpoints 3, 4 and 6).
- ii. To the east – during the winter months there are filtered views available from sections of the Cowtrees PRow and the linked Staffordshire Moorlands PRow. This recreational route has a largely north-south focus; however, users can obtain glimpsed views of the restored Quarry 1 surface and the retained administration buildings. The views are restricted by boundary vegetation and the intervening woodland block (see Photoviewpoints 1 and 2).
- iii. To the south – visibility is largely limited by the topography and the wooded slopes between Newhay Wood and Oakmoor. Very limited, transient highway views north can be obtained from a short section of Oakmoor Road (B5417), some 1.1km from the Appeal Site. A small portion of the restored quarry is barely perceptible above the intervening woodland (see Photoviewpoint 9).
- iv. To the south-west – glimpsed distant views are available from limited sections of Hawksmoor Wood, some 1.9km from the Appeal Site. development were deemed to be inconclusive given the woodland context. Whilst several clearings do exist, most users are experiencing the recreational paths as part of the woodland context. Where visible, the Sibelco Laboratories and the retained Quarry 1 administration buildings sit as a distant component of a much wider panorama (see Photoviewpoint 16). In closest proximity, there is also some inter-visibility with the Grade II Little Eaves Farmhouse, which sits on locally rising topography. Whilst a woodland block and boundary planting prevents clear views, an easement gap associated with the overhead power lines offers some appreciation of the partially restored quarry, the remaining infrastructure and the Sibelco Laboratories from PRow Kingsley 49. The backdrop is still dominated by characteristic wooded outcrops.
- v. To the west – there are distant highway views the Appeal Site (some 2.2km distance) from Lockwood Road, located to the south of Kingsley Holt; however, Quarry 1 itself appears to be screened by the intervening landform and associated vegetation. In closer proximity to west, the transient recreational views (from PRow Kingsley 68, 78 and junction

- between PRow Kingsley 75 and Ross Lane) are also screened by intervening topography and the intervening woodland blocks (see Photoviewpoints 7 and 8).
- vi. To the north-west – the extent of Quarry 1 is obscured from view at the more elevated PRow that connects Whiston with Whiston Grange. Likewise, from the closest highway receptors associated with Eaves Lane there is no visibility to Quarry 1 because of the roadside bund and establishing restoration planting (see Photoviewpoints 11, 12, 13 and 14).

Quarry 2 and the Black Plantation (located to the north)

- i. To the north – visibility of Quarry 2 is limited by the topography and the wooded margins associated with the former quarry face. Views towards the woodland edge of Black Plantation are available from the elevated section of Blakeley Lane (see Photoviewpoint 10); and, from PRow Kingsley 50 and Oakmoor 1R/2327 that immediately adjoins the plantation (see Photoviewpoints 15).
- ii. To the east – views are blocked by the presence of the woodland planting that adjoins Blakeley Lane.
- iii. To the south – filtered views are available from a section of Eaves Lane. The lane is flanked by a gappy stone wall, woodland planting with scattered Holly understorey. Receptors are largely associated with vehicles travelling between Whiston and Oakmoor. The former Quarry 2 stock piles, excavated quarry slopes and the drying lagoon are visible as part of a sequence of glimpsed transient views and, it is evident that even with restoration underway that the landscape in this locality has been significantly altered. Boundary vegetation also has the ability to increasingly filter these highway views. (see Photoviewpoint 5). In terms of more distant views from the south, Quarry 2 is barely perceptible from Oakmoor Road (B5417) given the extent of intervening vegetation; and, the coniferous trees associated with the Black Plantation can be seen as part of a wide panorama, and not appearing on the distant skyline. Distant views are also available from Hawksmoor wood to the south, however, the viewers must step off the course of the public footpath to experience a clearing where views are possible
- iv. To the west and north-west – the presence of the woodland vegetation to the south of Whiston Barn, restricts inter-visibility with Quarry 2 from the PRow that connects Whiston with Whiston Grange. There are some limited distant highway views to the Appeal Site (approximately 2.2km away) from Lockwood Road, located to the south of Kingsley Holt. The Quarry 2 stock piles are partially visible during the winter months; and, the Black Plantation can be seen in association with other coniferous woodland belts (see Photoviewpoint 8).

Quarry 3 (located to the west)

- i. To the north and north-west – the extent of Quarry 3 is obscured from view even at the more elevated sections of the PRow that connects Whiston with Whiston Grange. The former quarry nestles within a wider panorama where the wooded outcrops are the dominant feature. When considering the closest highway receptors that immediately adjoin Quarry 3 on Eaves Lane, the roadside bund and establishing restoration planting filters views to all but the upper limits of the north facing exposed quarry face (see Photoviewpoints 6, and 11-14).
- ii. To the east – views are largely blocked by the vegetated quarry face and the woodland planting that aligns both Eaves Lane and the access drive to the quarry (see Photoviewpoint 3).

- iii. To the south and south-west – visibility is largely restricted by the rising topography associated with the Grade II Little Eaves Farmhouse. From PRow Kingsley 49, Quarry 3 is largely screened by the restoration planting that flanks the southern boundary. With regards to distant views, sections of Hawksmoor Wood offer users experiencing the recreational paths, very glimpsed views of the landscape surrounding Quarry 3, but it is very difficult to perceive as a distant component of a much wider panorama (see Photoviewpoint 16).
- iv. To the west – the boundary of Quarry 3 is more open; however, the sunken nature of the excavated quarry and the local topography restricts any sense of clear inter-visibility with the transient recreational views from PRow Kingsley 68, 78 and junction between PRow Kingsley 75 and Ross Lane. From the more distant PRow Kingsley 68, near Littleheath House Farm, a portion of the upper exposed quarry face is visible; albeit a very small part of a much wider scene and increasingly obscured during the summer months (see Photoviewpoint 14).

8.92 Overall, when considering the size of the former quarry complex it is apparent that the Appeal Site forms a relatively discreet and well contained feature within the landscape. This is supported through the descriptive analysis of the Visual Envelope, which determines that views are predominantly localised and filtered by both landform and vegetation. In the limited instances where distant views are available, the Appeal Site is experienced as a largely concealed component part of a scene that is dominated the characteristic incised valleys and wooded outcrops. Furthermore, it is important to note that there is no viewpoint location where the combined visibility of all of the quarry components are available.

Visual Receptors

8.93 Visual receptors refer to those people who will be directly or indirectly affected by the proposed development. Key visual receptors for the new development include the following (in descending order of sensitivity): -

- Users of surrounding cycle, footpath and bridleway routes for recreational purposes, whose potential may be focussed on the landscape;
- Communities where the development results in changes in the landscape character or views enjoyed by the community;
- People travelling through or past the affected landscape in vehicles;
- People at their place of work.

Principal Viewpoints

8.94 A total of 17 viewpoints have been selected following comprehensive desktop and on-site survey and investigation, and following consultation with the Council. The viewpoint locations are shown on **Figure 8.8** and the views are shown in **Appendix 8.2**. The baseline for the visual assessment is based on how the site will exist when restored, as detailed within the approved Restoration Plan (**Figure 8.2**). The principal viewpoints form a range of representative viewpoints from around the site and are as follows:

View 1: Staffordshire Moorlands Walks/Crowtrees public footpath.

8.95 This viewpoint is located on the fringes of the site to the east, adjacent to Carr Wood and within close proximity to the junction between the public footpath that crosses the site at Crowtrees and the route of the Staffordshire Moorlands Walk. The view looks west across the sections of the site to the south of Eaves Lane.

- 8.96 The view is rural in character, incorporating features typical of the regional and local character, including dry stone walling, hedgerows and hedgerow trees.
- 8.97 Little Eaves Farm is visible in the distance, due to its slightly elevated location. The farm lies outside but immediately adjacent to the site boundary.
- 8.98 St Weburgh's Church in Kingsley is visible in the far extents of the view, occupying a prominent position on higher ground approximately 2.4 miles to the west of the site.
- 8.99 The buildings and structures that formed part of the processing plant have been removed as part of the site restoration works and therefore no longer feature in the view that forms the baseline of this assessment. The restored site surface and retained administration buildings are visible during the winter months, albeit still heavily filtered by the intervening woodland belt and layers of hedgerow planting. Other changes in the baseline view as a result of implementation of the Revised Restoration plan will be negligible.

View 2: Crowtrees footpath.

- 8.100 The viewpoint is located along the public footpath that crosses the eastern edge of the site and connects Carr Wood with Crowtrees Farm and Eaves Lane. The view looks west/south-west across those portions of the site to the south of Eaves Lane.
- 8.101 Similar to View 1, the existing View 2 is rural in character, featuring pasture farmland, and a belt of mature field trees, with a single field tree of considerable landscape value in the foreground of the view.
- 8.102 In the distance, Little Eaves Farm is visible on a crest of higher ground, approximately 0.6 miles from the viewpoint location.
- 8.103 The vast majority of the former quarried land is screened by its location at lower ground levels and dense belts of surrounding tree cover. As noted above, the buildings and structures that formed part of the processing plant have been removed as part of the site restoration works and therefore no longer feature in the view that forms the baseline of this assessment. The retained administration buildings are visible during the winter months. Other changes in the view as a result of site restoration will be negligible.
- 8.104 As with view 1, St Weburgh's Church in Kingsley is visible in the far extents of the view.

View 3: Site entrance, Whiston Eaves.

- 8.105 Viewpoint 3 looks into the existing site entrance from Eaves Lane. Despite forming the main ingress and egress for site traffic, the existing road is not inconsistent with the country lanes typical of the area. It is approximately 6.6 metres in width, and bordered by grass verges with dry stonewall boundaries. The access point to the public footpath that enters the site is clearly in view.
- 8.106 The location of former quarrying operations within the site are screened from this viewpoint due to their location at lower ground levels and heavy screening by trees bordering the entrance road. Implementation of the Revised Restoration Plan will therefore result in negligible change to the character of the view. The trees bordering the route also serve to frame views to Key Wood, which lies on rising ground beyond the site boundary to the south.

View 4: Eaves Lane, Crowtrees south.

- 8.107 Viewpoint 4 is located on Eaves Lane, which runs between the northern and southern portions of the site. The view looks south-west over the partially restored western half of the former Quarry 1 and towards the main processing plant.
- 8.108 The former quarry is located at significantly lower ground levels than the road and is visually screened by dense tree cover along the edge of Eaves Lane. When in full leaf, the tree cover provides substantial screening of views beyond, allowing only glimpsed views of the almost immediately adjacent quarry, and areas of open farmland and woodland on rising land beyond the site boundary.
- 8.109 Full implementation of the Revised Restoration Plan will result in a negligible change in the current view. The woodland in the foreground will be retained, restricting views to the restored open grassland, scrub wetland and open water beyond.

View 5: Eaves Lane, Crowtrees north.

- 8.110 Viewpoint 5 is located on Eaves Lane, within close proximity to Viewpoint location 4, but looking north towards former quarry 2. The view is dominated by tree cover with a dense shrub understorey, and there is limited physical evidence of the adjacent former quarrying activities. Implementation of the Revised Restoration Plan will therefore have a negligible impact on the character of this view. Minor change will be evident during the winter months, but this will be in accordance with the CVM principles.

View 6: Eaves Lane.

- 8.111 View 6 is located on Eaves Lane to the west of Viewpoints 3, 4 and 5, within close proximity to Cottage Farm. The view looks east, along Eaves Lane and south-east towards former Quarry 3. The view approximates the view of vehicular traffic and cyclists travelling east along Eaves Lane, and pedestrians using the public footpath along the northern edge of the Quarry 3.
- 8.112 A landscape bund along Eaves Lane within the site, along with a substantial drop in ground levels to the quarry bottom, serve to screen the majority of the quarrying activity. However, the upper fringes of Quarry 3 is currently visible.
- 8.113 The landscape within this part of the site was altered beyond all recognition from its original character by the former quarrying activities. The Revised Restoration Plan will work with this man-made landscape to establish a new landscape character that will provide visual interest and potential ecological value. In particular, proposed works will include new broadleaf woodland planting to the reinforce the existing bunding along the northern edge of the lake, retention of existing newly planted woodland on the southern edge of the existing lake and a matrix of bare ground, seeded grassland and heathland around the lake edges. These new landscape elements will change the character of the baseline view from the present condition. In particular, the restoration plan indicates a new belt of native woodland tree and shrub planting onto of the existing earth mound, that once established would form a dense screen to views of Quarry 3 from the road.

View 7: A521, Kingsley Holt.

8.114 View 7 is located to the west of the site, on the A521 in Kingsley Holt. Views towards the site are glimpsed views between dwellings fronting the A521, but the viewpoint also represents views from the rear of properties fronting the A521 on the eastern site. The viewpoint lies approximately 2.5km from the centre of the site. Implementation of the Revised Restoration Plan will knit the former quarry site into the surrounding landscape.

View 8: Wood House Farm, Lockwood Road.

8.115 View 8 is located on Lockwood Road, in close proximity to Wood House Farm. The viewpoint is located approximately 2.4km to the south-west of the centre of the site. The majority of the site is not clearly distinguishable in the view due to a combination of ground levels and tree cover. Implementation of the Revised Restoration Plan will further knit the former quarry site into the surrounding landscape.

View 9: Oakamoor Road.

8.116 View 9 is located just off Oakamoor Road, to the south-west of Oakamoor village. The centre of the site is approximately 1.6km to the north of the viewpoint.

8.117 The viewpoint is located at lower ground levels than the site, and intervening tree cover, including parts of Key Wood, Newhay Wood and Carr Wood, along with tree cover along the River Churnet and within the site boundary prevents site visibility.

View 10: Blakeley Lane.

8.118 The viewpoint is located on higher ground approximately 1km to the north of the centre of the site. The three former quarries and the main processing plant are screened by their location at lower ground levels and by screening tree planting. Implementation of the Revised Restoration Plan will therefore not visibly change the character of the view.

View 11: Whiston Hall/Public Right of Way.

8.119 This viewpoint is located approximately 1.1km north-west of the centre of the site. Views of the three former quarries and main processing plant are obscured by intervening tree cover and their location at lower ground levels, with glimpsed views of surrounding farmland. Implementation of the Revised Restoration Plan will therefore not visibly change the character of the view.

View 12: Eaves Lane, Whiston.

8.120 This viewpoint is located approximately 1.1km to the north-west of the centre of the site, within the public green space/ play area on Eaves Lane. Views of the three former quarries and former processing plant area are obscured by intervening tree cover and their location at lower ground levels, with glimpsed views of surrounding farmland. Implementation of the Revised Restoration Plan will therefore not visibly change the character of the view.

View 13: A52.

8.121 View 13 is located approximately 1.6km to the north-west of the centre of the site. Views of the three former quarries and former processing plant area are obscured by intervening tree cover and their location at lower ground levels, with glimpsed views of surrounding farmland. Implementation of the Revised Restoration Plan will therefore not visibly change the character of the view.

View 14: Ross Road.

8.122 View 14 is located on Ross Road adjacent to Eavesford Farm. The viewpoint is located on the western site boundary, and looks towards Heath House. Heath House is currently unoccupied. Views of the three former quarries and main processing plant are obscured by intervening tree cover and their location at lower ground levels, with glimpsed views of surrounding farmland. Implementation of the Revised Restoration Plan will therefore not visibly change the character of the view.

View 15: Blackley Lane.

8.123 View 15 is located on Blackley Lane and looks south-west towards the former quarry site. The existing view is rural in character, with the quarry areas heavily screened by existing tree cover. Implementation of the Revised Restoration Plan will therefore not visibly change the character of the view.

View 16: View from Hawksmoor Wood.

8.124 The viewpoint is located off the public footpath route through the woodland, approximately 1.7km to the south of the site. It provides a long-range view towards the site.

View 17: View from public footpath close to Little Eaves Farmhouse

8.125 The viewpoint is located approximately 140m to the south of the site on the public footpath route which runs past the Grade II listed Little Eaves Farmhouse. The viewpoint allows filtered views towards the proposed location for the hub, with views partially enclosed by screening tree cover. Impact in relation to the Little Eaves Farmhouse setting are considered in Chapter 10- Heritage and Archaeology.

Potential Impacts

8.126 Potential landscape impacts relate to individual landscape elements, and the characteristics of the surrounding landscape character, prior to any consideration of mitigation, in addition to implementation of the restoration plan which forms the baseline of this assessment. However, identification of potential impacts has been a key driver in the evolution of the masterplan, and those mitigation measures that have been designed in are assessed as part of the scheme proposals. The predicted landscape impacts can be divided into temporary impacts, i.e. those which will occur during the construction phase, and permanent impacts, which will be on-going throughout the operational phase of the proposals.

Construction effects***Activities and proposals with the potential for significant effects***

8.127 The proposed development is promoted in outline subject to parameters. It therefore cannot be predicted with certainty the precise methodology that will be adopted for construction and site management at this stage. However, the principles of such construction are reasonably well understood and it is therefore possible to identify the broad impacts that may arise during the construction phase:

- The visual impact of HGV movements carrying out the implementation of the masterplan proposals.
- Landscape impacts of remodelling ground levels.
- The visual impact of site hoarding erected prior to the commencement of works on site and the visual impacts of offloading, storing and handling materials within compound areas.
- The moving and relocating of materials from the compound area to the required construction area within the site.
- The visual impact of site lighting around construction areas.
- Landscape impacts of incorporating services and utilities.
- Visual impact of temporary screening measures and protective fencing.
- Landscape and visual impacts of temporary parking, on-site accommodation and work areas.
- Landscape and visual impact of material stockpiles.

Operational effects

Activities and proposals with the potential for significant effects

8.128 Potential landscape impacts relate to individual landscape elements and landscape character. The significant potential effects that will be identified and assessed are:

- Direct impacts on landscape character as a result of new development, and implementation of landscape masterplan;
- Direct impacts on topography;
- Direct impacts on tree cover;
- Indirect impacts on immediately adjacent designated landscapes of value, and visual impacts on the setting of designated landscapes;
- Visual impacts on receptors using footpaths, bridlepaths and cycle routes, landscape impacts in the locations and connectivity of routes;
- Impacts on topography through the integration of new development into the site, and the associated ground modelling works required.

8.129 Potential visual impacts are considered in terms of changes to the extent of visibility of the site and changes to the identified principal viewpoints. Visual impacts can be classified as either short-range, medium-range or long-range. Short-range views are likely to be considered sensitive due to their proximity to the site, however this also depends on the sensitivity of the visual receptor. Medium and/or long-range views are also likely to be considered highly sensitive, located largely within designated landscapes or from long distance recreational routes from which users are likely to be focussed on the landscape.

8.130 The design proposals have been formulated through an iterative process including environmental assessment and consultation. This process has allowed site constraints and opportunities to directly influence the evolution of the masterplan. As a result, mitigation measures form an integral part of the masterplan proposals. The key design considerations are described below.

- The Hub building is located on flat, low lying area in order to maximise potential to accommodate larger buildings.
- Lodges are located within areas identified with potential for least visual impact.
- Development is integrated into the site utilising existing levels, and will therefore enable the retention of existing landscape features around lodges with potential for visual screening benefits.
- One-storey high lodges are proposed in potentially more visually prominent and/or sensitive locations.

- Quarry 3 – the proposed development is lower density than elsewhere, due to potential views from Eaves Lane
- New planting is proposed in key sensitive areas to minimise potential visual impacts.

8.131 Laver Leisure have sought to accommodate the concerns of the Planning Committee in relation to the 2014 outline application. Accordingly, without prejudice to the ongoing appeal by Laver Leisure, HOW Planning has been instructed to submit this revised planning application which directly addresses all the issues raised within the reasons for refusal. This includes the following changes of relevance to the LVIA:

- The height of the proposed hub building has been reduced from 12 metres to 6 metres and the proposed climbing wall has been removed and does not form part of this planning application;
- The Parameter Plan provides more certainty on the future location of the hub buildings. The area in which the hub buildings can be located at the detailed design stage have been significantly reduced as shown on the Parameter Plan which accompanies this application re-submission;
- Additional landscaping is proposed within the hub area which further screens the hub development from the listed building and the surrounding footpaths. The additional landscaping is shown on the Illustrative Landscape Detailed Plan for The Hub which also accompanies this application re-submission;
- The 14 lodges proposed at Black Plantation and the proposed vehicular access from Blackley Lane have been removed as part of this application resubmission. Whilst both the land at Black Plantation and Blakeley Lane remain within the site edged red, permission for this work is not sought as part of the re-submitted application. Black Plantation is shown as “retained existing woodland” on the Parameter Plan; and
- The total number of lodges for which planning permission is sought as part of this application re-submission remains at up to 250 lodges. The 14 lodges removed from Black Plantation have been re-distributed within Quarry 2 – The Upper Lakes. The re-distributed lodges are within the existing development areas as shown on the Parameter Plan and the Illustrative Masterplan for the Upper Lakes.

Mitigation

Designed Mitigation

8.131 The design proposals have been formulated through a lengthy iterative process involving environmental assessment and consultation. This process has allowed site constraints and opportunities to directly influence the evolution of the masterplan and the landscape proposals. As a result, mitigation measures form part of the detailed design of the landscape and surrounding built form. Consideration has been given to alternative masterplan proposals, and these have been amended in order to take account of feedback received through the community and stakeholder engagement process. A brief summary of changes is provided below:

- Initial consultation (2011) – revised masterplan to show a reduced scale of development, with units removed from Whiston Eaves and Crow Trees Farm.
- Approval of Restoration Plan – Plan refined to show retention of key habitat types, development within Quarry 2 pulled back from the main lagoon to protect wetland, Quarry 3 slopes retained and protected, Quarry 1 rock

faces retained with protected areas at the base. Lodges within Crows Farm removed to retain open grassland.

- Adoption of Churnet Valley Masterplan – Development blocks refined to accord with identified zones within the masterplan and the number of lodges reduced to 250. Provision for renewable energy scheme.
- LVIA testing of proposals – Re-designing and reducing the quantum of development within Quarry 3 to minimise visual impact. Removal of hotel and development south of Crow Trees Farm. Re-location of development on both sides of Quarry 3 to reduce visual impacts, bund retained to screen view from Whiston Eaves Lane, new cutting proposed to place lodges at a lower level relative to the roadway. Scale of hub complex within quarry 1 established through view testing from adjacent viewpoints. Proposals adapted through consideration of cumulative impact in conjunction with the solar far.

8.132 A summary of mitigation measures which have been ‘designed in’ to the proposals in order to reduce or where possible, avoid landscape and visual impacts is provided below. Importantly it should be noted that landscape and visual issues are one of a number of different drivers to inform the proposed design e.g listed building issues.

Table 8.9 Summary of mitigation measures

| Mitigation measure | Effect |
|---|--|
| Hub building located on flat, low lying area in order to maximise potential to accommodate larger buildings. | Potential visual impacts reduced and/or avoided. |
| Location of lodges within areas identified with potential for least visual impact. Integration into site to utilise existing levels and therefore retain existing landscape features around lodges with potential for visual screening. | Potential visual impacts reduced and/or avoided. |
| One-storey high lodges have been proposed in potentially more visually prominent and/or sensitive locations. | Potential visual impacts reduced and/or avoided. |
| The proposed lodges will be designed to a high standard in order to achieve a quality overall development | Potential landscape and visual impacts reduced and/or avoided. |
| The use of timber, timber cladding, glazing and green roofs on the lodges where appropriate, along with sensitive positioning of lodges with careful consideration of topography. | Potential landscape and visual impacts reduced and/or avoided. |
| Incorporation of new structure planting around lodges. | Potential landscape and visual impacts reduced and/or avoided. Potential positive contribution to landscape character. |
| Additional planting proposed as part of the masterplan will provide further screening and softening of proposed development, and will also contribute to the overall habitat and ecological value of the site. | Potential landscape and visual impacts reduced and/or avoided. |
| Integrate built form into the existing topography wherever possible in order to minimise further re-grading works which could result in loss of valuable areas of woodland and/or planting. | Potential landscape and visual impacts reduced and/or avoided. |
| Larger areas of proposed parking are softened and integrated into surrounding landscape areas with new tree planting and limited use of metalled surfaced roadways. Parking is located in lower areas that are well screened from sensitive viewpoints. | Potential landscape and visual impacts reduced and/or avoided. |

| Mitigation measure | Effect |
|--|--|
| An extensive network of footpaths and cycle routes will be developed as part of the masterplan proposals, with some publicly accessible routes that connect up to the wider footpath, cycle route and bridlepath network. | Potential positive contribution to footpaths, cyclepaths and bridlepaths at the local level. |
| A new park, Quarry Park, is proposed as part of the masterplan vision. Public parks do not currently form a feature of the surrounding landscape character, however the proposed naturalistic design and location at the heart of the site will ensure the park has little visual or landscape impact. | Potential positive contribution to local landscape character. |

Supplementary mitigation measures

Construction

8.133 The precise methodology that will be adopted in order to mitigate against potential construction phase impacts will be formulated as part of the ongoing design development. However, it is anticipated that measures to control construction impacts will comply with the following general principles, which can be incorporated into a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP), and should include measures set out in Table 8.10 below.

Table 8.10: Summary of Construction mitigation measures

| Mitigation Measures | Effect |
|---|---|
| Site compounds to be positioned close to the proposed access points and as remote from existing developed areas as feasible; Hydraulic cranes will be used, which can be lowered when not in use, in order to minimise impacts of construction works. | Reduce potential landscape and visual impacts of general construction works on site. |
| Use of directional lighting will be used across the site. | Reduce potential landscape and visual impacts of general construction works on site. |
| The landscape screening areas to the boundaries of the site will be delivered at an early stage of development for each phase. | New native boundary planting will improve visual containment of site, provide potential positive contribution to local landscape character & reduction in landscape and visual impacts. |
| Site hoarding will be used where appropriate and coloured to be sympathetic to the surrounding environment to minimise visual impacts. Where possible hoarding lines will also utilise existing areas of woodland and scrub cover to help visually break up the extent of the fencing. | Potential landscape and visual impacts reduced. |
| Where possible, landscape screening and ecological enhancement measures will be delivered in advance of each phase of the construction of the built elements to soften and screen the development. Parking and construction accommodation will be positioned on site to limit visual impacts where possible. | Reduce potential landscape and visual impacts of general construction works on site. |

| | |
|--|---|
| <p>Lodges will primarily be prefabricated off site, which will help to minimise the duration of the construction period on site.</p> <p>The landscape screening areas to the boundaries of the site will be delivered at an early stage of development for each phase.</p> <p>Stockpiles will be located on site to limit visual impacts where possible. Where possible any removed material will be retained within the respective quarries to help avoid unnecessary construction vehicle movements across the wider site.</p> | <p>Reduce potential landscape and visual impacts of general construction works on site.</p> |
|--|---|

Completed Development

8.134 It is anticipated that the following measures may be employed to provide further mitigation once the site is operational:

- Landscape Management Plan, including the on going detailed assessment and management plans for the existing woodland blocks – in particular Black Plantation. In order to ensure longevity of the block and promote native species & diversity.

Residual Impacts

Construction phase

8.135 The predicted residual construction phase impacts are outlined in the table below.

Table 8.11: Summary of residual construction impacts

| Feature/ Nature of Impact | Value | Susceptibility to change | Sensitivity of Receptor | Magnitude of Impact | Significance of Impact |
|--|--------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|
| Landscape Character | | | | | |
| National level | | | | | |
| NCA 64: Potteries and Churnet Valley | Medium | Low | Medium/ low | Low/No change | Negligible |
| Local level | | | | | |
| <i>Type 1: Dissected Sandstone Cloughs and Valleys – Sub Area 1A: Alton and Oakamoor</i> | Medium | Medium | Medium | No change | Negligible |
| <i>Type 1: Dissected Sandstone Cloughs and Valleys – Sub Area 1B: Consall and Froghall</i> | Medium | Medium | Medium | Low | Minor adverse |
| <i>Type 3: Dissected Sandstone Highland Fringe – Sub Area 3A: Ipstones and Whiston.</i> | Medium | Medium | Medium | Low | Minor adverse |
| Footpaths, Cyclepaths and Bridlepaths | Low | Low | Low | No change | Negligible |
| Topography | Low | Medium | Medium/low | Low | Negligible |

| Visual impacts | | | | | |
|-----------------------|--------|--------|--------------|-----------|------------------------------|
| Viewpoint 1 | Medium | High | High | No change | Negligible |
| Viewpoint 2 | Medium | High | High | No change | Negligible |
| Viewpoint 3 | Low | High | Medium | No change | Negligible |
| Viewpoint 4 | Low | Medium | High/medium | No change | Minor adverse/ Negligible |
| Viewpoint 5 | Low | Medium | Medium | No change | Negligible |
| Viewpoint 6 | Low | Medium | Low | Medium | Moderate adverse |
| Viewpoints 7 | Medium | High | High | No change | Negligible |
| Viewpoint 8 | Medium | High | High/ medium | No change | Negligible |
| Viewpoint 9 | Low | High | Medium | No change | Negligible |
| Viewpoint 10 | Low | Medium | Medium | No change | Negligible |
| Viewpoint 11 | Low | Medium | Medium | No change | Negligible |
| Viewpoint 12 | Low | Medium | Medium | No change | Negligible |
| Viewpoint 13 | Low | High | Medium | No change | Negligible |
| Viewpoint 14 | Low | High | Medium | No change | Negligible |
| Viewpoint 15 | Low | Medium | Medium | No change | Negligible |
| Viewpoint 16 | Medium | High | High | Medium | Moderate adverse |
| Viewpoint 17 | Medium | High | High | Medium | Moderate adverse |

Operational phase

8.136 The predicted residual operational phase impacts are outlined in detail below.

Residual Impacts on Landscape Character

8.137 The site has been extensively quarried and therefore the contribution that the site makes to reinforcing the landscape character as defined at the national and local levels is limited. The Revised Restoration Plan proposes the retention, enhancement and management of all existing landscape features of character and quality. In addition, the Plan proposes restorative measures to the quarried areas that will enhance their landscape quality, visual appearance and potential habitat and ecological value, thus contributing positively to defining and restoring landscape character. Given the topographical impact of the quarry operations, the Revised Restoration Plan cannot possibly restore the site to its pre-quarried landscape character without importing large volumes of fill, but rather will work in harmony with the remnant quarry workings topography and site landscape features (assuming the restored landscape as the appropriate baseline of assessment), in accordance with the principles set out within the Churnet Valley Masterplan SPD.

8.138 The landscape principles established as part of the restoration proposals have been integrated into the masterplan for the proposed development. Additional planting will include small areas of ornamental planting, species rich dry and damp meadow and woodland edge planting. Although not part of the wider landscape character, the matrix of planting and waterbodies respond to the need to create a new, high quality landscape character and identity on the site. Whilst there will be a change from the character of a restored quarry, given that this contributes little to the above landscape character types then the overall impact of the proposals on landscape character level is therefore predicted to be **negligible**. That is both in respect of the local landscape character types as well as, necessarily, at a regional and national scale.

Residual Impacts on Footpaths, Cyclepaths and Bridlepaths¹

- 8.139 The Restoration Plan accommodates the existing public footpath route with runs along the southern edge of Eaves Lane, enters the site through the main site entrance and connects with Eaves Farm before meandering south through Key Wood. The Plan also allows for a route that connects Blakeley Lane to the north of Quarry 2, and wraps around the eastern edge of Quarry 2, to connect with Eaves Lane. Other public footpath routes in the site and surrounding local context would remain as existing.
- 8.140 The Masterplan Vision proposes a comprehensive network of recreational routes that connect to the wider footpath, cycle route and bridleway network. The main proposed recreational routes, excluding those that only provide access specifically to lodges, will be publicly accessible. The proposed routes exploit the dramatic views, topography and landscape within the site to its maximum potential, and will therefore make a significant contribution to the wider public recreational route network. The overall impact is therefore predicted to be **moderate beneficial**.

Residual Impacts on Topography

- 8.141 The Revised Restoration Plan has a minimal approach to altering ground levels within the site. Key works will include removing material that currently forms the landscape bund around Quarry 3, removing stockpiled material to the north of Quarry 2, and reducing ground levels within the eastern half of Quarry 1. This material will be relocated to Quarry 3 in order to reduce the subsequent water depth within parts of the proposed lake. This will maximise the potential habitat and ecological value of the waterbody.
- 8.142 The proposed development will substantially retain the ground levels proposed as part of the implementation of the Revised Restoration Plan, but the proposed development will require some limited additional groundworks, including minor cut and fill, in order to integrate development and infrastructure into the landform. It is proposed that any removed material will now be retained within the respective quarries to help avoid unnecessary construction vehicle movements across the site. Within Quarry 2 material will be used to help consolidate settlement areas, whilst in Quarry 3 material will be utilised to form shallows at the existing lake edge. It is not proposed to remove the perimeter bund from Quarry 3 so that the screening value of this can be retained. In order to mitigate against potential impacts, the proposed development will integrate built form into the existing topography wherever possible in order to minimise further regrading works which could result in loss of valuable areas of woodland and/or planting. However, careful consideration has been given to how the landform could help to mitigate against potential visual impacts of the development particularly within Quarry 3 where a new lower shelf along the northern quarry face will help lodges sit low within the landform and as such be well screened from the surrounding areas. The existing ground levels have been extensively altered as part of the former quarrying activities on the site. The proposed Hub building will use existing ground levels to minimise any potential visual impacts, allowing the hub building to 'flow down' over the level change. The overall impact is therefore predicted to be **negligible**.
- 8.144 A summary of residual landscape effects is provided in Table 8.12 below.

¹ NB this is upon the rights of way themselves and not visual effects upon users of those rights of way

| Description | Landscape Value | Susceptibility to change | Sensitivity of visual receptor | Magnitude | Significance of effect. |
|--|-----------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------|-------------------------|
| Landscape Character | | | | | |
| National level | | | | | |
| NCA 64: Potteries and Churnet Valley | Medium | Low | Medium/ low | No change | Negligible |
| Local level | | | | | |
| <i>Type 1: Dissected Sandstone Cloughs and Valleys – Sub Area 1A: Alton and Oakamoor</i> | Medium | Medium | Medium | No change | Negligible |
| <i>Type 1: Dissected Sandstone Cloughs and Valleys – Sub Area 1B: Consall and Froghall</i> | Medium | Medium | Medium | No change | Negligible |
| <i>Type 3: Dissected Sandstone Highland Fringe – Sub Area 3A: Ipstones and Whiston.</i> | Medium | Medium | Medium | No change | Negligible |
| Footpaths, cyclepaths and bridleways | Low | Low | Low | Medium | Moderate beneficial |
| Topography | Low | Medium | Medium/low | Low | Negligible |

Residual Visual Impacts

8.144 A summary of residual visual effects is provided in Table 8.13 below.

Table 8.13: Summary of visual effects

| Viewpoint | Description | Value of Views | Susceptibility of Visual Receptors to change | Sensitivity of visual receptor | Magnitude | Significance of effect. |
|-----------|--|----------------|--|--------------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|
| 1 | View west/north-west from fringes of Carr Wood on site boundary from Staffordshire Moorlands Walks and Crowtrees public footpath | Medium | High | High | No change | Negligible |
| 2 | View west/north-west from fringes of Carr Wood on site boundary from junction of the Staffordshire Moorlands Walks and Crowtrees public footpath | Medium | High | High/medium | No change | Negligible |
| 3 | View south into main site entrance | Low | High | Medium | No change | Negligible |
| 4 | View south into former quarry 1 from Eaves Lane close to Crowtrees Farm. | Low | Medium | Medium | Minor/No change | Minor adverse/Negligible |
| 5 | View north into Quarry 2 from Eaves Lane, close to Crowtrees Farm. | Low | Medium | Medium | No change | Negligible |

| | | | | | | |
|----|---|--------|--------|-------------|-----------|---------------|
| 6 | View south/south-east into site from Eaves Lane, close to Cottage Farm | Low | Medium | Medium | Minor | Minor adverse |
| 7 | View east from Kingsley Holt | Low | High | Medium | No change | Negligible |
| 8 | View north-east from Wood House Farm/ Lockwood Road | Low | High | Medium | No change | Negligible |
| 9 | View north from Oakamoor Road | Low | Medium | Medium | No change | Negligible |
| 10 | View south/south-west from Blakeley Lane | Low | Medium | Medium | No change | Negligible |
| 11 | View south/south-east from Whiston Hall/ public footpath adjacent to Whiston Hall | Medium | High | High | No change | Negligible |
| 12 | View south-east from Eaves Lane, Whiston | Low | Medium | Medium | No change | Negligible |
| 13 | View south-east from A52, Whiston | Low | Low | Low | No change | Negligible |
| 14 | View east from Ross Lane | Medium | High | Medium | No change | Negligible |
| 15 | View south-west off Blakeley Lane. | Medium | High | High/medium | No change | Negligible |
| 16 | View north/north-east from off a public footpath route through Hawksmoor Wood. | Medium | High | High | Low | Minor Adverse |
| 17 | View north-east from public footpath route adjacent to Little Eaves Farmhouse. | Medium | High | High | Low | Minor Adverse |

Conclusions

8.145 A summary of potential landscape and visual operational effects and their significance prior to mitigation is provided in Table 8.13 below.

Table 8.13 Summary of potential operational phase effects

| Receptor and sensitivity | Description of effect | Effect significance |
|--------------------------------------|--|---------------------|
| Landscape character – national level | The site has been extensively quarried and therefore the presence of landscape features which contribute to landscape character as defined at the national level are minimal. The Revised Restoration Plan proposes the retention, enhancement and management of any existing landscape features of character and quality. The proposals incorporate landscape features proposed as part of the restoration of the site, with additional areas of tree cover and planting. | Negligible |

| Receptor and sensitivity | Description of effect | Effect significance |
|--------------------------------------|---|---|
| Landscape character – local level | The landscape that forms part of the proposed development will be supplementary to the Revised Restoration Plan, with the purpose of providing a landscape setting to the development, screen potential views and contribute positively to habitat potential. | Negligible |
| Footpaths, cycleways and bridlepaths | The proposed development will contribute positively to the existing network of footpaths, bridlepaths and cycleways, through the creation of new routes and therefore a new recreational resource, with connections to existing routes. | Moderate beneficial |
| Topography | The existing topography of the site has been dramatically modified as a result of quarrying activities within the site. The Revised Restoration Plan works with the existing ground levels with modifications to ground levels where remediation is required. The proposed development will work with the remediated ground levels wherever possible, but will utilise cut and fill where required to minimise and/or avoid potential visual impacts of development. | Negligible |
| Views | Comprehensive desktop and onsite survey and investigation has demonstrated that views of the proposed development will be extremely limited. This is due to a combination of: former quarrying activities which created much lower ground levels within the three quarry sites, existing mature trees and planting, new tree cover and planting proposed as part of the Revised Restoration Plan, and a comprehensive landscape strategy as part of the proposed development, sensitive positioning of proposed new development through careful consideration of potential visual impact throughout the design development process. | View 4 – minor adverse/negligible. View 6 – minor adverse View 16 – minor adverse View 17 – minor adverse All other views – negligible. |

ⁱ Department for Communities and Local Government (2012) *National Planning Policy Framework*, DCLG, London.

ⁱⁱ Staffordshire Moorlands District Council (2014) *A Local Plan for the Future of Staffordshire Moorlands. Core Strategy Development Plan Document*, SMDC, Staffordshire.

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