

FAO Jane Curley  
Development Management  
Moorlands House  
Stockwell Street  
Leek  
ST13 6HQ

Our Ref: 0031  
Your Ref: PP-  
10504604

Date: 11 January 2021

Dear Mrs Curley,

## **Full Planning Application for a Revised Surface Water Outfall at Quarry 3, Moneystone Quarry**

On behalf of our client, Laver Leisure (Oakamoor Ltd) ("Laver Leisure"), please find enclosed a full application proposing the construction of a revised surface water outfall associated with the Moneystone Park leisure development and engineering operations to infill the existing outfall structure at Moneystone Quarry.

### **Submission Documents**

The following documents have been submitted in support of this full planning application:

- Application Forms and Certificate A.
- Existing Site Location Plan (Ref: 1733-OF-002 Rev 5).
- Existing Outfall Area Plan (Ref: 1733-OF-008 Rev 2).
- Proposed Outfall Masterplan (Ref: 1733-OF-009 Rev 7).
- Proposed Outfall Plan (Ref: 1733-OF-010 Rev 13).
- Outfall Area GA Section AA (Ref: 1733-OF-225 Rev 11).
- Outfall Area GA Section BB (Ref: 1733-OF-226 Rev 11).
- Outfall Area GA Section CC (Ref: 1733-OF-227 Rev 11).
- Landscape GA Outfall Area Plan (Ref: 1088.4-PLA-00-XX-DR-L-0007 Rev P03).
- Outfall Area Landscape Sections (Ref: 1088.4-PLA-00-XX-DR-L-0009 Rev P03).
- Outfall Statement prepared by Abbeydale BEC.
- Environmental Statement Addendum prepared by Avison Young.

The planning application has been submitted via the planning portal and has been given a reference of (PP-10504604). A planning application fee of £468 (plus a service charge of £28 (including VAT) has been paid by credit card.

## Site Background

Moneystone Quarry is located between the villages of Whiston and Oakamoor, Staffordshire. In 2010, Laver Leisure acquired Moneystone Quarry from Sibelco UK with agreement that Laver would take over any remaining restoration requirements which may be agreed with the appropriate local authority.

### Restoration

A Restoration Masterplan for the wider quarry site was submitted to Staffordshire County Council ('SCC') by Laver Leisure and was approved at SCC's Planning Committee on 6 March 2014 (LPA ref. SM.96/935/122 M D4). The approved Restoration Masterplan includes a requirement to outfall the lake water from Quarry 3 into an established adjacent stream recorded by the quarry as Stream A.

### 2016 Outline Planning Permission

Outline planning permission (LPA ref. SMD/2016/0378) was granted on 26 October 2016 for the erection of a high-quality leisure development across the whole Moneystone Quarry site comprising up to 250 holiday lodges and a range of associated facilities.

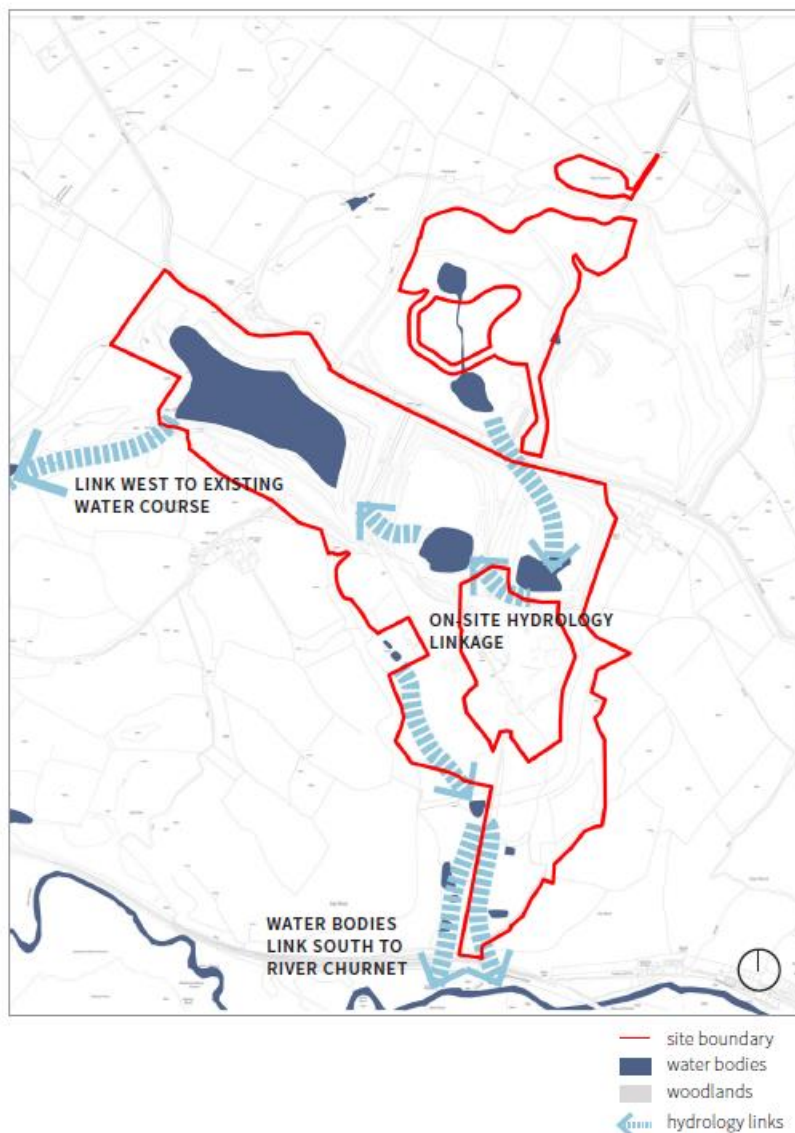
The Flood Risk Assessment (October 2014) ("FRA") which formed part of the Environmental Statement ("ES") that accompanied the outline planning application clearly sets out at Section 11 the requirement for an outfall at the southwestern end of the lake at Quarry 3 discharging at a level of circa 156m to 157m AOD into Stream A, ensuring a steady flow of water through most of the year. This is necessary to reduce the risk of flooding downstream by increasing the lag time from a rainfall event to peak flows in the local watercourses and then ultimately the River Churnet.

The following extracts are from the FRA submitted with the ES (with Asteer Planning's emphasis in **bold**):

*"In the former quarry areas Q1, Q2 and Q3 and their catchment areas to the north. The surface runoff (which does not infiltrate) will make its way into the main activity lake, maintaining a constant flow to prevent stagnation. **There will be an outfall at the south western end of the lake at about 156m to 157m AOD into Stream A, ensuring a steady flow through most of the year.** The end result of all of the above will be to potentially reduce the risk of flooding downstream by increasing the lag time from a rainfall event to peak flows in the local watercourses and then ultimately the River Churnet.*

*Past modelling suggested the current quarry outfall level of 159m AOD would not be attained as groundwater flow will become greater than inflow with an anticipated final lake level of 155m AOD was proposed. With this in mind the original proposal was to reduce the level of the outfall to around 155m to 157m AOD, to allow controlled drainage. The level of 155m AOD was reached in February 2013 and since this time the Q3 lake has continued to rise to a maximum level of 158.3m AOD. The most recent monitoring visit has recorded the lake level at 157.58m AOD. As a result recently recorded fluctuations in lake level it remains unclear whether current outfall will be reached. By monitoring any flow through the outfall it would be hoped the risk of stagnation conditions in the Q3 lake can be reduced. However, some small fluctuations in the lake level may be desirable to help maintain the beaches proposed. **Prior to entering Stream A, it is proposed that the lake water flows through reed beds to further filter the water before it enters the river network.** Although the exact detail of the above is yet to be decided, the broad principals of the system meet with the EA requirements of a minimum reduction of 20% of discharge rates to account for the future effects that climate change will have on runoff volumes."*

The Design and Access Statement which also supported the outline planning application contained a Hydrological Plan which indicates the hydrological link to the southwest of Quarry 3.



### 2019 Phase 1 Reserved Matters Application

A Reserved Matters planning application for Phase 1 pursuant to the outline permission comprising 190 lodges, a Hub Building and other additional facilities was submitted to SMDC on 18<sup>th</sup> October 2019 (LPA Ref: SMD/2019/0646). The application is pending determination.

### 2019 Original Outfall Application

In 2019 an original surface water outfall application (LPA ref SMD/2019/0725) was submitted by Laver Leisure and is pending determination. Following the submission of this planning application there has been extensive dialogue involving Natural England, the Environment Agency, Laver Leisure and their advisors JBA, Abbeydale BEC and Bowland Ecology to discuss the technical requirements, design, and location of the surface water outfall.

An output of these discussions is that a Hydrological Assessment has been prepared by JBA, working in conjunction with Natural England, which can be found at Appendix IX of the enclosed Environmental Statement Addendum which has informed the location and design of the surface water outfall. As a result of the detailed discussions with Natural England, the location of the outfall has moved further east when compared to the outfall location proposed as part of the

original application which necessitates the submission of this revised application; once validated, the original 2019 outfall application will be withdrawn.

## The Application Site

The outfall site which forms part of this application is irregular in shape and extends to 1235 sq. m. The site is located to the western extent of the 2016 outline application and provides a connection between the western quarry (Quarry 3) and an established tributary to the River Churnet (known as Stream A). In terms of the outfall site itself, it comprises the quarry lakeside edge, an access track and woodland and grassland. Part of the application site falls within area which benefits from the 2016 outline planning permission and subject to the 2019 Phase 1 Reserved Matters application with the remainder of the site within the Whiston Eaves SSSI.

## The Proposed Development

The outfall application is submitted in detail and the description of development is as follows:

*“Construction of a revised surface water outfall associated with the Moneystone Park leisure development and engineering operations to infill the existing outfall structure”*

The outfall was always envisaged as part of the June 2016 Environmental Statement. However, for completeness, as it requires a connection outside of the 2016 application red line boundary, this standalone full planning application has been prepared.

The works involved provide for a channel / cutting to be made through the existing land bridge between Quarry 3 Lake and the established watercourse, known as Stream A, at a level of 155.9m above Ordnance Datum (“AOD”). The new outfall entry location will be provided at 156m AOD to manage water levels in Quarry 3.

As part of the outfall construction, a 35m long battered cutting through the bedrock forming the land bridge is proposed to the east of the existing outfall structure. The existing outfall structure will also be backfilled once the new outfall is constructed. Key elements of the proposed outfall channel comprise:

- A channel - 600m wide at the base, 500m deep and with 1 in 1 slopes - leading it to be 1.6m wide at banktop.
- Above the channel - a 1 in 2 slope leading to the ground surface.
- The base of the channel is set at 155.9 m AOD. Within the SSSI, the excavation is estimated to be approximately 7.9 m wide, tapering down to 1.4 m where it joins the existing channel. At its widest the excavation is 17.5 m wide.

The total area of development within the SSSI which will be fenced off / utilised during the construction phase will amount to 0.005 hectares which is 0.04% of the total area of the SSSI which extends to 10.4352 ha. Overall, the proposed long term works represent a very small proportion of the overall SSSI designation. In addition, the trench that was previously created will be backfilled and made good.

## Planning Appraisal

The Development Plan for the area comprises the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan (2014 – 2033) adopted in September 2020. Other material considerations include The Churnet Valley Masterplan (approved in March 2014) and the National Planning Policy Framework (July 2021) (“NPPF”) and the Planning Practice Guidance (“PPG”).

## Principle of Development

The Churnet Valley Masterplan SPD identifies Moneystone Quarry as an opportunity site. Figure 7.4 of the SPD provides the Moneystone Quarry Concept Plan. This Plan shows the location of Quarry 3 and the Whiston Eaves SSSI.

In accordance with the Churnet Valley Masterplan SPD, outline planning permission for the leisure development was granted in 2016.

Policy NE 1 'Biodiversity and Geological Resources' of the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan states:

3. *"The Council will not normally permit any development proposal which would directly or indirectly (either individually or in combination with other developments) have an adverse effect on a Site of Special Scientific Interest. Where an adverse effect on the site's notified special interest features is likely, an exception should only be made where the benefits of the development, at this site, clearly outweigh both the impacts that it is likely to have on the features of the site that make it of special scientific interest and any broader impacts on the national network of Sites of Special Scientific Interest"*.

Policy NE 1 of the Local Plan mirrors paragraph 180 of the NPPF which states:

*'When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply the following principles:*

- b) *development on land within or outside a Site of Special Scientific Interest, and which is likely to have an adverse effect on it (either individually or in combination with other developments), should not normally be permitted. The only exception is where the benefits of the development in the location proposed clearly outweigh both its likely impact on the features of the site that make it of special scientific interest, and any broader impacts on the national network of Sites of Special Scientific Interest...'*

The Churnet Valley Masterplan SPD requires the following in relation to the SSSI:

- Active consideration of the site – re-establishing habitats, measures to protect SSSI, woodland planting.
- Maintain the agreed management regime for the Whiston Eaves SSSI.

The Environmental Statement submitted and approved as part of the 2016 outline planning application identified the following potential residual impact relating to Whiston Eaves SSSI:

*"The main impact during the operation of the site is disturbance arising from increased visitor pressure at the site and the local area. The management and enhancement of land immediately adjacent to the Whiston Eaves SSSI and Ashbourne Hey SBI will increase the extent and value of this resource. This additional land will also act as a buffer to the designated sites. Therefore, the impact of the completed development on the designated sites is considered to be **negligible**."*

The Environmental Statement Addendum submitted in support of this revised surface water outfall application concludes that there are no significant adverse residual impacts arising from the proposed outfall works and location. The proposed revised location of the surface water outfall within the SSSI is higher up the catchment of Stream A within the SSSI than that outlined in the Environmental Statement which accompanied the 2016 outline application. The proposed outfall location will therefore allow for the reinstatement of hydrological conditions as close as

possible to the pre-mineral extraction situation, as confirmed in the JBA Hydrological assessment.

In light of the above, the proposed revised surface water outfall application accords with Policy NE1 of the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan, paragraph 180 of the NPPF and the requirements of the Churnet Valley Masterplan SPD.

### **Scheme Benefits**

Notwithstanding the above the proposals will also assist with the delivery of the following economic, social and environmental benefits. The surface water outfall is intrinsically linked with the proposed leisure development which will provide:

#### **Economic:**

1. The creation of 230 FTE construction jobs in year 1 followed by 25 in years 2 and 3 during construction phase.
2. Anticipated construction cost of £18m of which approximately 25% will benefit local contractors.
3. The creation of 250 FTE on-site jobs once operational supporting a range of occupations. Given the nature of the roles available at the development and the flexible working hours required it is anticipated that that the number of actual on-site jobs could be in the region of 375, comprising 125 full time and 250 part time.
4. The creation of 78 additional FTE jobs off-site elsewhere in the district and in the wider area as a result of the proposed development's operational impacts.
5. The generation off-site expenditure in the district for staying visitors of approximately £1.03m per annum.
6. A reduction in unemployment, particularly youth unemployment, in the local area.
7. The Appellant has signed up to the Staffordshire Moorlands Employment and Skills Charter and thus seeks to:
  - a. Maximise supply chain opportunities both during the construction and once completed through the establishment of 'job / trade fairs' and 'meet the buyer' events and have set a target of 40% of goods and services on site to be provided by local firms.
  - b. Host pre-recruitment training for new positions in partnership with Jobcentre Plus which would guarantee job interviews for long term unemployed Staffordshire Moorlands residents who completed the training and are not looking to appoint any employees on less than 12 hour contracts.
  - c. Work to maximise job opportunities for people with disabilities including learning disabilities and facilitate apprentice opportunities and graduate placements.
  - d. Provide work experience placements for local schools including placements for young people with learning disabilities.
  - e. Work with the District Council to provide a range of fixed information panels to encourage off-site visits to local town centres and other attractions as well as

provide tourist information to help stimulate benefits to the wider economy and showcase local food and products in retail and on-site catering provision.

### **Social:**

1. The leisure development will promote healthy communities by:
  - a. Enabling accessibility by the local community to an extensive range of indoor and outdoor activities at 'the Hub'.
  - b. The accessibility to the proposed services within the hub by the local community will enhance the ongoing vitality and viability of local villages.
  - c. Providing access to the services by the community will facilitate social interaction and increase opportunities for meetings between members of the community.
  - d. The development will result in the creation of a safe and accessible environment.
  - e. Access will be provided to high-quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation.
  - f. Existing PROW's will be protected and new footpaths, cycleways and bridleways will be created for the enjoyment of visitors of the scheme and the local community.
2. The leisure development will promote sustainable transport through the creation of a Travel Plan including a shuttle service.
3. The leisure development will deliver a number of important educational opportunities at the visitor centre covering:
  - a. Quarrying History: The quarrying history of the site and background to the geology in the area.
  - b. Silica Sand: The use and importance of silica sand in modern technology.
  - c. Sustainable Technologies: Focussing on the adjacent solar farm demonstrating how the energy is produced and where it goes.
  - d. Wildlife and Ecology: Remote recording/ 'spy cams' showing protected habitats and local fauna and flora.

### **Environmental:**

1. Ecological compensation and enhancement measures will be implemented at the site. The on-going management of these elements will be incorporated into the long term management plan and will include the following:
  - a. Planting of species rich hedgerows to the north west of the application boundary. This should include the planting of native berry species.
  - b. Woodland management in form of coppicing and thinning of selective species including Turkey Oak within Key Wood.

- c. Scrub clearance and management of species rich MG5 grassland in quarry 1.
  - d. The management of moderate value/high potential grassland in quarry 1, land to the west of the application site.
  - e. Low value grassland to be enhanced land to the west of the application site and Ashbourne Hey SBI.
  - f. Existing pond enhancement within Key Wood and Frame Wood in form of scrub thinning/management.
  - g. A bat and bird box scheme within Key Wood and the remaining Black Plantation.
2. When development is complete at the site 63.23 hectares of habitats will be brought into positive long term management for wildlife. This includes:
    - a. 12.58 hectares of woodland management (Churnet Woodlands Ecological Action Plan).
    - b. 14.93 hectares of grassland management and restoration (Species Rich Farmland Ecological Action Plan).
    - c. 34.03 hectares of habitat within the approved restoration plan should largely be retained.
    - d. Other habitats to be created, managed and enhanced include 1080m of hedgerow plantings, 1.35 hectares of habitat mosaic to be managed (outside of the approved restoration plan area) and pond enhancement.
    - e. 20.57 hectares of the approved restoration plan will be retained elements to create attractive habitats for wildlife such as bare ground, low fertility grassland and retention of developing scrub and grassland habitats.
  3. The site is a former quarry requiring restoration and would represent an efficient use of the land which has previously been worked.
  4. The application proposals would have an acceptable impact on the local highway network.
  5. Safe and suitable access can be achieved for all people.
  6. The scheme seeks to conserve and enhance the historic environment and there are opportunities to draw on the contribution made by the historic environment for the enjoyment of residents and the local community.
  7. Mitigation is proposed to remove contamination risk and as such there would be no harm to visitors at the application site.
  8. The development would not result in any adverse noise or air quality impacts.

## Summary

In summary, the development would not result in adverse impacts to the Whiston Eaves SSSI. In addition, a comprehensive hydrological assessment has been undertaken by JBA as part of the planning application. The scope and approach to the hydrological assessment was agreed with Natural England, and the final report findings are the culmination of detailed discussions with



Natural England. Natural England undertook a condition survey of the SSSI unit closest to the outfall proposals in May 2021 which stated:

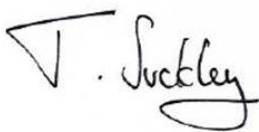
*"As water levels are recovering to post-quarrying levels the springs have returned throughout this part of the SSSI. Discussions are underway with the quarry owner (via the planning process) about securing a sustainable and appropriate permanent outfall arrangement into this part of the SSSI, which will be compatible with the natural processes that the flush features and wetlands depend on as well as furthering the conservation and enhancement of this part of the SSSI. Grazing management needs assessing later in summer."*

The hydrological assessment has confirmed that the outfall location will allow the reinstatement of hydrological conditions as close as possible to the pre-mineral extraction situation. In the long term this will deliver a sustainable and appropriate permanent outfall to the SSSI, thus furthering the conservation and enhancement of this part of the SSSI.

The surface water outfall is also intrinsically linked to the approved leisure development which will deliver a range of significant and positive economic, social and environmental benefits which should be afforded considerable weight in the decision-making process. In view of the above, the proposals accord with Local Plan Policy NE 1, paragraph 180 of the NPPF and the Churnet Valley Masterplan SPD. It is therefore respectfully requested that full planning permission is granted.

We trust this submission is sufficient for the Council to validate the planning application and should further information be required or should you wish to discuss then please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours Sincerely,



**Jon Suckley**  
**Managing Partner**  
**07958 565 409**  
[jon.suckley@asteerplanning.com](mailto:jon.suckley@asteerplanning.com)

**For and on behalf of Asteer Planning LLP**

Enc. Application Forms and Certificate A  
Existing Site Location Plan (Ref: 1733-OF-002 Rev 5).  
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Outfall Statement prepared by Abbeydale BEC.  
Environmental Statement Addendum prepared by Avison Young.

Cc. Pete Swallow – Lave Leisure (Oakamoor) Ltd