Sykes, David

From: Sykes, David
Sent: Thursday, November 13, 2014 4:33 PM
To: Glaisher, Ali (Place)
Cc: Swithenbank, Arne; Curley, Jane
Subject: FW: Moneystone Solar Farm - Updating Ecological Information
Attachments: 5623 Biodiversity Method Statement and Management B.PDF; CGO evidence review 2014 - biodiversity value of solar farms v2 (2).pdf

Importance: High

Hi Ali

My final thoughts on this application, before my departure from SMDC tomorrow:-

In the light of the submission of the attached and in view of the progress you have been making with the 'outside blue line' biodiversity offsetting measures, I request the following by **12.00 noon next Wednesday 19 November:** (This is the printing deadline for reports to go to the 27 November Planning Committee)

- a decision on whether or not the County Council can withdraw its objection to this application
- a short position statement of the progress you have made on 'outside blue line' offsetting measures, including what remains to be undertaken/mechanisims that need to be in place to be confident that this offsetting will be delivered.
- a short note on any outstanding issues arising from your reading of the attached, including what remains to be undertaken/mechanisms to be in place to be confident that the 'within blue line' offsetting will be delivered.

Please respond to Arne with any queries on the above, and with the information requested above.

Thanks

David Sykes
Planning Officer
Staffordshire Moorlands DC
david.sykes@staffsmoorlands.gov.uk
01538 395 400 Ext. 4102

From: James Cook [mailto:james.cook@stratus-environmental.co.uk]
Sent: Thursday, November 13, 2014 3:57 PM
To: Sykes, David; Swithenbank, Arne
Cc: 'Glaisher, Ali (Place)' (ali.glaisher@staffordshire.gov.uk)
Subject: Moneystone Solar Farm - Updating Ecological Information

David/Ali,
Further to our recent conversation I attach an updated Biodiversity Method Statement and Management Plan. This takes into account the more detailed mapping as requested by Ali and the slight gain in land available for enhancement.

I also attach a review of biodiversity value from solar farms undertaken by CGO Ecology. This document reviews the current thinking on solar farms in terms of biodiversity and has particular regard for Moneystone Quarry.

Regards,

James Cook
Senior Development Planner

Stratus Environmental Limited

4245 Park Approach
Thorpe
Park
Leeds
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T 0113 2328571
M 07714 704969
W www.stratus-environmental.co.uk

ykes, David

From: Glaisher, Ali (Place) [ali.glaisher@staffordshire.gov.uk]
Sent: Thursday, November 13, 2014 6:39 PM
To: 'James Cook'; Sykes, David; Swithenbank, Arne
Cc: Banbury, Julia (Place); Griffin, Matthew (Place)
Subject: RE: Moneystone Solar Farm - Updating Ecological Information

James

Thank you for sending me this latest information.

Biodiversity Method Statement

This will need to be reviewed by the SCC Landscape Officer and Planning Officer in regard of landscape and community issues. I will forward it on, but suggest amendments, in line with previous comments which do not appear to have been addressed.

Comments in regard of ecology:

In principle the proposals are suitable, as previously discussed, but issues of detail remain.

I said in comments of Oct 14th:
The restoration plan specified grassland and heathland habitats due to the status of these habitat types, recent losses and the rarity of opportunities for creation of new habitat, as well as availability of means of sustainable long term management i.e. grazing. The proposal includes 3.2 ha grassland, 1.27 ha oak/birch woodland, 1.02 ha heathland restoration (part from conifer woodland). Subject to landscape impact assessment and badger sett constraints I would like to see at least some of the oak/birch woodland (perhaps the more southern part) restored to heathland – given the presence of heathland species in the ground flora. The offsetting value of proposed restoration of woodland by removal of rhododendron and Himalayan balsam is questionable given the DAFOR occasional status of these species in survey records; further justification of the value of this is required. As pine is identified as frequent in this woodland removal of this species might be desirable to improve condition. I asked for mapping of where woodland is underlain by heath species, given Natural England heathland inventory status.

I acknowledge areas of habitat are now slightly different and more heathland restoration is proposed but comments relating to proposals for oak/birch woodland do not appear to have been addressed and I have doubts that the proposed woodland enhancement will be of value compared to heathland or species-rich grassland creation (as required by the approved restoration plan) given the high incidence of better woodland habitat in the area and the current condition of this secondary woodland.

The following comments also made on Oct 14th do not appear to have been addressed:

Feasibility/suitability of management suggestions:
Oak/birch woodland: the feasibility of bracken control by herbicide or cutting is questioned. In our experience cutting would be required twice a year – early June and late July for the full five years. The current restrictions on Asulox use mean that unless this can be applied by boom sprayer it may be not very effective. The dilution rate for hand-lance application is rather low and we are concerned that it may be ineffective. Specific management for invertebrates needs to be justified by local records – I have doubts about ring-barking trees as a technique within young woodland as the type of dead wood created might not be of great value? Control of Himalayan balsam may well be required for more than two years due to the soil seed-bank.

In addition:
I have reservations about use of glyphosate on balsam due to potential for impact on other species. If woodland restoration is to be included, ring barking one tree in ten appears excessive, not allied to natural processes, and potentially impacting on landscape. Generally woodland restoration would include some thinning, in this case to favour oak. Some dead wood creation might be desirable but the proposals appear excessive.

Grassland:

I remain unsatisfied that the proposed grassland restoration techniques are appropriate – comments made on Oct 14th do not appear to have been addressed.

s.4.21 needs to specify that the donor site(s) be species rich and supporting suitable a grassland type for the receptor site. As I said on Oct 14th I am not sure of the establishment methods suggested especially such early introduction of sheep – no rationale for this or examples of its effectiveness have been provided. I would be happy to discuss this and the proposed cutting regime - they do not match tried and tested techniques used on other sites in Staffordshire. A discussion of proposed management techniques – their appropriateness and feasibility, is also required. Tables appear incorrect regarding timing of green hay spreading.

Should the application be approved a condition for a detailed implementation and monitoring plan would be required. Given issues cited above I recommend that if the application is to be approved not all details of this document be approved but that details of habitat restoration be submitted under condition. This would give scope to discuss and agree measures.

Progress on identifying off-site grassland enhancement areas is ongoing – I have visited several sites and had discussions with SCC managers but further work is required on costings and consultation with tenants. I am confident that sites can be secured, given a bit more time.

Biodiversity value of solar farms

Having reviewed this report my conclusion is that while it may indeed be possible to deliver biodiversity benefit by creating and maintaining species-rich grassland round panels the report does not provide sufficient evidence to be confident that the approved restoration habitats can be delivered. Therefore potential biodiversity benefits should be considered as enhancements which NPPF indicates should be delivered by development where possible. The requirement for delivery of compensation habitats, as agreed, remains. Monitoring and reporting the establishment and development of the sward around and below the panels and its management over the 25 years of the project would provide valuable evidence for other applications. Perhaps a condition could cover this. You may find interest from a local university in such monitoring.

The report appears not to be objective and to be based on a premise that SCC opposes solar farms, which is not the case. I feel that I have done quite a lot of work to assist you in this matter and have put a considerable amount of time into assisting with identifying offsetting potential. Given the focus of the report t is a shame that the author chose not to discuss the case with local authority staff who have known this site for many years and are involved in this case as errors would have been avoided and perhaps a more objective report would have been the result. The aim of SCC, as the applicant is aware, is not to oppose the scheme but to ensure no loss of biodiversity due to the scheme. The report focusses mainly on issues outside of its remit of reporting whether species rich grassland can be delivered and maintained on solar farms such as this one.

The report misrepresents the Natural England position on solar farms. TIN 101 states "Like any type of development, solar parks have the potential to affect the landscape, natural habitats, soils

and geological and archaeological features." In fact the guidance note is neutral in tone rather than demonstrating that Natural England is "overwhelmingly in favour" of solar farms. Like any conservation body support is case-specific and based on impact assessment. Perhaps this approach has been taken as the report includes very little actual evidence of proven biodiversity benefit, being mainly a review of guidance. The guidance is fine, but is not evidence of successful implementation. I am well aware of guidance on providing biodiversity benefit from solar farms – but not of evidence that this is proven to be effective. The world would be a wonderful place if development always delivered the optimum benefit that guidance covers! The one relevant piece of research cited does not appear to have been published and peer reviewed with insufficient information provided to assess whether it is relevant to this application in regard of solar farm design and environmental factors. I would be glad to see the full report when it becomes available. SCC can provide many cases of evidence of successful restoration of minerals sites to valuable wildlife habitats.

The statement "Most ecological practitioners instinctively see the benefit of solar farms if executed sympathetically" betrays bias –contributors to the Association of Local Authority Ecologists Forum have concerns that benefits proposed will not be delivered. The statement confuses support of solar farms as a sustainable form of energy generation with case-relevant impact assessment. I would like to see evidence for the statement that "Natural England and the RSPB generally support solar projects" as I believe that, in common with SCC these organisations assess each application on a case by case basis. The issue here is not whether solar farms are a good idea but whether this application can deliver habitat of biodiversity value.

I take issue with the introductory statement that the approved restoration would be difficult to achieve – if the grassland creation commenced by Sibelco Ltd had been continued and managed as approved I am satisfied that, with suitable regulation, restoration would have been successful, given knowledge of the site and substrates. The report author clearly has not seen all documentation regarding restoration, only the plan revised by the Laver Leisure application.

Staffordshire County Council and Staffordshire Moorlands District Council do not, as the report states, operate a biodiversity offsetting scheme for developments in the county. The offsetting proposal was suggested by SCC to assist the applicant in this case, rather than to put obstacles in the way of the proposal.

Regards

Ali Glaisher BSc MSc MIEEM
Principal Ecologist
Staffordshire County Council
Office Location: 1 Staffordshire Place, Stafford, ST16 2LP
Postal address: Wedgwood Building, Block A, Tipping Street, Stafford, ST16 2DH
01785 277254
ali.glaisher@staffordshire.gov.uk
http://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/environment/eLand/planners-developers/biodiversity/development/biodiversitysurvey/BiodiversitySurveyandAssessment.aspx

---

From: James Cook [mailto:james.cook@stratus-environmental.co.uk]
Sent: 13 November 2014 15:57
To: David Sykes (David.Sykes@highpeak.gov.uk); Swithenbank, Arne (Arne.Swithenbank@staffsmoorlands.gov.uk)
Cc: Glaisher, Ali (Place)
Subject: Moneystone Solar Farm - Updating Ecological Information

David/Ali,

Further to our recent conversation I attach an updated Biodiversity Method Statement and Management Plan. This takes into account the more detailed mapping as requested by Ali and the slight gain in land available for enhancement.

I also attach a review of biodiversity value from solar farms undertaken by CGO Ecology. This document reviews the current thinking on solar farms in terms of biodiversity and has particular regard for Moneystone Quarry.

Regards,

James Cook
Senior Development Planner

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4245 Park Approach
Thorpe
Park
Leeds
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T 0113 2328571
M 07714 704969
W www.stratus-environmental.co.uk

Sykes, David

From: Claire Skitt
Sent: Wednesday, November 12, 2014 3:13 PM
To: Mat.griffin@staffordshire.gov.uk
Cc: Sykes, David; Ralphs, Sybil (CLLR); philip.atkins@staffordshire.gov.uk; karen.bradley.mp@parliament.uk
Subject: MONEYSTONE QUARRY SOLAR FARM MINERALS RESERVES
Attachments: CVCS MATHEW GRIFFIN ATTACHMENT 1.pdf; CVCS MATHEW GRIFFIN ATTACHMENT 2.pdf; CVCS MATHEW GRIFFIN ATTACHMENT 3.pdf

Dear Mr Griffin,

Moneystone Quarry - Proposed Solar Farm - ref SMD/2014/0432 - Proposed leisure development SMD/2014/0682 –Churnet Valley Conservation Society Objection

I am writing on behalf of the Churnet Valley Conservation Society and refer to your letter of 22nd October 14 to Mr David Sykes at SMDC (as attached). This withdrew the County Council's initial holding objection, on grounds of mineral sterilisation, to the solar panel proposal.

Mr Sykes undated report (as attached) to members of Staffordshire Moorlands Planning Application Committee meeting on 23 October 2014 i.e. the day after your letter to him notes that the County Council's initial holding objection to the solar panel proposal is withdrawn.

We see no reference either by your letter to Mr Sykes or his report to Committee of the possibility that the solar farm might adversely affect the future development of mineral reserves, obstruct options for mineral processing and access to the rail head; the southern area of the solar farm would be sited in a potential mineral processing location. There is no address to the practicalities of working and transporting remaining reserves of high grade silica sand which are of national importance.

We reiterate the importance to the nation of this silica reserve. A British Geological Survey (BGS) report of Staffordshire minerals commissioned by the County Council in 2006 ref CR/06/133 para 3.8 (pages 9 and 10) details silica sand as a scarce national resource. You will be aware from previous research that some 6.5 million tonnes of nationally important silica sand reserves lie over an area of some 30 hectares between Whiston and Oakamoor (i.eMoneystone). The previous quarry operators Sibelco illustrated in a 2006 planning application ref SM.06/10/122M an option for working the reserves. Those quarrying options show reserves that lie within the Laver Leisure plans for their intended solar farm.

We are concerned that the site owner and proposed developer, Laver Leisure, is pursuing proposals that are completely contrary to the planning obligation for restoration of the land in accordance with a scheme that is overdue for completion, as approved by the County Council's Planning Committee under reference SM 96/935/122 M D4. The Committee approved a variation on 6 March 2014.

We are surprised that Mr Sykes has not reported precisely your advice on behalf of the County Council as mineral planning authority: Mr Sykes report states on page 11.11 that the Mineral Planning Authority has resolved concerns about the restriction the development could impose on future mineral extraction and no longer objects on this count. However your letter states "it is reasonable to conclude that there would be no significant impact upon any mineral resources due to the location and nature of the proposal" and that the County Council has no objection on "mineral sterilisation grounds". The sentiments of your letter that concern **mineral sterilisation** are not the same as reported by Mr Sykes on **future mineral extraction.**

We believe that careful consideration should be applied to the protection of these mineral reserves:

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) Section 13 refers to facilitating the sustainable use of minerals. Paras 142 –149 are particularly relevant, especially para 143 and a list of criteria on page 33 concerning safeguarding issues and non–presumption that defined mineral resources will be worked. NPPF also refers to the importance of safeguarding potential railheads and rail links to quarries.

NPPF para 157 adds that Local Plans should take account of longer term requirements and be kept up to date. We understand that the County Council is working on a draft Local Minerals Plan.

We caution SCC against compensatory liability:

We remind the SCC that should planning consent be granted for any development that might prejudice the safeguarding of the future working of mineral reserves, indeed the possible compulsory rights to do so, then the relevant approving authority may be liable to compensate whosoever has invested in the development. Indeed, the District Council may also be liable for compensation if it grants planning permission for development without taking fully into account the safeguarding of nationally important silica sand reserves and the advice of the County Council, as the planning authority for its policies for minerals, quarry restoration and highways.

We request responses to the following:

1. That the County Council should advise the Staffordshire Moorlands District Council that it will oppose any proposals, such as those of Laver Leisure, which might by virtue of its design, prejudice any options for future working of the mineral reserves at Moneystone. That these be protected as designated for the County Council by a British Geological Survey Report of 2006 and anything that puts at risk potential processing areas, buffer zones and access to the existing rail head.
2. That the County Council withdraws its letter of "no objection" to the solar farm, so that it may consider as one entity the entire impact of the two current planning applications as illustrated on the Masterplan. Given that the application for lodges development covers an extensive area as shown on the attached Masterplan,which includes the solar farm, and that a new draft Minerals Plan is in hand. We note your letter of 22 October is only two days after a major outline application for holiday lodges etc. and presume that you were unaware of this when you sent your letter. There is no reference to it either in Mr Sykes report.
3. CVCS considers there is an urgent need for the County Council to reconsider its position on the Laver Leisure proposals as illustrated in the attached Masterplan for reasons given above and should advise the District Council of a holding objection to any development proposals while it considers the matter.
4. The Conservation Society would like assurance that the approved restoration scheme which is overdue for completion will be enforced.
5. In addition we consider it important that the County Council should set out the compulsory rights that exist to a mineral operator so as to gain access to essential raw material reserves. You will know that the compulsory rights to work mineral reserves plus ancillary rights, are available subject to the approval of the Secretary of State, even should the owner(s),object. [*Mines (Working Facilities and Support) Acts 1966-74*]. For Moneystone, as an example, a glass manufacturer may wish to secure raw materials essential to its core business and guarantee a supply of high quality silica sand to support further investment in production facilities.

You will see that I am copying this email to David Sykes at the District Council and to its elected Leader, Cllr Sybil Ralphs and Leader of Staffordshire County Council, Cllr Philip Atkins so that they are fully informed on this representation by CVCS. We are also sending a copy to our local Member of Parliament, Karen Bradley because of the interest that she is taking in the future of Moneystone.

In copying this email to Mr David Sykes we would be grateful if he would add a copy of this email to the two planning application files SMD/2014/0432 and SMD/2014/0682 as an objection by the Churnet Valley Conservation Society to both proposals that are prejudicial to the approved restoration scheme and safeguarding future options for the winning, processing and transportation of nationally important mineral reserves.

I look forward to obtaining a reply and reassurance from you within the next two weeks.

With many thanks,

Claire Skitt
Secretary,
Churnet Valley Conservation Society

ADDENDUM

The current planning applications (and links as below) for Moneystone to the Staffordshire Moorlands District Council are:-

SMD/2014/0432 – validated 28 June 2014 – proposed solar farm. (NB Application has comment on mineral reserves – see last item "letters on minerals" – this includes mineral plans.)
http://publicaccess.staffsmoorlands.gov.uk/portal/servlets/ApplicationSearchServlet?PKID=58694

SMD/2014/0682 – validated 20 October 2014 – outline application for major development of holiday chalets etc. (NB site plan includes areas designated for solar farm)
http://publicaccess.staffsmoorlands.gov.uk/portal/servlets/ApplicationSearchServlet?PKID=66394

ATTACHMENTS

20 October 2014 – Laver Leisure Masterplan - ref SMD/2014/0682 – outline application for holiday chalets etc. (includes solar farm sites)
22 October 2014 – Letter Matthew Griffin (SCC) to David Sykes (SMDC) – ref SMD/2014/0432 – proposed solar farm.
23 October 2014 – David Sykes report to SMDC Planning Applications Committee – ref SMD/2014/0432 – proposed solar farm.

Copies of this letter to

David Sykes – Planning Officer – Staffordshire Moorlands District Council
Cllr Sybil Ralphs - Leader – Staffordshire Moorlands District Council,
Cllr Philip Atkins - Leader - Staffordshire County Council,
Karen Bradley MP

Sykes, David

From: Glaisher, Ali (Place) [ali.glaisher@staffordshire.gov.uk]
Sent: Wednesday, November 12, 2014 4:41 PM
To: Sykes, David
Cc: Swithenbank, Arne
Subject: RE: Moneystone Solar Farm - Commuted Sum

David

Probably not as it is less than originally offered - £25,000 up front with £1000 per year would be equivalent, but I need to get costings – expected next week, sorry can't be sooner due to our staffing levels

Ali Glaisher BSc MSc MCIEEM
Principal Ecologist
Staffordshire County Council
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01785 277254
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http://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/environment/eLand/planners-developers/biodiversity/NaturalEnvironmentBiodiversity.aspx

---

From: Sykes, David [mailto:David.Sykes@highpeak.gov.uk]
Sent: 12 November 2014 16:38
To: Glaisher, Ali (Place)
Cc: Swithenbank, Arne
Subject: FW: Moneystone Solar Farm - Commuted Sum

Hi Ali

Can you live with the offer below?

Regards

David Sykes
Planning Officer
Staffordshire Moorlands DC
david.sykes@staffsmoorlands.gov.uk
01538 395 400 Ext. 4102

From: James Cook [mailto:james.cook@stratus-environmental.co.uk]
Sent: Wednesday, November 12, 2014 4:12 PM
To: Sykes, David
Subject: Moneystone Solar Farm - Commuted Sum

David,
Further to our conversation please find a revised offer for the commuted sum in respect of the off-site biodiversity enhancements that will be administered by the LPA.

As the County Council would like a larger initial payment at the outset, based on our initial offer of 2k a year the equivalent upfront figure of £17,500 with ongoing payments of £1,000 a year for 25 years would be appropriate.

Please note that these projects are tightly managed on initial construction costs, so to request a one off 50k payment means we would need to borrow a further 50k plus a debt rate. The cost of this additional 50k on a repayment is around 70k. This is not affordable for this project.

I trust this is acceptable.

James Cook
Senior Development Planner

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T 0113 2328571
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W www.stratus-environmental.co.uk

Sykes, David

From: Banbury, Julia (Place) [julia.banbury@staffordshire.gov.uk]
Sent: Wednesday, November 12, 2014 6:05 PM
To: Sykes, David; Glaisher, Ali (Place)
Cc: Griffin, Matthew (Place); Pattinson, Rob; Swithenbank, Arne
Subject: RE: Proposed Solar Farm, Former Moneystone Quarry

Dear David

Sorry for the delay in responding.

Whilst not ideal in terms of potential influence on the visibility of the solar farm, I accept that the areas of woodland outwith the red line boundary would be within the remit of the minerals permission, and not within the applicants control.

Please ensure that in drafting the condition regarding post operational restoration, reference is made to the approved minerals restoration scheme.

Best wishes in your new post.

Kind Regards
Julia

Julia Banbury MA CMLI
Principal Landscape Officer
Environment and Countryside
Staffordshire County Council
No 1 Staffordshire Place
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Tel: 01785 277261
Mob 07814 688549
(Monday - Wednesday)
julia.banbury@staffordshire.gov.uk

Postal Address: Wedgwood Building, Block A, Tipping Street, Stafford. ST16 2DH

From: Sykes, David [mailto:David.Sykes@highpeak.gov.uk]
Sent: 12 November 2014 11:05
To: Glaisher, Ali (Place); Banbury, Julia (Place)
Cc: Griffin, Matthew (Place); Pattinson, Rob; Swithenbank, Arne
Subject: FW: Proposed Solar Farm, Former Moneystone Quarry

Hi Ali and Julia

With my requested deadline due up tomorrow for me to update my draft Committee report - just a quick reminder email.
(See points raised in emails below)

Also my update on legal matters:-

Our legal advisor, Rob Pattinson, considers that any quarry restoration scheme tree planting and biodiversity enhancement forming part of your CC minerals permissions that are outside the red line application site remain part

of the County Council's Mineral's jurisdiction. Hence, I intend to include in my Committee report - reference to where such planting forms part of the minerals permission and that the controlling authority able to secure such planting is the County Council.

Regarding securing the biodiversity offsetting (within and outwith the blue line) and your query about the need for a Section 106 - the condition proposed to accompany any planning permission is a pre commencement condition and may indeed require a Section 106 legal agreement to be drawn up to satisfy the condition prior to any development start.

I haven't heard anything from Natural England regarding full and final confirmation that they are happy with the 'within blue line' offsetting area and have sent thema reminder today.

Look forward to your update on 'outwith blue line' offsetting and response to any remaining unanswered questions raised in my email of 4 November.

Finally, I have accepted a job offer back in Yorkshire and my last day at Staffordshire Moorlands is this Friday.

I will be getting this application as close as possible to a final report this Friday and then Arne will take over its processing up to and including Planning Committee.

Its been a pleasure to work with you and all the best for the future and a good result on this application.

Regards

David Sykes
Planning Officer
Staffordshire Moorlands DC
david.sykes@staffsmoorlands.gov.uk
01538 395 400 Ext. 4102

From: Sykes, David
Sent: Wednesday, November 05, 2014 12:43 PM
To: 'Glaisher, Ali (Place)'; Banbury, Julia (Place)
Cc: Swithenbank, Arne; Griffin, Matthew (Place)
Subject: RE: Proposed Solar Farm, Former Moneystone Quarry

Thanks Ali

No new information as yet.

We will be discussing the condition/106 situation with Rob Pattinson tomorrow hopefully.

But his view in the past has been a condition would be OK

Re-tree planting/restoration scheme

What I'm putting forward is that:

- We defintely need to condition post solar farm application site (red line) restoration because this permission supercedes the quarry restoration scheme, but
- Outside the red line - the quarry restoration scheme approved by SCC should still apply and you can still enforce the approved tree planting outwith the red line application site and whatever the approval states about woodland management.

Hope this helps

Sykes, David

From: Glaisher, Ali (Place) [ali.glaisher@staffordshire.gov.uk]
Sent: Wednesday, November 12, 2014 11:22 AM
To: Sykes, David; Banbury, Julia (Place)
Cc: Griffin, Matthew (Place); Pattinson, Rob; Swithenbank, Arne
Subject: RE: Proposed Solar Farm, Former Moneystone Quarry

David

Update from my perspective:

James Cook rang yesterday and said a detailed plan of the blue line compensation measures has been prepared. We need to see this before approval but I have not received it.

He explained the HLS and NE position and said he would be calling you about this.

I am progressing possible compensation areas within SCC ownership but won't have certainty for a few weeks as there are lots of issues to address. We should have more idea of costings next week once our rangers have been able to estimate this. If the SCC land was to fall through due to tenant objections or other reasons I think another site could be found.

After today I will only be available tomorrow afternoon to review anything this week, due to meetings and a conference.

It has been a pleasure working with you too– all the best for the new post in Yorkshire

Regards

Ali Glaisher BSc MSc MCIEEM
Principal Ecologist
Staffordshire County Council
Office Location: 1 Staffordshire Place, Stafford, ST16 2LP
Postal address: Wedgwood Building, Block A, Tipping Street, Stafford, ST16 2DH
01785 277254
ali.glaisher@staffordshire.gov.uk
http://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/environment/eLand/planners-developers/biodiversity/NaturalEnvironmentBiodiversity.aspx

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To: Glaisher, Ali (Place); Banbury, Julia (Place)
Cc: Griffin, Matthew (Place); Pattinson, Rob; Swithenbank, Arne
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Cc: Swithenbank, Arne; Griffin, Matthew (Place)
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Hope this helps

Thanks for progressing the outwith blue line SCC site biodiversity offsetting.

David Sykes
Planning Officer
Staffordshire Moorlands DC
david.sykes@staffsmoorlands.gov.uk
01538 395 400 Ext. 4102

From: Glaisher, Ali (Place) [mailto:ali.glaisher@staffordshire.gov.uk]
Sent: Wednesday, November 05, 2014 12:13 PM
To: Sykes, David; Banbury, Julia (Place)
Cc: Swithenbank, Arne; Griffin, Matthew (Place)
Subject: RE: Proposed Solar Farm, Former Moneystone Quarry

David

Just back and a quick interim response:

Should not the legal agreement cover blue line as well as off-site compensation as this is outside the red line?

I would not think that proposals for a condition on the restoration consent is a way of dealing with tree planting required for landscape mitigation as the restoration consent is with SCC not SMDC. Your authority therefore cannot control this.

I am back working on the potential compensation area in SCC ownership – tenant issues etc that might affect viability.

Is there any new information from the applicant that I need to look at?

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http://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/environment/eLand/planners-developers/biodiversity/NaturalEnvironmentBiodiversity.aspx

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From: Sykes, David [mailto:David.Sykes@highpeak.gov.uk]
Sent: 04 November 2014 14:34
To: Glaisher, Ali (Place); Banbury, Julia (Place)
Cc: Swithenbank, Arne
Subject: FW: Proposed Solar Farm, Former Moneystone Quarry
Importance: High

Hi Ali and Julia

Hope you had a good break Ali

James Cook has confirmed today that the Solar farm application is still live and therefore we have a job to do to get the application to the next Planning Committee - unfortunately whilst the Committee is not until 27 November, the deadline for information to be sent to me for incoproration in my report is Thursday 13 November - next Thursday.

Apologies, another lengthy email from me, but hopefully it is clear and sets out both our positions and enables us to maximise chances of getting the matter determining at the above Planning Committee.

Please note the SMDC comments/requests below are effectively an action 'to do' list for both authorities and some requests are particularly urgent.

Having read the County Council's holding objection of 22 October 2014, my understanding of the County's position on ecology and landscaping is as stated below:-

1. You are concerned that some of the proposed biodversity offsetting in Area 1 of the fpcr's 'Habitat Creation and Management Strategy and Biodiversity Offsetting Analysis' October 2014 may be constrained by impacts on local residents resulting from tree clearance and have asked the applicant to provide further information on these impacts.
2. There is a large portion of Area 2 of the above fprc's report which may not be be achievable for biodiversity off setting as Natural England (NE) has not agreed to the report's proposals on this land which is covered by a legal agreement between NE and the tenant farmer.
3. You can only agree a figure for appropriate funding of the outwith blue line area biodiversity compensation when actual areas/locations have been agreed and the real costs of habitat establishment, management and monitoring have been calculated.
4. A legal agreement is required to secure the appropriate funding and implementation of these outwith blue line biodiversity areas and in this agreement the majority of funding should be made available at the beginning of the scheme to allow an acceptable timescale to off-set the loss of biodiversity..
5. There should be a condition on any permission to ensure the site is restored in accordance with the approved restoration scheme upon the decommissioning of the solar panels.
6. The need to ensure that the tree planting shown on the approved quarry restoration plan around the site is carried out, and in particular the woodland planting between the Quarry access road and Area D. Furthermore that the existing woodland and tree planting be managed and maintained as an effectice screen.

SMDC comments/requests on above (To do list) :

1. Please can you let me know what you have asked for here and whether you have received any information in response.
2. As you can see below the email trail below is seeking to clarify with Natural England its position on this issue and the applicant's agent is seeking to ensure that the tenancy situation is not a constraint on the implementation of this matter.
3. Are you able to reach the stage (by the middle of next week) whereby you are confident that there are no ownership/tenancy and other 'in principle' reasons why specific sites marked on a map and totalling between 3 and 5 hectares of land cannot be used for appropriate biodiversity off setting for this proposal?
4. Our legal advice was that condition 6 of the 23 October Committee report would be sufficient to allow appropriate documentation to come forward for our approval (following consultation with yourselves) to ensure that the biodiversity off setting (both within and outwith the blue line area) to be delivered, managed and monitored. Please advise if you have a contrary view in the light of your references to legal agreements.
5. We agree that the application site should be restored to our (DC and CC) satisfaction and have included a more general reference to this issue in conditions 12 and 13 of the 23 October Planning Committee report. Are you happy with this wording and if not please explain why.
6. We agree that the post quarry restoration scheme tree planting should be undertaken, but were of the opinion that providing this tree planting is outside the application red line site, this can still be delivered via your authority through condition on the quarry restoration scheme. I will discuss this issue with our legal team on Thursday. Can you supply, or provide a link to, appropriate condition wording and other plans and documents relevant to new tree planting and maintainance of existing woodland of the quarry post restoration scheme . I can then discuss this information with our legal team.. We have taken the view to date that the existing woodland and tree belts will naturally maintain itself and are also potentially already protected by the quarry restoration scheme.