



Northamptonshire County Council

Mr Liam Toland
Heaton Planning
9a The Square
Keyworth
Nottinghamshire
NG12 5JT

Please ask for: Dan Szymanski
Tel: (01604) 368534
Our ref: 18.00001.SCO
Your ref: -
Date: 18 June 2018

By email only

Dear Liam,

Town & Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (England and Wales) Regulations 2017: Regulation 17 Scoping Opinion

Proposals: 18/00001/SCR: Proposed extension to Pury End Quarry including the extraction of limestone aggregate and building stone, together with the importation of inert fill materials to restore part of the existing quarry and proposed quarry to approx. 2m above existing land levels

I write to you further to your Screening and Scoping Report received on 15 May 2018 in respect of the above proposal. The scoping report has been the subject of consultation in accordance with the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Regulations.

The proposed development has been 'Screened' in accordance with Schedules 1, 2 and 3 of the EIA Regulations, including by reference to the Indicative Thresholds and Criteria set out in the NPPG. It is considered that on the basis of the information provided, particularly as a result of the likely duration of the development, and the cumulative impact with the existing permitted quarry, and application for the proposed development is required to be accompanied by an Environmental Impact Assessment.

The topics you address in the scoping report are generally considered to be acceptable and appropriate, but the consultation responses have revealed some additional assessments and information required, to that set out in the scoping report. I have provided commentary on appropriate matters, and the approach to these matters that we request are set out within the Environmental Statement (ES) below. Where comprehensive guidance has been provided by a consultee I have enclosed that guidance with this Scoping Opinion to avoid repetition.

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Northamptonshire
County Council

Landscape & Visual Impact

Subject to the study area being increased to 3km, the approach set out in the Scoping Report in paragraphs 5.1.2 – 5.1.6, is considered appropriate by the Minerals & Waste Planning Authority and Natural England. Please note the enclosed advice from Natural England in respect of the detailed requirements of the LVIA, much of which is proposed to be included by reference to the GLVIA3 guidance methodology in the Scoping Report. I would suggest consideration might also be given to the guidance provided by Landscape Institute Advice Note 01/11 Photography and photomontage in landscape and visual impact assessment.

It is noted that the applicant proposes to agree receptors with the Council's landscape adviser, but the ZTV and LVIA should include reference to Public Rights of Way and nearby designated heritage assets that could have their setting affected in some way by the proposed development (e.g. Kirby Farmhouse, the Church of St. James the Great, and churches and Conservation Areas within 3km). The LVIA should also consider the impact upon the SNC designated Special Landscape Area and its setting, approx. 2km to the south of the site. It is important that the proposals in paragraph 5.1.6 of the Scoping Report, are used to inform and justify the restoration scheme to comply with Policy 21 of the Northamptonshire Minerals & Waste Local Plan (2017). Please see the enclosures from Historic England and Natural England.

Flora, Fauna & Biodiversity

The broad approach set out paragraphs 5.1.7 to 5.1.11 is considered acceptable. It is expected that the Phase 1 and species surveys could result in the need for specific mitigation measures to be included within the working scheme. In addition to the Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment 2nd edition, other CIEEM guidelines from the Technical Guidance Series and BS4020 may also be of use in the preparation of the Ecological Assessment (and detailed restoration and mitigation proposal for the working and aftercare phases). The findings of the survey work should be used to inform the proposed restoration and landscaping schemes, including an assessment to demonstrate a net ecological benefit resulting from this overall development, as required by Policies 20 and 24 of the Northamptonshire MWLP.

The consultation response from Natural England sets out the expected information requirements to accompany an application, with reference to the hierarchy of protected and designated habitats and species. The findings of the initial survey will determine the extent to which these further requirements will need to be addressed in the application. Natural England would be consulted on any planning application and their views would be a material consideration in its determination.

Archaeology & Cultural Heritage

It is understood that your archaeologists are currently undertaking some field survey work, and has engaged with the County Archaeological Adviser. Paragraph 5.1.13 of the Screening and Scoping Report indicates that the assessment of the historic environment will involve a Desk Based Assessment and a geophysical survey. It implies that the results of the geophysical survey will give an indication of the archaeological activity on the site, and that this will inform the scheme. In pre-application advice provided to Mr Meadows the Council's Archaeological Adviser clearly indicated that geophysical survey should not be used in isolation and is usually undertaken in conjunction with trial trenching. The results of both techniques will provide an informed assessment as to the extent, preservation and significance of any archaeological remains within the proposed application area. The submission of the geophysical survey will allow an informed discussion as to the extent of the trial trenching – the results of which we would expect to accompany any forthcoming planning application. This information accompanying the application needs to be sufficient for the Minerals & Waste Planning Authority to make an informed judgement on any potential mitigation in accordance with Policy 22 of the Northamptonshire MWLP.

The Water Environment

It is noted that it is proposed to submit an assessment of the effects on hydrology, hydrogeology (groundwater) and drainage, and that a full Flood Risk Assessment with the Environmental Statement. In accordance with the advice in the NPPF and the NPPG, the FRA will need to consider surface water flooding/drainage and the provision of SuDS, ensuring that suitable and adequate drainage is provided in accordance with national standards. This includes for run-off during the operational and restoration phases of the development (including the climate change allowance) to ensure that surface water can be adequately dealt with and that neighbouring land is not flooded. Full details of what we would require for surface water drainage assessment, can be found within our developer guidance which is on our web page at <http://www.floodtoolkit.com/planning/surface-water-drainage/>.

The Environment Agency has confirmed they have no concerns with the scope of the EIA in terms of flood risk as the proposed extension lies wholly within flood zone 1.

Soil Resources

The approach outlined in paragraphs 5.1.18 – 5.1.20 of the Scoping Report is considered acceptable. Please note the attached comments from Natural England. It is expected that the ES will include (within the relevant chapter and the proposed Working Scheme) soil handling and storage arrangements that accord with the relevant best practice guidance (e.g. handling conditions, bund heights and bund seeding). South Northamptonshire Council has requested that consideration is given to potential and existing new contamination.

Highways

It is noted that the proposals would not exceed the previously permitted traffic movements from the current site access. The County Council as Highway Authority does not object to the proposals set out in the Scoping Report, but would like the vehicle numbers conditioned to those stipulated, if any future planning permission is granted. South Northamptonshire Council has requested that a greater level of assessment is undertaken within the ES, however, the view of the Mineral Planning Authority is that if the Highway Authority is satisfied with the application, then there would appear to be no reason to undertake the greater level of work suggested by SNC.

Highways England has been consulted and advised that it is noted that the proposals would not increase the previously permitted traffic movements from the current site access, therefore no new trips are expected on the highway network, although there is an increase in the duration of the trips. Due to this no detailed assessments are required to be provided by the applicant for the SRN in the area. However, as proposed, they expect the applicant to provide a Transport Statement to include a review of the existing transport arrangements, including vehicle volumes and the routeing/management of vehicles from the site.

Environment & Amenity Impacts

The Environmental Protection Officer recommends that details of any noise/dust control measures should be supported with relevant assessment(s) to quantify potential impacts, in order to demonstrate that environmental limits and aims of the National Planning Policy Framework, will be achieved. The EPO at SNC specifically cites the National Planning Practice Guidance. I enclose the full response for your consideration. Clearly, the EPO is intimating that they require a full assessment of dust and noise impacts to accompany the application, which is not proposed in the Screening and Scoping Report. If the need for full assessments are to be avoided, it is dependent upon the detail and precision of the noise and dust mitigation schemes enclosed with the applications, including proposed working practices and safeguards on amenity. If sufficiently detailed mitigation is provided then it is not likely there will be significant impacts upon local amenity and that full assessments will not be required.

A Working Scheme must be included as part of the planning and environmental statement – it should include the proposed hours of operation, a list of equipment and processes that are proposed to take place on site, and the nearest sensitive receptors for noise and dust. The scheme should make clear the operations that would be sources of noise and particulate matter together with reference to associated management and mitigation schemes to minimise the impact of dust and noise. Mitigation schemes should also include monitoring and remedial measures in the event of a complaint. In this regard I would recommend that the assessment includes a review of the existing conditions, recommended best practice, and uses these as a basis to propose new conditions.

Highways England expect the environmental impact arising during operation should be fully reported. They would also expect any adverse change to noise and air quality should be particularly considered, including in relation to compliance with the European air quality limit values and/or in local authority designated Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs).

Community Engagement

As suggested at paragraph 6.1.7 the Council would wish to see some pre-application community engagement. Please note that the County Council has consulted the Parish Council on the Scoping Report, but have not received any feedback from them. I would suggest that the applicant contacts the local Parish (and Local County Councillors) at a point well in advance of the submission of the application, to see if there is a desire to have some form of attendance at Parish meetings or other form of local engagement.

Cumulative Impacts,

As suggested in paragraph 6.1.1 the Environmental Statement will need to include a section addressing the likely cumulative impacts of the proposed development in combination with other developments in the locality. It needs to include a brief explanation of the methodology for and scope of the assessment of potential effects. The assessment would need to consider successive effects, simultaneous effects, and the combination of potential impacts (positive and negative).

Socio-Economic Impacts

As suggested in paragraph 6.1.3 there is likely to be some limited impact upon the local population through the (for example) the economic benefits that the development may bring, which could well off-set any perceived negative impacts (e.g. tourism). The ES should seek to quantify and explain these impacts.

Alternatives to the proposed development

As you set out in paragraphs 6.1.4 – 6.1.6 I would advise that in order to meet the legislative requirement, more detail will be needed as to how those conclusions have been reached, such as:

- Explaining the merits of the proposed development in relation to policy and sustainability considerations in ruling out alternative locations (including brief reference to how the principle of locating a development outside the County, would not be an option);
- Referring to the summary conclusions of the various environmental sections of the ES and your iterative design process in demonstrating why there are no reasonable Alternative Methods of Working (including restoration options);

- The 'No Development' scenario should include an explanation as to the benefits of primary aggregates/building stone, and why secondary/recycled aggregates would not fulfil part of the need being met by the development, and the particular importance of the dimension stone in the County and wider area (including to Heritage Assets).

Climatic Factors

I would expect a limited amount of commentary about working methods seeking to minimise emissions in the Working Scheme and Consideration of Alternatives.

Major Accidents and Disasters

It is a requirement of Schedule 4 of the 2017 EIA Regulations that an ES includes a description of the expected significant adverse effects of the development on the environment deriving from the vulnerability of the development to risks of major accidents and/or disasters which are relevant to the project concerned.

Regulation 18(5) – Competent Experts

Regulation 18(5) of the EIA Regulations require that an ES must include In order to ensure the completeness and quality of the environmental statement: (a) the developer must ensure that the environmental statement is prepared by competent experts; and (b) the environmental statement must be accompanied by a statement from the developer outlining the relevant expertise or qualifications of such experts.

Planning Policy

The application will need to be accompanied by a Planning Statement that includes an analysis of the proposals against the relevant national and development plan policies, including the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), the National Planning Policy for Waste (NPPW), reference to the relevant parts of the National Planning Practice Guidance, the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy (2014), the Northamptonshire Minerals & Waste Local Plan (2017), the South Northamptonshire Local Plan (1997) and to a limited extent the Pre-Submission Draft (2017).

The Planning Statement should pay particular attention to the need for inert waste capacity in the County as set out in the Northamptonshire Minerals & Waste AMR (2016) and other more recent evidence in the assessment to other planning applications (I can provide you with details as necessary).

Please note that the Towcester Vale Sustainable Urban Extension is being developed in reasonably close proximity to the site. Therefore the application documents to the outline

and reserve matters submissions may well provide useful local information that could contribute to informing this planning application.

Once you have had the time to consider the above, if you require a meeting with myself and/or the specialists who have provided observations, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "D Szymanski". The letters are dark and fluidly connected.

Dan Szymanski
Principal Development Control Officer

Enclosures:

- Natural England response to 18/00001/SCO, dated 6 June 2018;
- Historic England response to 18/00001/SCO, dated 11 June 2018;
- South Northamptonshire Council Environmental Protection Officer response to 18/00001/SCO.