

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT) (ENGLAND & WALES) REGULATIONS 2017 (“the Regulations”)

SCREENING OPINION (18/SCR/00014)

Proposal: Hydroelectric generation plant and associated infrastructure including Kaplan turbine, adjustable weir crests, new multi-species fish passes, turbine house building, hydraulic channels, screening, crane pad, electrical substation and underground cabling.

Site: Hazelford Weir Hazelford Lock Bleasby Nottinghamshire.

A. Is the development listed in Schedule 1 of the Regulations? No

B. Is the development listed in Schedule 2 of the Regulations? If so, which description in column 1 of the table in paragraph 2 of Schedule 2 of the Regulations applies?

Yes

The development falls within:-

Schedule 2, Part 3a (Industrial installations of the production of electricity, steam and hot water).

Schedule 2, Part 3h (Installations for hydroelectric energy production) of Schedule 2 apply to the proposed development.

C. Is the development in a ‘sensitive area’ as defined in Regulation 2?

No

The closest sensitive area is a Scheduled Monument, which is located circa 1300m downstream on the right bank of the river

D. Does the development meet any of the relevant thresholds and criteria in Schedule 2 of the Regulations?

Yes

In relation to Schedule 2 Part 3(a) the area of development exceeds 0.5h

In relation to Schedule 2 Part 3(h) the installation is designed to produce more than 0.5 Megawatts of power.

E. Taking into account such of the selection criteria in Schedule 3 of the Regulations as are relevant to the development , is this ‘Schedule 2 development’ likely to have significant effects on the environment?

The selection criteria in Schedule 3 of the regulations and the Council’s comments on those criteria are set out below:

1. Characteristics of Development

(a) the size of the development;

No. Excluding the existing access lane, this is considered a small scale development in terms of the actual developable area.

The largest component of the scheme is the hydropower station and associated equipment. This falls within Landscape Character Zone TW 52 Thurgaton River Meadow Lands. It is considered that the proposal will not have a significant impact on the landscape as a resource. Nor will it have a significant visual impact.

The hydropower station, substation and associated equipment will be seen in conjunction with the existing infrastructure of the weir and lock and the existing Bungalow. It will be accommodated by and not be out of character or scale with the existing landscape nor significantly visually intrusive.

(b) Cumulative and combined impact

There are no existing or approved developments in the vicinity within the meaning of Schedule 3 paragraph 3(g) that would, taken together with the proposed development and the existing weir and lock infrastructure, be likely to have a significant effect on the environment.

(c) the use of natural resources;

The scheme will generate and store a source of renewable energy utilising the existing watercourse of Hazelford Weir. The hydropower station will sustainably provide up to 999 Kw of carbon free electricity using the natural resources of the River Trent, and is expected to power an average of 1,540 UK households. These are material environmental benefits.

(d) the production of waste;

Not relevant

(e) Pollution and nuisances;

The scheme will not pollute or otherwise give rise to nuisance that is likely to have a significant effect on the environment. A potential source of pollution is riverine noise and vibration affecting fish. However, relevant professionals have advised the Local Planning Authority that the noise generated by the turbine is likely to be lower than background noise levels. Therefore noise is unlikely to have a significant impact upon the fish population

The Council has considered whether building operations might have a significant effect on the environment. It has concluded that provided works take place in accordance with the Initial Method Statement and details of construction traffic deposited together mitigation measures which can be secured, such effects are very unlikely to occur.

(f) the risk of accidents, having regard in particular to substances or technologies used.

The risk of accidents associated with the scheme is not judged likely to give rise to significant environmental effects.

(g) risks to human health

It is not considered likely that there will be any risks to human health resulting from the development, specifically through air pollution, water contamination or an increased risk of flooding that would be more than of local importance.

2. Location of development

The environmental sensitivity of geographical areas likely to be affected by development must be considered, having regard, in particular, to—

(a) the existing land use;

The existing land use is weirs along the River Trent adjacent Hazelford Lock and adjacent riverbanks. Neither lock nor weirs are defined as sensitive within the Regulations nor sensitive in any other way. The development would not have a significant impact upon the appearance of the site nor surrounding area.

(b) the relative abundance, quality and regenerative capacity of natural resources in the area; .

The scheme's potential impact on hydrology and water resources have been considered in the Fisheries and Geomorphology Assessments and Water Framework Directive Compliance Report. This indicates the scheme's use of water resources is unlikely to have a significant effect on the environment.

(c) the absorption capacity of the natural environment, paying particular attention to the following areas—

(i) wetlands, riparian areas, river mouths; The scheme is capable of being absorbed into the local riverine environment without giving rise to any significant effect on the environment.

(ii) coastal zones; Not relevant

(iii) mountain and forest areas; Not relevant

(iv) nature reserves and parks; Not relevant

(v) areas classified or protected under Member States' legislation; areas designated by Member States pursuant to Council Directive 79/409/EEC on the conservation of wild birds and Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora; Not relevant

(vi) areas in which the environmental quality standards laid down in Community legislation have already been exceeded; Not relevant

(vii) densely populated areas; Not relevant

(viii) landscapes of historical, cultural or archaeological significance.

The proposed development is unlikely to have a significant environmental impact upon the identified historical or archaeological assets within the development site nor wider vicinity. Relevant professionals have advised the Council that it is unlikely that there are any surviving archaeological deposits that the proposal could impact. It is not considered likely that the scheme will have a significant environmental impact upon historical, cultural or archaeological assets.

There would be no impact on any statutory heritage designations, including Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas.

3. Characteristics of the potential impact

The likely significant effects of development must be considered in relation to criteria set out under paragraphs 1 and 2 above, and having regard in particular to—

(a) the extent of the impact (geographical area and size of the affected population);

(b) the nature of the impact;

(c) the transboundary nature of the impact;

(d) the intensity and complexity of the impact;

(e) the probability of the impact;

(f) the duration, frequency and reversibility of the impact;

(g) the cumulative impact with other existing/approved development;

(h) the possibility of effectively reducing the impact

Summary in respect of paragraph 3(a) –(h)

It is unlikely that the proposal will have a significant effect upon the environment. Therefore that the development does not constitute EIA development requiring a further Environmental Statement. Following the advice of AECOM, Natural England, the Environment Agency and Nottinghamshire County Council Archaeologist it is considered that the scheme will have a permanent but not a significant impact upon the receptors identified within Schedule 3 of the Regulations. Any identified environmental impacts are only anticipated to be

insignificant, localised, with ecological enhancements expected to result from the proposal further upstream.

It is not considered that there will be a significant environmental impact with regard to the historical or archaeological receptors within the vicinity of the site, nor on identified landscape receptors beyond the short-term construction phase.

The ecological impact (in terms of its extent, nature, and complexity) will not give rise to unacceptably permanent adverse environmental impacts on either the watercourse, habitats or protected species, both localised and in the wider vicinity. The scheme has incorporated identified ecological enhancements, including the betterment of upstream fish passage and habitat enhancements of benefit for the long-term management of this sensitive receptor.

The Council has received and relies on expert reports on the effect of the scheme on fish population. It is acknowledged that the proposal will affect the local weir pool hydrology and geomorphology and fish passage at Hazelford Weir. However, the development is not judged likely to have a significant effect on the environment (and upon the Humber Lamphrey population in particular). Indeed, when the fish passage has been installed it is likely to benefit the resident fish population.

The impacts upon the environment are anticipated to bring about lasting but localised beneficial changes. The proposed infrastructure is a source of carbon-free renewable energy generation which lends itself to being located alongside the existing weir, which in itself currently acts as an ineffective ecological barrier to upstream fish passage.

Impacts upon biodiversity through the necessary removal of trees and other vegetation both up and downstream of the development area are to be compensated for by planting upon completion of the development, and those trees which are to be retained appropriately protected throughout the construction phase.

No permanent significant environmental impacts are anticipated in relation to noise, pollution or nuisance. Short-term construction operations are to be managed in a way as to reduce the impact upon the environment as much as is practicable.

The Local Planning Authority has considered the potential significant impacts of development in relation to the criteria set out above having regard to the extent of the impact. It is concluded that the effects are not significant enough to require the submission of an Environmental Impact Assessment.

Conclusion: On the basis of the submitted information and the advice of relevant professionals, it is considered that the development required a Screening Opinion to be produced, on account of the development exceeding the thresholds as details within Schedule 2 Part 3(a), 3(h) and 10(f). The Local Planning Authority does not consider that there will be significant impacts on the environment when assessed against the criteria

set out in Schedule 3 sufficient to trigger a requirement for an EIA Environmental Statement being produced.

Bev Pearson.

Officer:

Date: 18th March 2019

Clare Walker

Signed by

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