

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

SCREENING OPINION (18/01477/FULM)

Proposal: Erection of a Hydropower Electricity Generating Station, supported by energy storage and fish passage in the area of land adjacent to Cromwell Weir on the right bank of the River Trent near Collingham. The purpose of this development is to generate and store renewable electricity and provide improvement to upstream fish and eel passage and biodiversity on the River Trent.

Site: Cromwell Weir, Land On The South Side of Westfield Lane, Collingham.

- 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.

Schedule 2, Part 10f (construction of roads).

- 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 about 500m upstream on the left 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

In relation to Schedule 2 Part 10(f) the area of works exceeds 1 hectare (the access road measures 2,920m x 5m (notional width) which produces a total area of 1.46h

- 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. This is a small scale development.

The largest components of the scheme are the access track and the hydropower station. The access track runs through open countryside designated as being of low and moderate sensitivity (character areas TW PZ 17 & 36 Besthorpe River Meadowlands & Holme Pastures River Meadowlands). It will not have a significant impact on the landscape as a resource. Nor will it have a significant visual impact.

The hydropower station will be seen in conjunction with the existing infrastructure of the weir and lock. It will be accommodated by and not be out of character or scale with the existing landscape nor 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 Cromwell weir. The hydropower station will sustainably provide up to 1.6MW of carbon free electricity using the natural resources of the River Trent, and is expected to power an average of 3000 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 the Transport Statement and Construction Management Plan 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 a significant environmental effects.

(g) risks to human health

It is not considered 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.

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 a weir along the River Trent adjacent Cromwell Lock and adjacent riverbank. Neither lock nor weir 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 and summarised in the Abridged Compliance Assessment Hydrology, Morphology, Ecology, Operation 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, given that the land is previously disturbed and regularly dredged. 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, RPSB, the Environment Agency, Nottinghamshire County Council Archaeologist and Nottinghamshire County Council Landscape Architects 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, habitat enhancements and access improvements within the nearby RSPB nature reserve, 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 Cromwell 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 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: 4th January 2019

Signed by

L. Cardno

pp. Matt Lamb
Business Manager - Development

Documents relied on:-

Deposited 31.07.18

Abridged Assessment of Hydrology Morphology, Ecology and WFD Compliance July 2017

Cromwell Landscape and Visual Appraisal

Cromwell weir Habitats Map October 2016

Draft Phase 1 Habitat Map July 2016

Ecological Appraisal (MRB Ecology and Environment) October 2016

Cromwell Weir Hydroelectric Scheme Fisheries Assessment (Fishtek Consulting)
01/06/2017

Cromwell Weir Hydropower Scheme Flood Risk assessment (JBA Consulting) October 2017

Heritage Statement 31st August 2017

Cromwell Weir HEP hydraulic impacts modelling report (JBA Consulting) March 2018

Planning Statement 10th July 2017

Transport Statement & Construction Management Plan 11th July 2017

Slough Dyke Cromwell Weir Water Vole Survey 2nd May 2018 (MRB Ecology and Environment)

Deposited 29.08.18

Ecological Appraisal – Update Note August 2018

Cromwell Weir Protected Species Scoping Summary report

Slough Dyke Cromwell Weir Water Vole Survey 2nd May 2018 (MRB Ecology and Environment)

Deposited 20.11.18

Ecological Addendum – Bat Tree Inspection (Middleton Bell Ecology dated 6th November 2018)

Planning Statement Addendum – Noise Assessment dated 12th November 2018

Heritage Statement deposited 22.11.18

Other Documents

VIA Landscape and Visual Impact and appendices dated 11th 17th December 2018

Technical Note Planning Documents Review (AECOM) Dated 28th November 2018

Screening Advice of Planning Application 18/01477/FULM (AECOM) received 17th December 2018