

DELEGATED REPORT

Application No:	21/P/2520/EA1	Target date:	21.09.2021
Case officer:	Jessica Harper	Extended date:	
Proposal:	Request for a Screening Opinion to determine the need for an Environmental Impact Assessment to revise the quarryworking and restoration scheme and extend the end date for quarrying by one year. THIS IS NOT A PLANNING APPLICATION		
Site address:	Durnford Quarry, Clevedon Road, Failand, Long Ashton		

EIA SCREENING OPINION

Classification and the need for screening

The proposed development falls within Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 - Column 1, *Subsection 2. Extractive Industry a) Quarries, open cast mining and peat extraction*. As detailed in Column 2 – ‘All development except the construction of buildings or other ancillary structures where the new floorspace does not exceed 1,000 square metres’, is subject to EIA Regulations. A formal screening opinion is therefore required.

Consultation summary

The Council has no statutory obligation to consult on EIA screening requests. It does however undertake nominal consultation including the local Parish Council and it can carry out further consultation if required. The following comments comprise summaries only. For the full comments, please refer to the website:

Tickenham Parish Council

Strongly support the need for an EIA to assess the current effects of the quarry working and restoration scheme at Durnford Quarry. The current scheme is causing traffic misery to the residents of Tickenham, as a direct result of the effect of quarry lorries, both laden and unladen, travelling through Tickenham on the B3128 and B3130 as opposed to using the A369 to gain access to and from the M5 Motorway.

The current effect of quarry lorries is currently unacceptable as is an additional 12 months of this traffic. The Tarmac document states that: *"The previous EIA assessed the effects of HGV movement on the local road network and concluded that there would not be unacceptable impacts."* Tickenham Parish Council strongly dispute this erroneous statement. The document continues by stating: *"The additional HGV movements would remain well below the approved level of HGV movements and no further consideration is necessary."* Tickenham Parish Council strongly dispute this statement.

In June 2019, Tickenham Parish Council arranged for a 2.3km topographic survey to be undertaken on the B3130 through part of Tickenham.

a. Overall assessment

- i. Average road width is 6.258 metres compared with the requirement of 6.7 metres.
- ii. Average width of the Northern footpaths (where they exist) is 0.787 metres, compared with the sensible requirement of 2 metres
- iii. Average width of the Southern footpath (where it exists) is 1.305 metres, compared with the sensible requirement of 2 metres.

b. Detailed assessment of the road width of the B3130 through Tickenham

- i. 16% of the road is compliant with the required width of 6.7 metres
- ii. 62% has a road width less than 6.7metres but greater than 6 metres
- iii. 21% has a road width less than 6 metres.
- iv. The minimum road width is 5.251 metres which is below that required for a bus route.
- v. In essence, 84% of this 2.3km length of road through Tickenham is below the standards set by North Somerset Council for this type of highway.

c. Detailed assessment of the Northern footpath of the B3130 through the village of Tickenham

- i. 60% has no northern footpath
- ii. 1% has a footway of less than 1 metre wide
- iii. 27% has a footway of between 1 metre and 2 metres wide
- iv. 12% has a footway of acceptable standard being either 2 metres wide or greater
- v. In essence, 88% of the northern footway either does not exist or is below the required 2metre

d. Detailed assessment of the Southern footpath of the B3130 through the village of Tickenham

- i. 19% has no southern footpath
- ii. 10% has a footway of less than 1 metre wide
- iii. 62% has a footway greater than 1 metre wide but less than 2 metres wide
- iv. 9% has a footway of acceptable standard being either 2 metres wide or greater
- v. In essence, 91% of the southern footway either does not exist or is below the required 2metre standard.

The topographic survey, and associated analysis, was limited to the length of the B3130 through the most populated part of Tickenham. We would refer you to the 3 x 90° bends to the east of the survey area, the sub-standard junction between the B3130 and B3128 and the problematic length of Tickenham Hill on the B3128.

The Council have no objection to the use of the quarry for the working and restoration scheme, but strongly object to the use of the B3128 and B3130 as a route for heavily laden and unladen lorries when the A369 could be used to gain access to the M5 Motorway.

In August 2021, the Council asked residents of Tickenham (via an online survey) questions about the traffic through Tickenham. Over 200 responses were received, in a small village with about 300 dwellings! The results of this online survey showed that large HGVs and, in particular, quarry lorries were causing misery to residents in terms of:

- a. Noise
- b. Vibration
- c. Air pollution
- d. Pedestrians feeling unsafe due to lack of adequate footpaths
- e. Parents and others worried about the safety of school children walking to Tickenham Church of England Primary School which lies on the B3130 in Tickenham
- f. Number of HGV vehicles
- g. Speeding and aggressive HGV vehicles

Tickenham Parish Council respectfully request that an EIA, with the full involvement of Tickenham residents and Tickenham Parish Council is undertaken, prior to any consideration of the extension of use of the quarry.

Neighbours' views

58 comments received.

The principal planning points made are as follows:

EIA required due to:

- Detrimental impact on the local highway network – B3130 through Tickenham.
- Air pollution/ safety/ vibration/ noise impacts from HGV movements along the local road network.

Tickenham Road Action Group

The group believes there should be an EIA, especially to examine the impact of the transport routes to and from the quarry site.

We represent people living on or adjacent to the B3130 in Tickenham. This B-road has become a regular route for the many (hundreds a day are being counted by residents) trucks passing through the village to & from Durnford Quarry - sometimes from 6.00am.

This matter must be a consideration within a much-needed EIA. The current level of trucks passing through Tickenham village is causing incredible levels of frustration, angst, anxiety, concern within the community. These all resulting from worries regarding pollution, safety, excessive noise and disruption.

Safety being a huge factor as the B3130 within the village settlement drops to a width of under 6 metres and at points has no pavement. It is a major disaster waiting to happen (the primary school without a parent car park requires that every pupil walks to the school from other locations) this risk is worsened by the current levels of usage for respective quarry trucks. Such trucks are also at times breaking the speed limit and due to their width and the narrowness of the B3130 itself, they straddle the centre line and cross into the opposite lane on bends. The situation worsens when buses or other large vehicles and agricultural equipment are passing through at the same point.

So for all these reasons how can there not now be the demand for an EIA.

Environment Agency

No comments received.

Natural England

It is Natural England's advice, on the basis of the material supplied with the consultation, that significant effects on statutorily designated nature conservation sites or landscapes are unlikely.

The proposed development is not located within or partly within any Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Special Area of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Area (SPA) or Ramsar Site and is not likely to significantly affect the notified interest features of such sites. The proposal is not located within or partly within a National Park, Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty or Heritage Coast and is unlikely to impact upon the purposes for which these areas are designated or defined.

Natural England does not hold information on the location of significant populations of protected species, so is unable to advise whether this proposal is likely to affect protected species to such an extent as to require an EIA. We are aware that Horseshoe bats roost and forage in this area and that there is a significant roost within 600m of the proposals. The application must make reference to the North Somerset and Mendip Bats SAC Guidance on Development SPD¹. Due to the proximity of the roost, our advice is that the quarry site should be treated as lying within Consultation Zone B.

The developer must provide sufficient information for your authority to assess whether protected species are likely to be affected and, if so, whether appropriate avoidance, mitigation, or compensation measures can be put in place. Further information is included in Natural England's standing advice on protected species.

Furthermore, Natural England does not routinely maintain locally specific data on all environmental assets. This development proposal may have environmental impacts on priority species and/or habitats, local wildlife sites, soils and best and most versatile agricultural land, or on local landscape character that may be sufficient to warrant an EIA. Information on ancient woodland, ancient and veteran trees is set out in Natural England/Forestry Commission standing advice.

Due to the proximity of the site to Ashton Court SSSI, we recommend that the proposed Air Quality Assessment considers the SSSI as a sensitive receptor.

Should you determine that an EIA is not required in this case, you should still ensure that the application is supported by sufficient biodiversity, landscape and other environmental information in order for you to assess the weight to give these material considerations when determining the planning application.

Historic England

From the information given, we consider that there appears to be minimal impact on the historic environment and therefore an EIA may not be required in relation to the historic environment. We recommend, however, that the applicant seeks confirmation from the relevant local authority Historic Environment staff for an informed local opinion of need.

If further information becomes available which might result in a change to this, then we would like to be informed and provided with that information so that we can consider the matter further and respond to you as appropriate.

National Highways

The site is located approximately 5km from the M5, Junction 19.

It is understood that the current permission allows for a maximum of 640 HGV movements per day in total. The proposed alterations would result in a continuation of 110 HGV movements per day and an increase in waste imports of between 16 and 24 HGV movements per day (8 to 12 HGV Loads) for the remaining life of the site, ending 31 December 2032. The additional HGV movements would remain well below the previously approved level of 640 HGV movements per day, and it is noted that there is no intention to increase the levels of limestone production or sales from the site. As such, it is considered that the proposals, operationally is likely to have limited impact on the safe and efficient operation of the SRN.

¹ [Microsoft Word - FULL Adopted SPD, Word version \(n-somerset.gov.uk\)](#)

However, the applicant should engage with National Highways to develop an appropriate transport assessment required to determine the impact of the scheme on the safe and efficient operation of the strategic road network.

The potential impact of construction vehicles on the SRN should be included within the assessment work. During the construction of the development appropriate consideration is given to the timing of works and potential diversion routes to ensure any impact upon the operation of the SRN is fully understood and managed. At the application submission stage, these issues will need to be addressed as part of a construction traffic management plan.

Assessment criteria

In considering whether the proposal is 'EIA development' the key is whether it is likely to have 'significant' environmental effects. Criterion for Screening 'Schedule 2' development is set out in 'Schedule 3' of the EIA Regulations, and it says proposals should be screened according to the:

- Characteristics of the development (e.g. size, use, pollution and waste);
- Location of the development; and
- Types and characteristics of potential impact (magnitude and duration)

EIA development will usually apply where the proposals are:

- More than local importance
- Development proposed in particularly sensitive or in vulnerable locations
- Development with unusually complex or hazardous consequences

The **screening checklist** attached alongside this report is provided so that consideration can be given to potential impacts and whether these are likely to have 'significant' environmental effects. Further information is provided below.

1. Characteristics of the Development

Schedule 3 of the Regulations sets out that the characteristics of the development must be considered having regard, in particular, to the size of the development; the cumulation with other development; use of natural resources; production of waste; pollution and nuisances and the risk of accidents, having regard in particular to substances or technologies used.

The scheme is at Durnford Quarry, which supplies crushed rock aggregates and imports inert construction and demolition waste material for recycling into aggregates and for use in restoring the quarry void. The proposal is to submit a planning application for an amendment to the quarry working and restoration scheme, with northern quarry faces straightened and additional limestone extracted from within the existing quarry.

Limestone extraction is due to cease by 31 December 2022 and quarry infilling/restoration is to be completed by 31 December 2032. As a consequence of the proposed additional limestone extraction, the end date for extraction would be extended by one year to 31 December 2023, the end date for quarry infilling/restoration would remain as 31 December 2032.

Production of limestone at the present time is 300,000 tonnes per year. The current rate of importing inert infill material is approximately 500,000 tonnes per year. The proposed

straightening of the quarry face would release an additional 450,000 tonnes of limestone. This would be released over an 18-month period at current rates. An extra 350,000 tonnes of additional inert infill would be imported for use in restoration. The additional infill would be imported over the remaining approved, eleven-year life of the site at a rate of approximately 30,000 to 35,000 tonnes per year.

It is proposed to remove the inside slope of the overburden mound to allow the quarry faces below to be straightened. The removed overburden would be used with the imported infill in the quarry restoration. Approximately 15,000 cubic metres of overburden would need to be removed, moving the faces up to 20 metres to the north.

Size and cumulative impact - landscape

The screening report at paragraph 3.2.1 states that *'there are no views into the operational quarry area as a consequence of the existing vegetation and northern screenbank'*. Whilst the proposed alteration may not be visible from outside the site, as further stated at 3.3.3 *'The alterations to the northern screenbank would disturb existing vegetation including areas of grass, shrubs and trees. A preliminary ecological assessment would be undertaken to identify if there were any important species or habitats that would be affected and what measures would be necessary to protect them.'*

The existing exposed quarry faces may indeed have significant wildlife value, and this must be investigated. A full **Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment** is required. This will need to identify the implications of the changes to the existing restoration scheme, straightening the quarry edge, which may be visually less attractive and therefore visuals are required. Loss of vegetation through scrub removal, trees loss from the northern slopes must be quantified and fully assessed. It is considered that there are important inter-relationships between the landscape and biodiversity effects of this proposal.

Size and cumulative impact - highways and transportation:

The applicant advises that as a result of the extended activities, vehicle movements will not exceed the traffic levels permitted by the current planning permission. However, the extension to the quarrying period and accompanying import of material, will indeed lead to additional HGV movements. The screening statement says that the proposal would continue the aggregate removal HGV movements of 110 per day until 2023 and increase the number of HGV movements a day to import infill from currently 280 per day, to include an additional 16 to 24 movements per day until 2032. Therefore, the cumulative impact of these additional traffic movements above the current levels of HGV movements, on both the local and strategic road network will need to be assessed through additional **Transport Assessment**. These additional movements are also considered to have potentially significant impacts on the quality of environment, in particular, for communities along these routes, which should be examined together.

Natural resources, waste, pollution and hazards:

It is noted that a new blasting vibration assessment will be carried out as part of the new proposal. It is not understood whether the blasting regime is intended to replicate that of the existing quarrying activity. As the details of this are not yet known, it is not possible to assess the extent of the impact and whether this may cause significant impacts, but it is considered likely that the disturbance will have implications for the environment and biodiversity in the area.

Contrary to the screening report, it is viewed that there is a potential to increase risk to human health through the increased traffic movements and Natural England advise that due to proximity of the site to Ashton Court SSSI, Air Quality Assessment should consider the SSSI as a sensitive receptor.

It is therefore essential that both a **Noise/ Vibration** and **Air Quality Assessment** are submitted and these issues should be considered together.

Flood risk and drainage:

Although not in a Groundwater Source Protection Zone, British Geological Society maps show there is good infiltration in the area, therefore the water quality of any infiltrated water must be considered. The applicant should study where surface water collects naturally and how this is disposed of.

The site layout must respect the natural drainage pattern across the area, and any spring or watercourse network must remain open, culverting is allowed for access only. There must be no interruption to the surface water drainage system of the surrounding land as a result of the operations on the site. Provisions must be made to ensure that all existing drainage systems continue to operate effectively and that landowners upstream and downstream of the site are not adversely affected. Whilst mitigation measures and controls may be put in place it is considered that any changes in the way that drainage is affected as this may have consequences for biodiversity and other land-use activities in the vicinity.

2. Location of Development

Schedule 3 of the Regulations states that the environmental sensitivity of geographical areas likely to be affected by development must be considered, having regard, in particular, to the existing land use; the relative abundance, quality and regenerative capacity of the natural resources in the area and the absorption capacity of the natural environment, particularly in relation to the relationship to wetlands, coastal zones, mountain and forest areas; nature reserves and parks; designated wildlife nature conservation areas; areas with a poor environment; densely populated areas; and landscapes of historic, cultural or archaeological significance.

The Planning Practice Guidance states that the more environmentally sensitive the location, the more likely it is that the effects will be significant and will require an assessment. Certain designated sites are defined in regulation 2(1) as sensitive areas. All developments in, or partly in, such areas should be screened. These are:

- Sites of Special Scientific Interest and European sites;
- National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty; and
- World Heritage Sites and scheduled monuments.

Durnford quarry is located north of the village of Long Ashton, approximately 5 kilometres west of Bristol. The proposed development is not located within or partly within any Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Special Area of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Area (SPA) or Ramsar Site and is not likely to significantly affect the notified interest features of such sites. The proposal is not located within or partly within a National Park, Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty or Heritage Coast and is unlikely to impact upon the purposes for which these areas are designated or defined.

There are records of Horseshoe bats roost and forage in this area and that there is a significant roost within 600m of the proposals. Since the original application and the

previous Environmental Impact Assessment of 2009, a North Somerset and Mendip Bats SAC Guidance on Development SPD has been published. This outlines the importance to be given to bat roosts in proximity to development proposals. Due to the proximity of the roost, Natural England advise that the quarry site should be treated as lying within Consultation Zone B.

It is noted that the site has an Environment Management Plan and Biodiversity Action Plan will remain in place throughout the life of the site. Details of these should be submitted alongside the planning application.

Historic Impact

There appears to be minimal impact on the historic environment and therefore an EIA is not required in relation to the historic environment.

3. Characteristics of Potential Impact

Schedule 3 of the Regulations states that the potential significant effects of development must be considered in relation to criteria set out above (characteristics and location) and having regard in particular to the extent of the impact (geographical area and size of the affected population); the transfrontier nature of the impact; the magnitude and complexity of the impact; the probability of the impact; the duration, frequency and reversibility of the impact.

Planning Practice Guidance provides indicative EIA screening thresholds and circumstances in which proposals are likely to lead to the conclusion that an EIA is required. The threshold for the Extractive industry is for quarries covering more than 15 hectares or involving more than 30,000 tonnes of mineral extraction a year. Durnford quarry is larger than 15 hectares and the rate of mineral extraction at 300,000 tonnes of limestone per year is ten times greater than this threshold. The guidance states that the key issues to consider when considering the need for an EIA under this category of Schedule 2 development are *'the likelihood of significant effects will tend to depend on the scale and duration of the works, and the likely consequent impact of noise, dust, discharges to water and visual intrusion*. Whilst the duration, and some aspects of the scale of the works is set out, the scale of the quarrying activity exceeds the threshold and the impacts of the extension of quarrying activities across a wide range of aspects on sensitive receptors is not yet known. Further assessment is therefore required.

It is understood that the overall size of the quarry would not be affected by the proposals. However, the proposal would alter some of the existing quarry faces and increase the duration of quarrying activity at the location. This has the potential to lead to detrimental environmental impacts, and so should be assessed in a comprehensive way. As identified within this report, there is a range of quite potentially significant impacts, which could alone or in-combination with each other, lead to significant impacts on the environment. The original proposal required an EIA and the extension of activities indicate that the in-combination effects should also be considered alongside one another.

The screening opinion has identified a number of areas which will require further assessment.

Screening checklist

The screening checklist has identified potential impacts from the proposal, which may cause significant impacts on the environment. These impacts relate to whether the project

may cause physical change in the locality – the topography of the quarry will change. The proposal will involve transport of substances or materials which has the potential to be harmful to human health and the environment. Since the previous EIA in 2009, Redwood Lodge Retirement Village has been built – this is less than 200 metres from the closest point of the quarry and significantly more is known about the importance and sensitivity of protected bat populations in North Somerset since the original approval. Therefore, there are now existing land uses around the location, which could be affected by the project. The proposal will cause noise and vibration and potentially cumulative impacts. The environmental impacts from the additional quarrying activity may lead to significant impacts when combined with those from the existing quarrying activity.

Summary and Conclusions

For the reasons set out above, the proposal is likely to have significant effects on the environment having regard to the characteristics, location and potential impact of the development. The proposed development therefore constitutes EIA development and an Environmental Statement will be required as part of any future planning application.

Recommendations

Issue a **POSITIVE SCREENING OPINION** - The proposal does constitute EIA development for the following reasons:

It is determined that the impact of this proposal has the potential to lead to significant impacts on the environment which will need to be fully assessed in the form of an Environmental Impact Statement. Proposed measures to mitigate any adverse impacts should be presented.

The Environmental Statement should include the following:

- Traffic Assessment – detailing impact on local highway network.
- Noise/ Vibration Assessment
- Air Quality Assessment.
- Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment – including impact of loss of trees
- Ecological Assessment – to include impact on Horseshoe Bats (location is within Bat consultation zone B)

Further guidance on the scope of the Environmental Impact Statement may be obtained through requesting a formal Scoping Opinion from the Council.

NORTH SOMERSET COUNCIL:

EIA Screening Checklist

Planning reference Number: 21/P/2520/EA1					
Site address: Durnford Quarry, Long Ashton					
Questions to be considered:	Likely to have an adverse effect?		If yes , is this likely to be significant?		If yes , consider whether: 1) Likely to be of more than local importance? 2) Is within a sensitive area? 3) Likely to have unusually complex/ hazardous effects?
1. Will construction, operation or decommissioning cause physical change in the locality (topography, land use, changes in waterbodies etc?)	Yes x	No	Yes	No	Change in the topography of the quarry.
2. Will construction or operation use natural resources, such as land, water, materials or energy especially any resources which are non-renewable or in short supply?	Yes	No x	Yes	No	
3. Will the Project involve use, storage, transport, handling or production of substances or materials which could be harmful to human health or the environment?	Yes x	No	Yes	No	Further assessment required.
4. Will the project produce solid wastes during construction or operation or decommissioning?	Yes	No x	Yes	No	
5. Will the project release pollutants or any hazardous, toxic or noxious substances to air?	Yes	No x	Yes	No	Further assessment required
6. Will the project cause noise and vibration or release of light, heat or electromagnetic radiation?	Yes x	No	Yes	No	Further assessment required
7. Will the project lead to risks of contamination of land or water from releases of pollutants onto the ground or into surface waters, groundwater, coastal waters or the sea?	Yes	No x	Yes	No	
8. Are there any areas on or around the location which are already subject to pollution or environmental damage e.g. where existing legal	Yes	No x	Yes	No	

environmental standards are exceeded, which could be affected by the project?					
9. Are there any areas on or around the location which are protected under international or national or local legislation for their ecological, landscape, cultural or other value, which could be affected by the project?	Yes	No	Yes	No	Ashton Court SSSI
		X			
10. Are there any other areas on or around the location which are important or sensitive for reasons of their ecology e.g., wetlands, watercourses or other waterbodies, the coastal zone, mountains, forests or woodlands, which could be affected by the project?	Yes	No	Yes	No	
		X			
11. Are there any areas on or around the location which are used by protected, important or sensitive species of fauna or flora e.g. for breeding, nesting, foraging, resting, overwintering, migration, which could be affected by the project?	Yes	No	Yes	No	
		X			
12. Are there any inland, coastal, marine or underground waters on or around the location which could be affected by the project?	Yes	No	Yes	No	
		X			
13. Are there any areas or features of high landscape or scenic value on or around the location which could be affected by the project?	Yes	No	Yes	No	
		X			
14. Is the project in a location where it is likely to be highly visible to many people?	Yes	No	Yes	No	
		X			
15. Are there any areas or features of historic or cultural importance on or around the location which could be affected by the project?	Yes	No	Yes	No	
		X			
16. Are there existing land uses on or around the location e.g. homes, gardens, other private property, industry, commerce, recreation, public open space, community facilities, agriculture, forestry, tourism, mining or quarrying which could be affected	Yes	No	Yes	No	Redwood Lodge, which is in close proximity (< 200 metres) to the quarry has become a retirement village since the last EIS was carried out. The impact on should be assessed.
	X				

by the project?					
17. Are there any areas on, or around, the location which are occupied by sensitive land uses e.g. hospitals, schools, places of worship, community facilities, which could be affected by the project?	Yes	No	Yes	No	
		x			
18. Are there any areas on or around the location which contain important, high quality or scarce resources e.g. groundwater, surface waters, forestry, agriculture, fisheries, tourism, minerals, which could be affected by the project?	Yes	No	Yes	No	
		x			
19. Is the project location susceptible to earthquakes, subsidence, landslides, erosion, flooding or extreme or adverse climatic conditions , which could cause the project to present environmental problems?	Yes	No	Yes	No	
		x			
20. Are there any plans for future land uses on or around the location which could be affected by the project?	Yes	No	Yes	No	
		x			
21. Is there potential for cumulative impacts with other existing or planned activities in the locality?	Yes	No	Yes	No	Further assessment required
	x				
Screening Decision					
Through answering the above, is it judged that the project is likely to have a significant effect on the environment?	Yes x				No

Signed: Jessica Harper