



17 November 2015

Agenda Item:

REPORT OF CORPORATE DIRECTOR – PLACE

NEWARK AND SHERWOOD DISTRICT REF. NO.: 3/15/01407/CMA

- PROPOSAL:** DEMOLITION OF 1970s VISITOR CENTRE, EXCAVATION OF CAR PARKING AREA, REMOVAL OF PICNIC AREA AND PLAYGROUND, AND RESTORATION OF SITE TO NATURAL HABITAT. REFURBISHMENT/UPGRADE OF RANGER ACCESS AND RED SHALE PATH. ALTERATIONS TO RANGER HIGHWAY ACCESS POINT. CLOSURE OF TWO HIGHWAY ACCESS POINTS TO FORMER CAR PARK (BEING REMOVED), CLOSURE OF HIGHWAY ACCESS POINT TO PICNIC AREA (BEING REMOVED), AND REINSTATEMENT OF HIGHWAY VERGE TO ACID GRASSLAND. DEMOLITION OF 1970'S VISITOR CENTRE, EXCAVATION OF CAR PARKING AREAS AND REMOVAL OF PICNIC AREA AND PLAYGROUND IN SHERWOOD FOREST COUNTRY PARK
- LOCATION:** SHERWOOD FOREST COUNTRY PARK AND VISITOR CENTRE, SWINECOTE ROAD, EDWINSTOWE
- APPLICANT:** NCC CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND CULTURAL SERVICES

Purpose of Report

1. To consider a planning application for the demolition of Sherwood Forest Visitor Centre and reinstatement of the site, with alterations to the vehicular access to a retained Ranger facility at Sherwood Forest Country Park. The key issue relates to the manner in which the development will be carried out in consideration of the environmental sensitivity of the site. The recommendation is to grant planning permission subject to the conditions set out in Appendix 3.

The Site and Surroundings

2. The application site is approximately 35ha of Sherwood Forest Country Park adjacent to Swinecote Road (B6034), 600m to the north of Edwinstowe. To the north, the B6034 joins the A616 (Worksop Road). The site comprises buildings at Sherwood Forest Visitor Centre with areas of car parking to the south, linked by a path to a picnic area and playground (Plan 1). The paths running through the site link to paths around Edwinstowe cricket ground and the wider forest path network.

3. Single storey visitor centre buildings dating from the 1970s are located at the northern end of the application site, forming a cluster around a central space and a group of veteran trees (Plan 2).
4. The visitor centre is approached on foot from four linked macadam surfaced car park areas to the south with a capacity for 262 cars and coach parking. There are two points of access to the car park. The southern access is used as an entrance for all vehicles (and also used as an exit by coaches and larger vehicles such as campervans as directed by parking attendants), while the access point to the north is used as an exit to Swinecote Road. An additional vehicular access, immediately to the north of the exit point, is used for service access to the visitor centre and as a means of access to an adjoining Ranger compound. A picnic and outdoor play area, located to the south of the car park is accessed from the car park on foot (Plan 1 and Plan 3). The adjacent vehicular access point on Swinecote Road is used only a means of maintenance access.
5. The Robin Hood Way long-distance footpath passes through the application site but it is not a definitive public footpath or bridleway. Bridlepath Edwinstowe BW5 leading north from Edwinstowe runs through the forest to the west, but does not form part of the application site, and is linked to the visitor centre and car park by the forest path network (Plan 1).
6. There are trees of all classifications including veteran and mature trees throughout the application site, while a small group of younger trees are established on a mound formed of excavated material when the visitor centre was constructed.
7. The site is within the Birklands and Bilhaugh Special Area of Conservation (SAC) which is protected under the European Habitats Directive. The site is also notified at a national level as Birklands and Bilhaugh Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

Proposed Development

Background

8. Legislation requires management of the SAC to very high levels. Natural England has appraised the area of the existing visitor centre as being in unfavourable condition, which can only be addressed through the removal of the existing buildings and restoration of the site.
9. A consortium led by the RSPB (Royal Society for the Protection of Birds) has been named as the preferred bidder to design, build and operate a new visitor centre for Sherwood Forest (Appendix 1). The County Council is to remain responsible for current visitor facilities until a new visitor centre opens. A planning application for a replacement visitor centre has not been submitted.
10. The submitted application for the demolition of existing buildings and restoration of the site is a means by which to facilitate the replacement visitor centre, as

exiting the present site would be a necessary part of a proposal to be submitted by the RSPB consortium. Approval for the carrying out of demolition and restoration would simplify the preparation and consideration of a RSPB consortium planning application by providing approved methodologies for the demolition and restoration of the existing visitor centre site. The applicant for the replacement visitor centre would be at liberty to submit different proposals for demolition and restoration of the existing visitor centre proposed in this application, but any such proposals would need to be considered through submission of a separate planning application.

Proposed Development

11. Planning permission is sought for the demolition of existing visitor centre buildings and the removal of car parks with the site of each restored to woodland pasture (Plan 4). The playground to the south would be restored to heathland with small areas of acid grassland (Plan 5). The car park access and egress onto Swinecote Road, and the maintenance access from the highway to the playground would be stopped up, with the verge reinstated as acid grassland.
12. The existing vehicular access to the Ranger compound would be retained with an upgraded construction and surfaced dressed with aggregate. A *Portacabin*-type building, a range of storage buildings, a sub-station and mast within the Ranger compound would be retained. A red shale path running through the site would be retained and re-surfaced.
13. Having regard to the sensitivity of the site, the application is supported by an Environmental Statement (EIA development) and is accompanied by technical methodologies for the demolition and removal of buildings and arisings. Particular care needs to be taken in proximity to veteran and mature trees and Natural England has identified trees that will require particular safeguarding. A work plan would be prepared for each veteran tree located near to the visitor centre. It has been assessed that the removal of the restaurant floor slab would present a significant risk to the root system of trees and it is proposed that the floor slab is left *in situ*, treated to prevent leachate entering the soil and punctured to provide aeration to underlying soils. Some trees would be removed as part of the site restoration, typically the more recent trees planted on mounds around the visitor centre buildings. The material from the mounds would be reused in the site restoration.
14. Methodologies are proposed to avoid root compaction, while species sensitive to light, noise and dust may be adversely affected. It is proposed that works would be carried out after the end of the bird breeding season, before bat species begin to hibernate, and during the plant dormant season with restrictions on illumination, working hours and measures to contain dust generation proposed to reduce pollution and disturbance as far as possible. Work would commence no sooner than early September (subject to a bird nesting survey) and no later than 1 October with the programme of work including demolition and restoration to last no longer than six weeks. Restoration works are seasonally dependent and it is anticipated that seeding and planting works would be undertaken the following spring.

15. The application concludes that the short-term impact of demolition and restoration works on the ecosystem would be reversible, and in the long term the health of the SAC would be considerably enhanced.
16. Site reinstatement would take place concurrently with excavations with exposed ground covered over as the active front of excavation moves towards the site exit. This approach would avoid the need for over-running and potential root compaction. Provision would be made for bird nesting and bat roosting in the vicinity of the demolished buildings.
17. In order to restrict the incursion of contractor traffic into the forest, the existing coach park would be used as a site compound and material transfer area and is in the less sensitive part of the site. The car park access and egress would be the last areas of the site to be restored and the compound would be available for the majority of the period of works.

ESTIMATED VEHICLE MOVEMENTS																																						
Working Days	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35			
Site Set-up	10	10																																				
Phase 1 works																																						
Import Soil Ph 1																																						
Phase 2 works																																						
Import Soil Ph 2																																						
Phase 3 works																																						
Import Soil Ph 3																																						
Dismantle Site																																						
movements in and out per day	?	?	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	5	5	5	?	?
outgoing loads	40T		max																																			
incoming loads	40T		max																																			
in/outgoing loads	10T		max																																			

18. The anticipated frequency of vehicle movements is shown in the table above. Site traffic would be routed to and from the site from the A616 along Swinecote Road, and lorries would expressly not be routed through Edwinstowe. There would be short periods when excavations are nearly complete when vehicles would have to reverse in or out onto the highway when stop/go signals would be installed in accordance with relevant highway legislation and NCC Highways Management.
19. The application states that the new visitor centre and parking facilities (subject to planning permission being granted) would be provided before demolition of the existing visitor centre and removal of the current car park, so as not to impact on a recreational demand for car parking in the area and also ensure continuous provision of a focal point for access to the forest. The applicant has subsequently confirmed, subject to planning permission, that the new centre is due to open in winter 2017.

Consultations

20. **Newark and Sherwood District Council** – *Support the demolition of the facility and associated ecological enhancements subject to a suitable replacement facility being provided within a clearly defined time frame, in order to comply with*

Newark & Sherwood LDF Core Strategy DPD Core Strategy (N&S Core Strategy) Spatial Policy 8 – Protecting and Promoting Leisure and Community Facilities, and development being in accordance with relevant Development Plan policies.

21. **Edwinstowe Parish Council** – *No objection.*
22. **Environment Agency** – *No objection subject to a condition to deal with unsuspected contamination which may be encountered.*
23. **Natural England** – *No objection subject to conditions. The proposal is strongly supported by Natural England and is considered necessary to achieve the site's Conservation Objectives. It is imperative that works are undertaken carefully and sensitively, in accordance with agreed methodology.*
24. *The sensitive forest ecosystem could be adversely affected during the demolition works due to impacts from light, dust, air emissions, noise and vibration, direct impact to trees, roots and deadwood, changes in stability and to surface water. Method statements specific to each area will guide the works in the most appropriate manner and should set out timescales, methods for demolition and removal, and detail the equipment and set out the measures that can be used to mitigate potential impacts from vibrations, dust, surface water and contamination.*
25. *Conditions are recommended to require detailed Method Statements for each phase and a Construction Environment Management Plan; that an ecologist or arboriculturalist or other specialist with experience of working with veteran trees be present on site during key points in the demolition to ensure the method statements are adhered to and to manage any unexpected consequences; trees with Tree Protection Plans (those with Root Protection Areas in the demolition area) to have direct supervision of works; and in the event of an unexpected incident impacting on safeguarded trees, that a revised method statement is submitted.*
26. *Conditions are also recommended to require the preparation of a Tree Protection Plan for all veteran trees and root protection areas that may be affected by the works; and details of surface water drainage and dust management during demolition should be included in an Environment Management Plan. Advice is given on the methodology to be followed when carrying out work in proximity to veteran trees.*
27. *Natural England is happy for the restaurant foundations to be retained so as not to compromise veteran trees in the immediate vicinity and makes a recommendation on the finished surface treatment of the retained slab.*
28. *Soils to be retained and used should be analysed to ensure they are suitable for the restoration of heathland/acid grassland. Artificial mounds should be removed unless works would impact on veteran trees. Surface water will need to be managed during demolition.*

29. *It is suggested that to ensure compliance with the method statement by contractors a penalty clause should be applied to ensure further safeguarding of the veteran trees.*
30. *The area of works will need to be fenced to preclude public access until restored habitats are established.*
31. *Advice is given on the measures to be incorporated in the methodology for restoration of the site. The monitoring of veteran trees following demolition, and avoiding footpaths close to veteran trees should be subject of planning conditions.*
32. **NCC Landscape Team** – *No objection. The proposals to demolish the visitor centre, remove the car park and play area and the associated infrastructure, and reinstate to heathland / grassland / woodland habitats have the potential to significantly enhance the landscape character of the area. In the medium to long-term there should be no significant negative visual impact and indeed the works should improve views for visitors to the forest, and viewing the site from the retained path network or the adjacent road.*
33. *The successful and careful method of working outlined in the Environmental Statement, avoiding detrimental impact on the health of the existing mature and veteran trees, is fundamental to the positive impact of the proposed scheme. It is unlikely that damage to the existing habitat and trees can be absolutely avoided during the construction phase, but adequate mitigation has been suggested. Protective working methods must be adhered to.*
34. **NCC Reclamation Team** – *No objection subject to relevant surveys and measures identified in the Environmental Impact Assessment being undertaken. In addition, a condition to require an asbestos survey to inform an asbestos management plan for the safe removal and disposal of asbestos containing materials is recommended.*
35. *Material from bunds and other excavated soils should be tested before re-use on the site. A construction and waste management plan should outline how these materials are to be screened, tested and stockpiled on site.*
36. *The potential for excess dust is quantified as low risk and the need for a Dust Management Plan and mitigation measures have been highlighted. The plan should contain site specific methods to control and mitigate dust emissions from the works, and should also take into account the demolition of the buildings containing asbestos containing materials. Dust emissions should be monitored and measures put in place if the dust emissions vary from those in the Dust Management Plan.*
37. **NCC Project Engineer (Noise)** – *No objection subject to a condition for an Environment Management Plan to include steps to be taken to minimise the impacts of noise and vibration on sensitive ecological receptors.*
38. **NCC Flood Risk Management Team** – *Proposed site restoration with diffuse infiltration is acceptable. The upgraded road should be constructed with a cross-fall to shed water into an infiltration swale adjacent to the road.*

39. **NCC Nature Conservation Team** – *No objection subject to conditions. The application is supported by an up-to-date Ecological Assessment. No evidence has been found of roosting bats in any of the buildings although there are numerous bat roosting opportunities within the trees on the site. There is no record of breeding by nightjar or woodlark. Common lizards have been recorded within the application site boundary. Surveys confirm notable invertebrates within the site, a number of these within the application site, including a population of cave spiders (one of only two sites known for this species in Nottinghamshire).*
40. *Surveys have not recorded nightjar or woodlark within the project area, and any indirect impacts appear unlikely to be significant given the localised, short-term and temporary nature of works. The demolition and restoration methodology has been designed to minimise impacts on sensitive habitats and protected species as far as is practicable.*
41. *Specialist advice should be sought from NCC Forestry Team and Natural England about impact on veteran trees.*
42. *Indirect impacts including air quality, noise, artificial lighting and dust are considered in the Environmental Statement but appear unlikely to be significant, and will be short-term and temporary in nature. A condition to require submission of an Environment Management Plan to address issues including noise, vehicle emissions, dust management and artificial lighting is recommended.*
43. *Conditions are recommended to require compliance with relevant mitigation measures included in relevant methodologies of the application, restriction of works to specific seasonal windows, and submission of a 'prior to commencement' method statement for the passive displacement of reptiles from working areas.*
44. *NCC must decide whether predicted impacts on the SAC are likely to be significant. Natural England's Advice should be sought as to whether an Appropriate Assessment under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 is required.*
45. *In respect of site restoration, conditions are recommended to require the testing of sub-soils to ensure their suitability in terms of pH/nutrient status, the sourcing of site-native trees, especially oak, a detailed planting plan, and a planting specification.*
46. *It appears that restoration will deliver a flat, uniform ground surface prior to seeding. In order to maximise the biodiversity value of the restoration, provision should be made for micro-topographic features to be incorporated to make the restoration more attractive to invertebrates. A condition is recommended to ensure that this is addressed under the direction of a NCC 'watching brief' in accordance with the submitted Environmental Statement Addendum.*
47. *A condition to require yew tree stumps to be treated to prevent re-growth as an addendum to the Demolition Method Statements is recommended.*

48. **Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust** – *No objection. The proposal is supported but given the importance of habitats and species it is essential that work is undertaken so as to minimise any impacts. Appropriate surveys have been carried out. Conditions are recommended to ensure the protection of adjacent habitats in accordance with submitted reports; and an Environment Management Plan that incorporates dust and emission controls. Carrying out development in accordance with methodologies should be conditioned and robustly enforced. Tree Protection Plans for all veterans in the vicinity of the works should be agreed and closely monitored.*
49. *Although there is no evidence of roosting bats in buildings, there is extensive evidence of roosting in veteran trees. No veteran trees should be felled or pruned as part of the development. It should be conditioned that the suite is not lit at night. The work should be carried out in the autumn as the most suitable time of year for both bats and birds. Periods of noise should be minimised to avoid disturbance to birds.*
50. *Development should be carried out in accordance with a methodology and protocol to safeguard amphibians and reptiles. Conditions should be imposed to require re-survey for protected species to be carried out prior to the commencement of works; specific measures for the storage of deadwood; and the retention of features used by cave spiders to be followed. Advice is given on sowing rates for habitat restoration. The eradication of the Himalayan balsam and Japanese knotweed should be undertaken as part of the scheme.*
51. **Historic England** – *No comment. Advice should be sought from NCC Archaeology Team.*
52. **NCC Built Heritage Team** *notes that the visitor centre is not a designated heritage asset, nor is it recorded as a non-designated heritage asset. However, it is considered that the original architecture and layout of the centre is of interest as an example of visitor interpretation facilities of the late 20th century. There are original plans and drawings within the County Council's records along with extensive photographs of the centre throughout its life. In order that these plans and images can be kept as a suitable record of the local interest that the centre represents, it is recommended that a proper record of the site is made, including original plans and photographs and other information that catalogues it from original inception to its final removal. This record should be provided to the County Council's Historic Environment Record as a suitable depository, and offered to others, namely the Angel Row local studies library, Nottingham Records Office and Edwinstowe library.*
53. **NCC Archaeology Team** – *Demolition and restoration of the site is unlikely to impact on the archaeological potential of the site. Investigation and mitigation can be secured through a planning condition for an archaeological watching brief.*
54. **NCC Highways Development Control** – *No objection subject to conditions to require a scheme of traffic management signage for the duration of demolition works; traffic associated with demolition only to access the site from Swinecote Road from the north with daily records kept of HGV movements; and redundant access points being stopped up and reinstated as verge.*

55. *Proposed works are expected to take six weeks and the three existing vehicular access points will be used for demolition traffic. All vehicles associated with this proposal are to use Swinecote Road and avoid travelling through Edwinstowe. It is anticipated that temporary traffic signals will be required during these works. Demolition of the visitor centre and the removal of the car park will commence once a new centre and car park are constructed.*
56. *All existing access points are to be reinstated as verge except for the existing access to the north of the site for the ranger compound for future park maintenance. These works are to be undertaken by NCC Highways following completion of the demolition works.*
57. **National Planning Casework Unit** - No comment.
58. **NCC Countryside Access Team, NCC Forestry and Arboriculture Team, Severn Trent Water Limited, Western Power Distribution and National Grid (Gas)** – No responses received. Any responses received shall be orally reported.

Publicity

59. The application has been publicised by means of site notices and press notice in accordance with the County Council's adopted Statement of Community Involvement Review.
60. Councillor John Peck has been notified of the application.
61. No representations have been received.

Observations

62. European sites are afforded protection under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010, as amended (the 'Habitats Regulations'). In considering the European site interest, Natural England has advised that NCC, as a competent authority under the provisions of the Habitats Regulations, should have regard for any potential impacts that a plan or project may have. The submission does not include a Habitats Regulations Assessment. However, to assist in screening the likelihood of significant effects Natural England has advised that the proposal is not necessary for the management of the European site and that the proposal is unlikely to have a significant effect on any European site in light of measures built into the project that avoid impacts on European sites. Given the nature and scale of this proposal, Natural England is satisfied that there is not likely to be an adverse effect on this site as a result of works being carried out in accordance with the submitted details, and that the SSSI does not represent a constraint in determining the application. The development can therefore be screened out from any requirement for further assessment.
63. In order to comply with Regulation 61(1) of the Habitats Regulations, Nottinghamshire County Council as the competent authority must, before giving

consent or permission for a project which is likely to have a significant effect on a European site (either alone or in combination with other projects), and that is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site, make an appropriate assessment of the implications for that site. In order to determine whether a project is likely to have a significant effect, it is normal practice to undertake what is termed a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA). Where a significant effect appears likely, or cannot be ruled out, then a formal Appropriate Assessment should be conducted. An HRA has been carried out in-house, by the County Council's Ecologist, using information submitted by the applicant. This HRA process has concluded that the proposals will not have a likely significant effect on the Birklands and Bilhaugh SAC, provided that the project is strictly controlled through conditions, as proposed. The HRA is appended at Appendix 2.

64. The application site lies within the area of Sherwood Forest that might be recommended for future classification as a Special Protection Area for woodlark and nightjar. Natural England advise that LPAs should adopt a 'risk based approach' whereby proposals affecting this area are subject to a robust assessment of potential impacts on nightjar and woodlark within the Sherwood Forest area. In this case, surveys have not identified woodlark or nightjar breeding in the project area, and it is concluded that the proposal would not give rise to direct or indirect impacts on either species.
65. The application includes methodologies dealing with environmental impacts that could arise through the proposed demolition and site restoration and a condition is recommended requiring an Environmental Management Plan to be submitted to ensure that issues such as noise, vehicle emissions, dust and artificial lighting are suitably controlled. The demolition method statement aims to find a delicate balance between a protracted light-touch operation and a more invasive mechanised approach over a shorter period. The methodologies are considered to be appropriate and acceptable although consideration will need to be given to detailed matters itemised in recommended planning conditions. Any on-site impacts of demolition and site restoration are likely to be short-lived.
66. The proposal would allow the unfavourable condition of this part of the SAC to be addressed, and is welcomed. The development would be consistent with Newark and Sherwood Core Strategy Core Policy 12 *Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure* which (amongst other matters) seeks to secure development that maximises opportunities to conserve, enhance and restore biodiversity; and Newark and Sherwood Core Strategy Area Policy ShAP1 *Sherwood Area and Sherwood Forest Regional Park* which ensures the continued delivery of conservation aims and objectives of the Birklands and Bilhaugh SAC.
67. Works for the demolition and restoration of the existing visitor centre would not commence until a replacement visitor centre and associated car parking has been provided and a suitably worded condition is recommended and would be in compliance with Newark and Sherwood Core Strategy Spatial Policy 8 – *Protecting and Promoting Leisure and Community Facilities*. Whilst an application for a replacement visitor facility has yet to be submitted, the enhancement of the SAC would be consistent with the objective of Newark and Sherwood LDF Allocations and Development Management DPD Policy

ED/NC/1 *Edwinstowe – Sherwood Forest Visitor Centre* which in line with Newark and Sherwood Core Strategy Area Policy ShAP1 – *Sherwood Area and Sherwood Forest Regional Park* will deliver both enhanced management of the SAC and an improved visitor experience. Subject to planning permission being granted, the new centre is due to open in winter 2017.

68. In addition to the ecological and environmental enhancement of the site, the proposed development would improve the appearance of the site, particularly to passing traffic through the removal of alien features from the natural environment. The retention of the Ranger facility, upgrading of the associated access road and improvement of shale paths would not have a significant impact and are considered to be acceptable.
69. The off-site impacts of demolition and restoration have also been considered. Lorry movements are to be directed to and from the site via the A606, and vehicles would expressly not pass through Edwinstowe village. The need for a lorry routing agreement has been discussed with NCC Highways Development Control, but it has been advised that recommended highway conditions would provide sufficiently robust controls over vehicle movements, particularly as at times NCC Highways Management would be controlling vehicular access to and from the site.
70. Conditions recommended by the Environment Agency on contamination and NCC (Reclamation) on asbestos and the testing of excavated soils are considered appropriate. The advice from the County Council's Historic Buildings Officer to provide a full record of the visitor centre for the Historic Environment Record is also considered appropriate, although it is recommended that this is set out as an informative attached to any planning permission issued.

Other Options Considered

71. The report relates to the determination of a planning application. The County Council is under a duty to consider the planning application as submitted, and given the site specific nature of the proposal there no other options have been considered. Given that the application proposes the demolition and removal of an existing facility there are no other acceptable options to consider. To 'do nothing' would not address the unfavourable condition of this part of the SAC.

Statutory and Policy Implications

72. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of finance, the public sector equality duty, human resources, crime and disorder, human rights, the safeguarding of children, sustainability and the environment, and those using the service and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

Implications for Service Users

73. None. A replacement facility would be provided elsewhere before demolition and site restoration commences.

Crime and Disorder Implications

The contractor would need to take usual precautions to safeguard against theft of plant and equipment left on site.

Human Rights Implications

74. Relevant issues arising out of consideration of the Human Rights Act have been assessed. Rights under Article 8 (Right to Respect for Private and Family Life), Article 1 of the First Protocol (Protection of Property) and Article 6 (Right to a Fair Trial) are those to be considered. In this case, however, there are no impacts of any substance on individuals and therefore no interference with rights safeguarded under these articles.

Implications for Sustainability and the Environment

75. The proposal would enhance the currently unfavourable condition of the SAC through the removal of the existing visitor centre and associated car park and facilities.
76. There are no Financial, Equalities, or Human Resource implications arising, or implications for the Safeguarding of Children.

Statement of Positive and Proactive Engagement

77. In determining this application the County Planning Authority has worked positively and proactively with the applicant by entering into pre-application discussions and the scoping of the application. The proposals and the content of the Environmental Statement have been assessed against relevant Development Plan policies, the National Planning Policy Framework, including the accompanying technical guidance and European Regulations. The County Planning Authority has identified all material considerations; forwarded consultation responses that may have been received in a timely manner; considered any valid representations received; liaised with consultees to resolve issues and progressed towards a timely determination of the application. Issues of concern have been raised with the applicant, in respect of the detail of methodologies that have been addressed through clarification by the applicant or recommended planning conditions. The applicant has been given advance sight of the draft planning conditions. This approach has been in accordance with the requirement set out in the National Planning Policy Framework.

RECOMMENDATIONS

78. It is RECOMMENDED that planning permission be granted for the purposes of Regulation 3 of the Town and Country Planning General Regulations 1992

subject to the conditions set out in Appendix 3. Members need to consider the issues, including the Human Rights Act issues, set out in the report and resolve accordingly.

TIM GREGORY

Corporate Director – Place

Constitutional Comments

Planning and Licensing Committee is the appropriate body to consider the content of this report.

[SLB 28/10/2015]

Comments of the Service Director - Finance

There are no specific financial implications arising directly from this report.

[SES 02/11/15]

Background Papers Available for Inspection

The application file available for public inspection by virtue of the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985.

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

Rufford

Councillor John Peck

Report Author/Case Officer

David Marsh

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For any enquiries about this report, please contact the report author.

NCC Press Release – Wednesday 12 August 2015

RSPB-led consortium named as preferred bidder to manage Sherwood Forest Country Park and new visitor centre

A consortium led by the RSPB – the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds – has been named as the preferred bidder to design, build and operate a new visitor centre and to manage the stunning natural habitats within Robin Hood's Sherwood Forest Country Park.

One of the UK's leading nature conservation charities – the RSPB – has come out on top in a procurement process organised by Nottinghamshire County Council for a new visitor centre and to take on the conservation management of Sherwood Forest Country Park, which forms part of Sherwood Forest National Nature Reserve (NNR).

The RSPB will lead a consortium which also features The Sherwood Forest Trust, Continuum Attractions and Thoresby Estate as part of a £5.3m investment programme.

The visitor centre will be designed and built over the coming years and will provide a completely new facility and visitor experience for the people of Nottinghamshire and beyond to enjoy and celebrate the woodland, wildlife and heritage of the site. Around 350,000 visitors visit Nottinghamshire's world-famous Sherwood Forest country park each year and the hugely successful Robin Hood Festival will again take place next year. The County Council's management contract also requires the preferred bidder to deliver on effective conservation of the country park within the wider NNR, which features England's Tree of the Year, the Major Oak.

Nottinghamshire County Council's Culture Committee discussed the options at its meeting on July 21 and today (WedAug12) the council has announced the outcome of that process. The council will now enter exclusive discussions with the preferred bidder to move towards signing final contracts which could be complete by the end of September. The County Council will remain responsible for the current visitor facilities until the new visitor centre opens at Sherwood Forest Country Park.

Nottinghamshire County Council Leader Councillor Alan Rhodes said: "A bright new chapter for Sherwood Forest country park and the legend of Robin Hood is a step closer with this announcement as we move to final contract talks with the preferred bidder.

"The RSPB has a track record in delivering award-winning visitor centres. Their bid focussed on conservation management, iconic heritage and of having expertise of successfully managing these sorts of schemes. The wider consortium has a vast amount of experience and knowledge to promote the international icon of Robin Hood and preserve and protect our world-famous Sherwood Forest."

Mike Clarke, the RSPB Chief Executive said: "This is a hugely exciting project for the RSPB, and a really great opportunity to deliver a fantastic new facility at Sherwood Forest for people, communities and the forest.

“Our core charitable activity is all about managing landscapes for nature and engaging people - and we have a proven track record of delivering, to a high standard, exactly what is required from the Nottinghamshire County Council brief.

“I believe the RSPB, with its wider consortium, will be an excellent partner in this project, committed to delivering a long-term sustainable future for the National Nature Reserve and developing an exciting visitor experience for the people of Nottinghamshire and beyond.”

David Parker, Acting Area Manager for Natural England said: “The iconic Sherwood Forest NNR is Nottinghamshire’s premier wildlife site and internationally important for its famous ancient trees and special woodland wildlife. We’re pleased that this project will realise our shared ambition, to fully restore the condition of this ancient forest to its former glory through the removal of the current facilities. This new modern visitor centre will enable people to continue to marvel at and enjoy this specially protected site in a more sustainable way. We look forward to working with the County Council, RSPB and others to deliver this exciting project.”

Jennifer Spencer, Chief Executive of Experience Nottinghamshire said: “Sherwood Forest is already one of the most popular tourist attractions in Nottinghamshire, and is known around the world for its role in the Robin Hood legend. The RSPB led team is well placed to deliver the project, and we look forward to working with them on the promotion of the new visitor centre when it opens. It is sure to attract even more visitors to the area, while also carefully preserving the forest for future generations.”

Patrick Candler, Chief Executive of the Sherwood Forest Trust said: “The Trust is delighted to be part of the consortium winning bid, where our previous work on the Sherwood National Nature Reserve and excellent track record of supporting local community nature sites is well known. We will be keen to play our part to ensure that there are great benefits for all those who visit and enjoy the wonderful forest that is Sherwood.”

Nick Brown, Regional Agent for Thoresby Estate said: “As a major local landowner, including several leisure and tourism interests, Thoresby Estate is extremely keen to see a first class facility built within Sherwood Forest. The Estate also has strong conservation and heritage ethos and I am therefore confident that the RSPB led consortium will be able to deliver a superb new tourist attraction whilst ensuring the wider environment and landscape is managed to the highest standards.”

Kevin Smith at Continuum Attractions said: "Continuum Attractions is delighted to be part of the RSPB-led consortium which will breathe new life into Sherwood Forest Country Park and develop a new visitor centre. The shared expertise across the consortium will deliver a sustainable future for the Sherwood Forest visitor experience.”

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Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)

1. Introduction

This is a record of a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) undertaken by Nottinghamshire County Council as local planning authority and competent authority for the purposes of Regulation 61(1) of The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010, in relation to a planning application submitted by the Landscape and Reclamation Team of Nottinghamshire County Council and which affects the Birklands & Bilhaugh Special Area of Conservation (SAC). Nottinghamshire County Council may only give permission for the project where it is able to ascertain that it will have no adverse effect on the integrity of the Birklands & Bilhaugh SAC.

2. Information about the project

Type of application, plan or project:	The project is a planning application seeking permission for the demolition of the existing visitor centre at Sherwood Forest Country Park; excavation and removal of hardstanding areas (car park) and playground; and restoration of affected areas to heathland and woodland pasture.
Location of project:	All activity will take place within the south-eastern sector of the SAC, and will be limited to the visitor centre and car parking area. The location is shown on documentation submitted with the planning application (see drawing no. LR/4028826.02 Rev B – Extent of Planning Application Area)
Applicant:	Nottinghamshire County Council – Landscape and Reclamation Team
National Grid Reference:	SK626677 (visitor centre)
Summary of the project and its elements:	The project involves the demolition of the existing visitor centre structures and surfacing; removal of carparking and a play area, within the Birklands and Bilhaugh SAC, required in order to meet the conservation objectives of the site. Areas would subsequently be restored to heathland and wood pasture. Works would take place during a narrow window at the end of the summer period.

	The demolition and restoration works require planning permission from Nottinghamshire County Council; consequently, a planning application has been submitted (planning application number 15/00717/FULM).
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3. Information about the SAC

3.1 Qualifying Features

The Qualifying Feature of the Birklands and Bilhaugh SAC is *'old acidophilous oak woods with Quercus robur on sandy plains'*, for which this is one of only four known outstanding localities in the UK. These are dry oak-dominated woods and wood-pastures (NVC woodland communities W10 and W16) on acid sandy soils usually with silver birch, downy birch, rowan and holly. The most important of these woods for conservation have a large number of old trees which are of high value for their lichens and/or dead-wood invertebrates (from official SAC citation).

The four key components of this European Interest feature as represented at Birklands and Bilhaugh SAC are:

- The oak woodland community;
- Its wood-pasture structure;
- The population of old or ancient trees; and
- Assemblage of decaying-wood invertebrates.

3.2 European Site Conservation Objectives

With regard to the natural habitats and/or species for which the site has been designated (the "Qualifying Feature" listed below), and subject to natural change, the conservation objective for the site is;

Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the Favourable Conservation Status of its Qualifying Features, by maintaining or restoring;

- *The extent and distribution of qualifying natural habitats*
- *The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats*
- *The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats rely*

4. Screening Stage

There are two screening stage tests required under Regulation 21 (transposing Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive):

4.1 Test: Necessary to management (of the European site)

Is the whole project directly connected with or necessary to the conservation management of the site for its European site features?

Having considered the project under Regulation 61(1) of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010, it has been concluded that it is not necessary to the management of the Birklands & Bilhaugh European site, for the following reasons;

- The project involves the removal of buildings, hard standing and other infrastructure and subsequent restoration, and does not involve practical habitat management works necessary for the management of the SAC.

4.2 Test: Likely Significant Effect

Is the project, alone or in combination with other projects, likely to give rise to significant effects on the site?

4.2.1 Likelihood of significant effects alone

This section details the checking of the submitted project proposals for likely significant effects alone, having considered the stated nature and details of the project against each of the European site features, their conservation objectives and their vulnerability to potential effects using best available information. The applicant has submitted a document – “Information for Habitats Regulations Assessment: Demolition of Sherwood Forest Visitor Centre” (July 2015), which forms part of the planning application submission and has been used to assist with this assessment.

Potential effect	Interest feature likely to be affected	The mechanism/pathway of effect	Have measures which would mitigate the potential effects been included? (Y/N) If Yes provide details	Likely Significant Effect (LSE)? (Yes/No / Uncertain)
Damage to trees and root systems	Population of old/ancient trees	Damage by machinery; damage during removal of foundations; vibration; change in conditions surrounding trees	A number of old/ancient trees are located on the edge of, or within the demolition zone and are vulnerable to direct damage or the delayed effects of soil instability from vibration, and changes to the soil microclimate. The context of each veteran tree will be assessed before adjacent demolition under the guidance of NCC’s arboricultural officer,	No

			<p>and a tree-specific demolition plan produced and agreed with the contractor (Tree Protection Plan)</p> <p>A watching brief will be maintained, including the attendance of arboriculturalists and ecologists to oversee adherence to method statements and to agree more detailed processes in respect of individual veteran trees. All works in the vicinity of trees will be carried out in accordance with BS5837; 2012 Trees in Relation to Construction.</p> <p>Demolition and restoration works will additionally be controlled through a Construction Environment Management Plan and area-specific Demolition Method Statements.</p> <p>The floor slab to the restaurant will be retained, to avoid damage to the nearby veteran trees.</p> <p>In addition, as part of the planning consultation process, Natural England has requested a number of conditions be adhered to during works (including those measures outlined above).</p>	
Loss of dead-wood habitat	Assemblage of decaying-wood invertebrates	Damage to/removal of dead wood	<p>Dead wood encountered during the site clearance works from non-veteran trees will be manually collected and deposited outside the immediate operational area, but will be retained on site.</p> <p>Deadwood adjacent to veteran trees will be replaced as near to the original tree as</p>	No

			<p>practicable without double-handling.</p> <p>Deadwood will not be removed from veteran trees.</p> <p>Veteran trees will be protected as above.</p>	
<p>Damage to/ loss of trees and shrubs and changes to habitat structure</p>	<p>Wood pasture structure</p>	<p>Direct removal of vegetation; damage; compaction.</p>	<p>Tree and shrub cover is generally outside the area subject to demolition and restoration works. The passage of demolition vehicles may require some pruning of canopies, but overall there will be no net reduction in the total extent of the feature.</p> <p>Road traffic from demolition works is unlikely to represent a quantum increase from existing visitor traffic.</p> <p>A transfer area will be set up on the existing coach park (which has received the heaviest trafficking in the past and where there is an existing open space furthest from existing trees). Beyond this compound, weight restrictions will be imposed on vehicles and machinery; waste material will be returned to this area for loading and/or temporary storage before removal from site. Machinery will follow defined routes through the site.</p> <p>Oil and fuel storage areas will be bunded.</p> <p>The area will be restored to an agreed plan, with advice from Natural England and the county ecologist, with the aim of recreating a wood pasture structure within restored parts of the site in the long term.</p>	<p>No</p>

			Works will be controlled through a Construction Environment Management Plan and area-specific Demolition Method Statements.	
Changes to ecological communities	Oak woodland community	Noise; disturbance; dust; artificial lighting; vibration; air quality; pollution/contamination; damage to habitat	<p>The demolition phase will be programmed to sit between the end of the bird nesting season and bat hibernation period, commencing work no later than 1 October and lasting for a 6 week programme.</p> <p>Operations will be restricted to an 8 hour day to limit the need for artificial illumination.</p> <p>Site cabins will be located adjacent to the transfer area to keep additional heat, noise and exhaust gases and emissions as far from more sensitive areas of the site as possible</p> <p>For the period of demolition, there will potentially be disruption to feeding patterns for all species e.g. through disturbance, noise, vibration and artificial lighting and temporary severance of territories. However, the works are short-term the area being demolished is already disturbed on a daily basis by footfall and vehicles so overall the effect of this is not considered significant.</p> <p>The potential impacts of noise, dust, lighting and contamination/ pollution will be controlled through a Construction Environment Management Plan, and additionally through area-specific Demolition Method Statements.</p>	No

			<p>Where trees are to be pruned, or veteran trees identified as being at risk of failure have roosting potential, an ecologist with Class 2 bat licence will inspect the trees for bats prior to pruning, and supervise the works to manage a situation if bats emerge/ are found.</p> <p>The area will be restored to an agreed plan, with advice from Natural England and the county ecologist, using species of tree and shrub appropriate to the local area.</p>	
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4.2.2 Likelihood of significant effects in-combination with other plans and projects

No likely in-combination effects are predicted.

5. Conclusion of the screening stage

Nottinghamshire County Council has considered the project under Regulation 61(1) of The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 and has decided that it is not likely to have a significant effect, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, due to measures built into the project to avoid impacts, and controls arising through the use of planning conditions to strictly control the activities. The project is therefore screened out of requiring any further assessment.

Nick Crouch
Senior Practitioner Nature Conservation
Nottinghamshire County Council
6th November 2015

RECOMMENDED PLANNING CONDITIONS

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun within 3 years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with the requirements of Section 91 (as amended) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

2. The County Planning Authority (CPA) shall be notified in writing of the date of commencement at least 7 days, but not more than 14 days, prior to the commencement of the development hereby permitted, with works to be carried out in the timeframe and circumstances specified in the application.

Reason: To assist with the monitoring of the conditions attached to the planning permission and to ensure that works are only carried out between ecologically sensitive specified dates.

3. Within a period not earlier than six weeks before the commencement of works in accordance with Condition 2, a survey for protected species shall be carried out and the results submitted to the CPA for its written approval before works commence. In the event that works do not commence (in accordance with Condition 2) within 6 weeks of the survey, the site shall be re-surveyed and the results submitted to the CPA for its written approval. Should the survey identify previously unidentified features of ecological interest, the survey results shall include mitigation measures designed to protect these features from any adverse impacts resulting from the development. Mitigation measures shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: A survey is required prior to the commencement of development to ensure the favourable conservation status of protected species in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework.

4. No development authorised by this permission shall commence until such time as a replacement visitor centre for Sherwood Forest and associated car parking has been provided to the written satisfaction of the CPA.

Reason: A replacement facility needs to be provided prior to the commencement of development to ensure continued provision of a visitor centre and car parking for visitors to Sherwood Forest and to comply with Newark & Sherwood LDF Core Strategy DPD Core Strategy (N&S Core Strategy) Spatial Policy 8 – Protecting and Promoting Leisure and Community Facilities.

5. Unless otherwise required pursuant to conditions of this permission, the development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the submitted application (including addendum), documents and recommendations of reports, and the following plans:

- a) Location Plan (Drawing LR/4038826.02 Rev B) received by the CPA on 20 July 2015.
- b) Demolition and Site Clearance Overview (Drawing LR/4038826/03 Rev A) received by the CPA on 20 July 2015.
- c) Demolition and Working Restrictions (Drawing LR/4038826/06 Rev C) received by the CPA on 28 July 2015.
- d) Restoration Proposals (Drawing LR/4038826/04 Rev B) received by the CPA on 28 July 2015.
- e) Demolition Layout (Drawing LR/4038826/21) received by the CPA on 20 July 2015.
- f) Route Protection Areas and Access Routes (Drawing LR/4038826/22) received by the CPA on 28 July 2015.

Notwithstanding Table 3.2 of the (revised) supporting Demolition Method Statement, permission is granted subject to an addendum requiring yew stumps left *in situ* being treated to prevent re-growth.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt as to the development that is permitted.

- 6. No artificial lighting shall be employed on site during the period of site works.

Reason: In order to safeguard the ecology of the site.

- 7. No development shall commence before a written scheme of archaeological mitigation has been submitted to and approved in writing by the CPA. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: Details are required to be submitted prior to the commencement of development to establish and record any archaeological potential of the site.

- 8. No development shall commence before a detailed Programme of Works, which shall include detailed Method Statements to ensure appropriate ecological avoidance and mitigation measures are undertaken for each phase of works, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the CPA. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: Details are required to be submitted prior to the commencement of development to ensure that development is to proceed in accordance with approved detailed methodologies.

- 9. No development shall commence before a Tree Protection Plan for all root protection areas of veteran trees that may be affected by the works, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the CPA. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: Details are required to be submitted prior to the commencement of development to ensure that veteran trees are to be appropriately safeguarded throughout the duration of site works.

10. Notwithstanding details in the submitted application, trees to be planted shall be site-native stock. Prior to the commencement of development a scheme, including a programme for the provision of landscaping to include
- a) Species, locations, planting size and planting density;
 - b) Establishment methods (including tree pit detail); and
 - c) Schedule of maintenance including a Landscape Management Plan to guide ongoing management of created and retained habitats

shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the CPA. Other than as may be agreed in the programme for the provision of landscaping and planting, the approved landscaping and planting scheme shall be completed not later than the first planting season following the development first being brought into use. Any tree, plant, shrub or grass seeding that fails to become established within 5 years of the completion of the approved planting and landscaping scheme shall be replaced to the satisfaction of the CPA.

Reason: Details are required to be submitted prior to the commencement of development given the short period of site works and to ensure the planting of appropriate tree specimens in recognition of the ecological significance of the site.

11. No development shall commence before a Remediation Plan providing full details of;
- (a) Objectives for creation/restoration and establishment of habitats;
 - (b) Management of the site; and
 - (c) Aftercare provision

has been submitted to and approved in writing by the CPA. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: Details are required to be submitted prior to the commencement of development given the short period of site works and to ensure that details of an acceptable remediation plan are in place.

12. Prior to the commencement of development, a contingency plan to monitor the health and in particular the stability of veteran trees, to deal with any adverse consequences of demolition, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the CPA. In the event that a veteran tree triggers an indicator that the stability of a veteran tree is at risk, the contingency plan to stabilise the tree shall be implemented to the satisfaction of the CPA and shall be monitored for an agreed period (to be specified in the contingency plan) thereafter.

Reason: Details are required to be submitted prior to the commencement of development given the short period of site works and to ensure that details to monitor veteran trees are in place.

13. Unless in the event of an emergency, or as otherwise may be previously agreed in writing with the CPA site works shall only be carried out between the hours of dawn until dusk.

Reason: To avoid the need for artificial lighting in the interest of the ecology of the site.

14. Prior to the commencement of development an environmental management plan, to include:

- a) Lorry routeing for all HGV traffic during the period of site demolition and restoration;
- b) Measures to prevent the deposit of debris on the public highway;
- c) Measures for the control of noise and vibration on sensitive ecological receptors;
- d) Precautinary Method of Working statement to safeguard against risk to reptiles encountered throughout the period of construction;
- e) Vehicle emissions;
- f) A Dust Management Plan incorporating site specific methods to be used to control and mitigate dust emissions from the works;
- g) The monitoring of dust emissions and measures to be put in place in the event that dust emissions vary from those in the Dust Management Plan;
- h) Site storage of materials;
- i) The screening, testing and stockpiling of material from mounds and other soils to be used to backfill site excavations;
- j) A scheme for the recycling/disposal of surplus soils and waste resulting from construction;
- k) Measures to prevent spills.

shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the CPA. Demolition and site restoration shall be undertaken in accordance with the approved details unless otherwise agreed in writing by the CPA.

Reason: Details are required to be submitted prior to the commencement of development to ensure that effective measures are in place during site works In the interest of highway safety, to safeguard the amenity of residents of Edwinstowe, the ecology of the site, and to safeguard against site contamination.

15. Prior to the commencement of main site works details of the type, location and phasing of fencing to be installed to prevent public access to the site:
- (a) During the period of works; and
 - (b) Following site restoration

shall be submitted and approved in writing by the CPA . The fencing shall be installed in accordance with the approved details. The fencing around restored habitats shall be retained until such time as restored habitats have become established to the written satisfaction of the CPA.

Reason: Details are required to be submitted prior to the commencement of main site works to ensure that effective measures are in place to prevent access to the site by the public during the period of works and to ensure that restored habitats are suitably safeguarded until they have become established.

16. Prior to the commencement of works of demolition on site, a full asbestos survey of buildings to be demolished shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the CPA. Development shall not be carried out other than in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: Details are required to be submitted prior to the commencement of works of demolition to ensure that effective measures are in place to ensure that risks from asbestos to the environment are minimised, and to ensure that the development can be carried out safely without unacceptable risks to workers and other off-site receptors.

17. If during development, contamination not previously identified is found to be present, unless first agreed in writing by the CPA no further development shall be carried out, until a remediation strategy to deal with unsuspected contamination has been submitted to and approved in writing by the CPA. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved remediation strategy.

Reason: To ensure that the site is remediated to an appropriate standard.

18. No development shall commence until a scheme for the provision of traffic management signage during the period of works has been submitted to and approved in writing by the CPA. The scheme shall be fully implemented prior to the commencement of works approved by this permission, and shall be retained throughout the period of demolition and site restoration.

Reason: Details are required to be submitted prior to the commencement of works of demolition to ensure that effective measures are in place in the interest of highway safety.

19. All vehicles associated with site demolition and restorations works approved by this permission shall only access the site along the B6034 via the A616 (Worksop Road).

Reason: In the interest of highway safety.

20. The applicant shall keep daily records of all HGV movements to and from the site, including origin and destination, and ensure that no vehicle is routed via Edwinstowe along the B6034. The written vehicle movement records shall be supplied to the CPA within two weeks of request for such records being made by the CPA.

Reason: In the interest of highway safety.

21. Within eight weeks of the commencement of development or such other timescale as may first be agreed in writing by the CPA, the three access points on the B6034 made redundant as a consequence of the development shown on Drawing LR/4038826/04 Rev B shall be permanently closed and the access crossings within the public highway reinstated as highway verge in accordance with the specification of the Highway Authority.

Reason: In the interest of highway safety.

Informatives/Notes to applicant

1. Attention is drawn to the detailed recommendations of Natural England in the consultation response dated 21 September 2015, particularly targets for restored wood pasture areas, heathland areas, and dry acid grassland areas, a copy of which is enclosed.
2. With reference to Condition 8:
 - a) an ecologist, arboriculturalist or other specialist with experience of working with veteran trees should be present on site during key stages of demolition to ensure that works take place in accordance with approved method statements and to manage any unexpected consequences. Works in proximity to trees with identified Root Protection Areas in the demolition area should be directly supervised.
 - b) the Method Statement to be submitted shall include provision that in the event of an unexpected incident that could give rise to an adverse effect on any retained tree, unless otherwise first agreed in writing by the CPA, work shall stop until such time as a revision to the approved Method Statement has been submitted to and approved in writing by the CPA.
 - c) in order to ensure greater care of veteran trees, Natural England advises that a penalty clause is included in the works contract to be triggered in the event that the contractor fails to comply with approved method statements.
 - d) a bespoke method statement should be provided for the removal of mounds. An initial hand exploration should be undertaken to determine the extent of the working area affected. Natural England advises that where a mound to be removed overlaps with a root protection area, or there is significant that its removal would result in adverse impact to a veteran tree, the mound should remain *in situ*. Consideration should be given to the effect of the removal of young trees on the roots of nearby veteran trees.

- e) any dead wood that needs to be cleared from the demolition area should be retained within the SSSI close to a veteran tree to ensure that there are no negative impacts on the invertebrate population.
 - f) Recommendations for the retention of the feature used by cave spiders should be closely followed.
 - g) a specification is to be provided for any tree pruning to be undertaken. Natural England would not wish to see any pruning of veteran trees.
 - h) Natural England advises that the phasing of the removal of red shale paths is timed so that vehicles will not drive over bare sand.
 - i) Natural England advises that the retained restaurant foundations are spread with sand to reduce their unnatural appearance during site degradation.
 - j) a method statement to deal with ruderal weeds that become dominant in the demolition area should be submitted following discussion with Natural England.
 - k) a method statement to manage surface water and prevent pooling near veteran trees should be submitted. Consideration should be given to the provision of a drainage channel during works to direct surface water away from veteran trees to a more suitable part of the site.
 - l) in considering final restoration of the site, if areas of the site become prone to surface water flooding, the final restoration scheme should incorporate areas of wetland habitat (wet heath) that would provide for long term surface water management and create a more diverse habitat.
3. With reference to Condition 8 and Condition 9;
- a) Natural England advises that no work shall take place during periods of frost when there would be an increased risk of damage to exposed roots. Whilst exposed, any veteran tree roots should be wrapped or covered to prevent desiccation and to protect from rapid temperature changes. Any wrapping should be removed prior to backfilling, which should take place as soon as possible.
 - b) vehicular routes should be planned to avoid root protection areas and canopies of all veteran trees with all vehicle and pedestrian access making best use of existing roads, paths and areas of hardstanding. Defined routes for machinery/traffic movements are to be shown on the submission in compliance with Condition 9. Where root protection areas cannot be avoided, machinery with low ground pressure should be specified in the method statement to be submitted in compliance with Condition 8.
4. With reference to Condition 10, whilst other sources may be available, NCC Skegby Tree Nursery (gary.litte@nottscc.gov.uk) normally stock oak and birch originating from Sherwood Forest.

5. With reference to Condition 11;
 - a) any soil that needs to be imported for backfill should be Sherwood sand and sourced locally;
 - b) heather seed harvesting should take place in late autumn-early winter with only heather seed from the Sherwood area (preferably Budby South Forest) to be used.
 - c) Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust (NWT) consider the sowing rate of 10g/m² for acid grassland nurse sward may not provide the necessary microclimate suitable for the germination of heather seed, and NWT recommend a sowing rate of 20-25g/m².
 - d) NWT advise that a programme for the eradication of Himalayan Balsam and Japanese Knotweed should be undertaken.
6. With reference to Condition 12, Natural England advises that the routing of paths close to veteran trees which are vulnerable to erosional/recreational impacts should be reviewed.
7. With reference to Condition 14f), the Dust Management Plan should use Institute of Air Quality Management guidance on the *Assessment of Dust from Demolition and Construction (2014)*. The Dust Management Plan should also take into account the demolition of buildings with asbestos containing materials.
8. With reference to Condition 14h), no storage of materials should take place in the Root Protection Area of veteran trees.
9. With reference to Condition 14i), soil analysis should be undertaken to ensure that the material is appropriate for restoration of heathland/acid grassland.
10. With reference to Condition 16, the presence of asbestos containing soils should be acknowledged and considered in accordance with CIRIA C733 *Asbestos in Soil and Made Ground: A Guide to Understanding and Managing the Risks*.
11. NCC Flood Risk Management Team advises that the upgraded road to the Ranger's compound should be constructed with a simple cross-fall that sheds water into an adjacent infiltration swale.
12. In order that plans and images of the visitor centre can be kept as a suitable record of the local interest that the centre represents, it is recommended that a proper record of the site is made, including original plans and photographs and other information that catalogues it from original inception to its final removal. This record should be provided to the County Council's Historic Environment Record as a suitable depository, and offered to others, namely the Angel Row local studies library, Nottingham Records Office and Edwinstowe library.