

North York Moors National Park Authority

Scarborough Borough Council (South) Parish: East Ayton	App No. NYM/2019/0444/FL
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Proposal: works to existing car parks, creation of footpaths, earthworks, installation of interpretation boards, construction of footbridge and creation of new car park

Location: Forge Valley Woods National Nature Reserve, Seavegate, East Ayton

Applicant: Scarborough Borough Council, fao: Mr Chris Bourne, Town Hall, St Nicholas Street, Scarborough, YO11 2HG

Agent: Fairhurst, fao: Mr Josh Murphy, 1 Arngrove Court, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE4 6DB

Date for Decision: 23 August 2019

Grid Ref: 499203 485398

Director of Planning's Recommendation

Subject to clarification that the new car park is not located on genuine semi Ancient Woodland - Approval subject to the following conditions:

1. TIME01 Standard Three Year Commencement Date
2. PLAN02 Strict Accordance With the Plans/Specifications or Minor Variations
3. DRGE00 The development hereby approved shall be carried out in accordance with the submitted Flood Risk Assessment (by Fairhurst, dated May 2019, reference 128858 Forge Valley) and the following mitigation measures it details:
 - i) The bridge soffit levels shall be set no lower than 35.84mAOD
These mitigation measures shall be fully implemented prior to being brought into use and subsequently in accordance with the scheme's timing/ phasing arrangements. The measures detailed above shall be retained and maintained thereafter throughout the lifetime of the development.
4. MISC00 The development hereby approved shall be carried out in strict accordance with the Construction Method Statement by Fairhurst dated June 2019.
5. LNDS00 The development hereby approved shall be carried out in strict accordance with the mitigation measures set out in the Tree Survey, Arboricultural Method Statement and Arboricultural Impact Assessment prepared by EcoNorth dated June 2019.
6. LNDS00 The development hereby approved shall be carried out in strict accordance with Section 6 "Mitigation and Compensation Strategy" of the Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey prepared by EcoNorth dated June 2019 and Section 6 "Mitigation and Compensation Strategy" of the Protected Species Survey prepared by EcoNorth dated July 2019.
7. ARCH02 Archaeological Interest Requiring Full Survey

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Conditions continued

8. HWAY00 Unless otherwise approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, there shall be no excavation or other groundworks, except for investigative works, or the depositing of material on the site until the access(es) to the site have been set out and constructed in accordance with the published Specification of the Highway Authority and the following requirements
- a. The new and existing crossings of the highway verge at Seavegate and Wallis Quarry within the highway boundary shall be constructed in accordance with the Standard Detail number E9A.
 - b. The new footway within the highway boundary shall be constructed in accordance with Standard Detail number E6W.
 - c. The final surfacing of any private access within 1 metres of the public highway shall not contain any loose material that is capable of being drawn on to the existing or proposed public highway.
All works shall accord with the approved details unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority
9. HWAY10 Visibility Splays

Informatives

1. The developer is advised that the bridge should be designed in such a way that the handrails do not prevent the free flow of flood water during extreme events. Best practice would be to only install handrails on the downstream side of the bridge.
2. The developer is advised that the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2016 require a permit to be obtained for any activities which will take place:
 - on or within 8 metres of a main river (16 metres if tidal);
 - on or within 8 metres of a flood defence structure or culvert (16 metres if tidal);
 - on or within 16 metres of a sea defence;
 - involving quarrying or excavation within 16 metres of any main river, flood defence (including a remote defence) or culvert;
 - in a floodplain more than 8 metres from the river bank, culvert or flood defence structure (16 metres if it's a tidal main river) and you don't already have planning permission.
3. You are advised that a separate licence will be required from the Highway Authority in order to allow any works in the adopted highway to be carried out. The 'Specification for Housing and Industrial Estate Roads and Private Street Works' published by North Yorkshire County Council, the Highway Authority, is available at the County Council's offices. The local office of the Highway Authority will also be pleased to provide the detailed constructional specification referred to in this condition.



North York Moors National Park
Authority
The Old Vicarage
Bondgate
Helmsley YO62 5BP
01439 772700

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Scale: 1:2500





Seavegate Gill



View of new car park area



Site of proposed footbridge



Extension to Old Man's Mouth

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Consultations**East Ayton Parish** – No objections**West Ayton Parish** – Supports the principle of:

- Boardwalk replacement (but disappointed full details have not been included in the application and that this is considered 'like-for-like replacement as the works will impact on neighbouring land owners and users);
- Improvement to Old Man's Mouth car park;
- Improvement to the Seavegate Gill car park and river area (but key area missing);
- Provision of improved information panels and picnic facilities.

Objects to:

- New footbridge and car park opposite Wallis Quarry which will result increased pressure of users on the boardwalk and the associated environmental and anti-social problems;
- Increasing volume of public access on a restricted width PROW in a SSSI designated protected area.

Main concerns:

- Damage to the SSSI caused by increased numbers of users which will be encouraged with the provision of a new footbridge and car park;
- Riverbank damage caused by off lead dogs leading to soil erosion;
- Faecal contamination of land and water;
- Increased sediment and nutrients in drinking water, abstracted by Yorkshire Water downstream;
- Road safety for pedestrians has not been addressed, particularly crossing the road to access the new footbridge and the entrance to the new car park opposite Wallis Quarry will be near to a blind corner on a 60 mph road causing a highway safety issue;
- No proposals for the refurbishment of existing overgrown roadside footpaths between Seavegate Gill and Wallis Quarry have been included in the application, endangering pedestrians and other users. Furthermore there is no footpath at the northern end of Castlegate in East Ayton to facilitate access to the footbridge;
- The damaged area of woodland below Seavegate Gill, which is used as an informal cycle park, car park and camp site has been excluded from the proposals with no protection for key veteran Champion tree and eroded riverbanks – this is the area visitors see first on entering the reserve so should be first to be restored and enhanced;
- Increased littering and fly tipping – no details of rubbish collection;
- Increased antisocial behaviour;
- Increased use of boardwalk by cyclists and potentially by off-road motorbikes endangering pedestrians, wheelchair users and buggies;
- Livestock worrying by dogs in adjacent meadow and litter in grass silage;
- No information on the method of refurbishment of the boardwalk;
- No details on location of site for contractor's compound and parking;
- Increased signage and information boards will not address the problems of littering, dog fouling and antisocial behaviour;
- No details provided as to the volume of timber to be removed and whether a felling licence from the Forestry Commission is required;
- The proposed new car park is at risk of flooding at high river levels and surface water run-off during heavy rain;
- No information has been provided on the diversion footpaths whilst the boardwalk is being replaced;

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Consultations continued

- There will be very limited impact on the economic role of sustainable development;
- What assurances are there from the Environment Agency for continued flood relief via the sluice into the Sea Cut?

Concludes that the objectives of the NYMNPA include the need to protect and enhance the special habitats and places in the National Park of which Forge Valley is one. Increasing public access should not be allowed to take precedence over the protection and enhancement of designated habitats, biodiversity and water quality in the SSSI and NNR.

Highways – No objections as the application aims to improve the existing facilities within the reserve for all users and recommend conditions to ensure existing and proposed accesses are constructed to meet the specification of the local Highway Authority.

Natural England – No objection subject to appropriate mitigation being secured, without which it is considered that the proposal would damage or destroy the interest features for which Raincliffe and Forge Valley Woods SSSI has been notified. In order to mitigate these adverse effects and make the development acceptable the following mitigation measures are required:

- an updated Construction Management Plan which incorporates the recommendations within Appendix H in the Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey;
- a biosecurity risk assessment/protocol requiring prevention measures to be put in place to ensure any equipment and construction workers do not accidentally introduce nor spread non-native species in the SSSI/NNR;
- an updated schedule of tree works which only proposes removal of trees for health and safety purposes.

In addition the proposal has potential to adversely affect woodland classified on the Ancient Woodland Inventory and advises that the Authority, along with the developer, should ensure that there is suitable evidence to make a decision, including proposed mitigation and compensation measures.

Finally there are users of the site that are causing damage to habitats both within and outside the SSSI/NNR through inappropriate car parking and access. As such it advises that the Authority should consider whether the proposal will exacerbate these problems further and whether any measures can be implemented to protect these habitats from damage.

Environment Agency – No objection- The site lies within Flood Zone 1, 2 and 3, the low, medium and high probability zones. The proposed works, including the construction of footbridge, are considered to be a 'less vulnerable' land use in [Table 2: Flood Risk Vulnerability Classification](#) of the Planning Practice Guidance: Flood Risk and Coastal Change. The application is supported by a site-specific flood risk assessment (FRA), however the proposed development will only meet the National Planning Policy Framework's requirements in relation to flood risk if a condition is imposed requiring the bridge soffit levels to be set no lower than 35.84m AOD.

Forestry Commission – Standing advice issued.

Ramblers Association –

Police (Traffic) –

Site Notice/Advertisement – 7 August 2019

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Others - Mrs Rosie Pither, 23 Moor Lane, East Ayton
Mrs Joanne Martin, 50 Shelton Avenue, East Ayton
Mrs Elizabeth Waite, Oakroyd, Pickering Road, West Ayton
Lynn Johnson, 13 Lonsdale Place, East Ayton
Miss Anna Greenwood, 33 Garth End Road, West Ayton
Mrs Morna McLennan, 68 Shelton Ave, East Ayton
Mr Malcolm McLennan, 68 Shelton Avenue, East Ayton
Mr David Sidebottom, 35 Racecourse Road, East Ayton
Mrs Kerry Jeffrey, 52 Chantry Road, East Ayton
Mrs Alexandra Haworth, 27 Meadow Drive, East Ayton
Dorne Whale, Lavender Cottage, 9 Pickering Road, West Ayton
Mrs Julie Smith, Diving Duck Cottage, 46 Carr Lane, East Ayton
Mr Marcus Halliday, 44 Chantry Road, East Ayton
Lynda Stewart, 14 Sheepfold Way, West Ayton
Mrs Susan Farthing, 21 Broadlands Drive, East Ayton
Mrs Frances Hall, 12 Uplands Avenue, East Ayton
Mr Richard Mead, 3 The Mount, Mill Lane, West Ayton
Doug Cartlidge, 21 The Garlands, Scarborough
David Jefferson, 16 Morley Drive, West Ayton
Mr Dave Evans, 27A Throxenby Lane, Scarborough
Mrs Eileen Race, 20 Broadlands Drive, East Ayton
Miss Vikki Metcalfe, 22 Shelton Avenue, East Ayton
Mrs Lynda Stewart, 14 Sheepfold Way, West Ayton
Mr Anthony Stewart, 14 Sheepfold Way, West Ayton
Mr Robert Peacock at 44 Meadow Drive, East Ayton
Graham Tacon, 10 Chantry Road, East Ayton
Mrs Elizabeth Riley, The Wilf Ward family Trust, 42 Betton Rise, East Ayton
Paul Cain, Seamer Road, East Ayton
Mrs Margaret Beal, 17 Seamer Road, East Ayton
Miss Sarah Swift, 47 Herons Court, Gilesgate, Durham

All of the above support the application for some or all of the following reasons:

- Forge Valley Boardwalk is a much used and loved area of natural beauty and the proposed works will be a great asset to the residents of all ages in the village and for visitors;
- It will make the area more accessible for all to enjoy the health and wellbeing benefits that the Forge Valley reserve offers;
- A footbridge at the southern end of Forge Valley would be an invaluable amenity providing a safe walking route from East Ayton to both the Castle and the boardwalk for residents and walkers, and is long overdue;
- Dedicated parking provision within the new car park for those with accessibility needs ensures they can visit all year round, which they presently cannot do at Old Man's Mouth due to such steep access;
- It will allow access to the boardwalk from East Ayton and create circular walking routes from both East and West Ayton and also Old Man's Mouth;
- Improved and increased parking will greatly improve the safety of pedestrians using the area who are unable to walk down the road safely due to the current paths being overgrown;
- The boardwalk is in much need of replacement;
- The prevention of parking amongst the tree opposite Seavegate Quarry will improve the area;
- A reduction in the speed limit and/or traffic calming measures would enhance the area;

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Others continued

- The proposed improvements will also need to be maintained and anti-social behaviour and rubbish kept under control;
- The plans represent a well thought out scheme while being sympathetic to the natural surroundings that will bring pleasure to many people of all abilities;
- The benefits far outweigh any environmental concerns given that the valley is already compromised by the boardwalk and a busy road on either side of the river;
- The proposals will enhance tourism in area, helping the local economy from the additional footfall generated by the facility.

Mr Christopher Gray, 9 Castle Rise, West Ayton – Objects for the following reasons:

- Much of the delight and charm of Forge Valley will be destroyed if a new car park and footbridge are created which will transform the western bank into a picnic playground and campsite;
- If additional leisure areas and cycle tracks are wanted then Raincliffe Woods is better suited being much larger with better gradients and already has four underused car-parks;

Mrs Catherine Cussons, Low Yedmandale Farm, West Ayton (owners of the fields at the southern end of the boardwalk and within Ayton Castle, adjacent to West Ayton Caravan Club Site) – no objection to the replacement boardwalk or the improvements to Old Man's Mouth car park but object to the new footbridge as it will increase visitors to this important SSSI/NNR which need protection from anti-social behaviour and vandalism and not being turned into another outdoor leisure facility like Dalby Forest.

National Farmers Union – Wish to make the following comments on behalf of their member in the area:

- The community benefits of improved access in the area are acknowledged as are the rights for all to enjoy the countryside however there are concerns that the proposals may further increase visitor numbers to the area;
- The plans for Wallis Quarry will lead to an increased visitor footfall, heightening existing environmental and anti-social behaviour problems (e.g. fly-tipping, camping, bonfires, trespassing onto farmland, gates being left open, dog worrying of livestock, damage to the river bank etc.) already experienced and cause further problems for farming business in the area;
- If the plans are approved, more need to be done to tackle these problems as the current signage is not sufficient.

North York Moors Local Access Forum – Supports the application but wishes to raise a number of concerns:

- The river banks and water are clearly being contaminated by dog fouling and it is suggested that advisory notices at strategic locations should be erected explaining the need for dogs on leads and that the river provides drinking water to Ayton and further south.
- The river banks need considerable work to restore and maintain them in a satisfactory manner, and limit access for dogs into the river. The boardwalk reconstruction should ensure adequate locations to accommodate disabled users scooters/wheelchairs and the recycled rubber intended for the surface material needs to be non-slip.
- Work to improve the access/egress to Old Man's Mouth car park would be hugely beneficial to walkers using the area and the addition of a picnic area would add significantly to the attraction for visitors.

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Others continued

- A 'tidying up' of the Seavegate area opposite Wallis Quarry would further enhance the attraction of the Forge Valley area.

Background

This application by Scarborough Borough Council is for a range of improvement works to the Forge Valley National Nature Reserve to provide all year round accessibility suitable for wheelchair users, walkers and runners. At present the area includes a boardwalk on the west side of the River Derwent, a number of designated car parks along with informal parking facilities at the southern end of the reserve at Seavegate. The existing boardwalk was created in 2000 to enable wheelchair users to access the nature reserve but is no longer fit for purpose and in need of replacement.

The works proposed as part of this application form part of a wider scheme of improvement works to the nature reserve, with some works such as the replacement of the existing boardwalk and formalisation of existing car parks, not requiring planning permission. The proposed works in this application comprise improvements to the existing car park at Old Man's Mouth to provide additional parking spaces, including disabled and minibus parking along with a picnic area; the construction of a new car park, including disabled and minibus parking and new footbridge constructed in recycled plastic to match the refurbished boardwalk to connect with Public Rights of Way on the East Ayton side of the River Derwent opposite Wallis Quarry car park; the creation of new footpath links and formalisation of the current parking arrangements at the southern end of the nature reserve around the Seavegate Gill car park; the installation of interpretation boards; and areas of new native tree planting, reinstatement of grass verges and protection to existing trees from current informal parking arrangements with soil bunds with log tops. The new car park and footpaths will be surfaced with reinforced gravel grid whereas the extension to Old Man's Mouth car park will be in crushed stone to match the existing surfacing. Timber bollards are also proposed around both car parks to protect pedestrians and the surrounding woodland.

The site lies within Raincliffe & Forge Valley Woods Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Forge Valley National Nature Reserve (NNR). The Forge Valley NNR was established to "protect important habitats, species and geology, and to provide 'outdoor laboratories' for research. In turn this offers great opportunities to schools, specialist interest groups and the public to experience wildlife at first hand and to learn more about nature conservation". Furthermore as a SSSI any development needs to be carried out with sensitivity and with minimal disruption to the natural flora and tree population, whilst balancing the need to manage the trees for safety and amenity value.

The application is accompanied by a Planning Statement; Design and Access Statement; Flood Risk and Drainage Statement; copy of the Environment Agency permit application; Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey; Protected Species Survey Report; Tree Survey Report; Arboricultural Impact Assessment and Construction Method Statement.

Prior to the submission of the application, the applicants entered into pre-application discussions with the Authority and sought to engage with the local community with a public consultation meeting was organised by the RWCE and attended by Fairhurst after which there was a two week consultation period from which the response were collated and considered with modifications made to the scheme such as the reduction of hardstanding within the car parking areas and the reduction in the number of parking spaces in the Old Man's Mouth car park to make space for a picnic area. The formalisation of the existing lay-by area, located at the southern end of the nature reserve was also removed from the final design owing to concerns of an urbanisation of the area.

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Main Issues**Policy**

Core Policy A states seeks to further the National Park purposes and duty by encouraging a more sustainable future for the Park and its communities whilst conserving and enhancing the Park's special qualities. Priority will be given to providing a scale of development and level of activity that will not have an unacceptable impact on the wider landscape or quiet enjoyment of the National park nor detract from the quality of life of local residents or the experience of visitors whilst also maintaining and enhancing the natural environment.

Core Policy C seeks to conserve and enhance the quality and diversity of the natural environment of the North York Moors National Park and states that protected sites and species will be afforded the highest level of protection.

Core Policy G seeks to conserve and enhance the landscape, historic assets and cultural heritage of the North York Moors with particular protection being given to those elements which contribute to the character and setting of sites of archaeological importance.

Development Policy 1 supports new development only where it will not have an unacceptable adverse impact on surface and ground water, soil, air quality and agricultural land; will not generate unacceptable levels of noise, vibration, activity or light pollution; will not have an adverse impact on the health, safety and amenity of the public and users of the development; and there will be sufficient infrastructure capacity to accommodate the demand generated by the development.

Development Policy 2 seeks to ensure development will not lead to an increase in flood risk elsewhere.

Development Policy 3 seeks to maintain and enhance the distinctive character of the National Park, requiring a high standard of design detailing, good quality sustainable design and construction techniques and a satisfactory landscaping scheme as an integral part of the proposal.

Development Policy 7 seeks to ensure that proposals do not have an unacceptable impact on the integrity or setting of a Scheduled Monument, or other sites or remains considered to be of national archaeological importance.

Development Policy 14 seeks to improve the quality of the tourism and recreation product in the National Park where it will provide opportunities for visitors to increase their awareness, understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the National; can be satisfactorily accessed from the road network or by other sustainable modes of transport; and will not generate an increased level of activity, including noise, which would be likely to detract from the experience of visitors and the quality of life of local residents.

Principle

The proposed works would enhance the existing facilities and opportunities in the Forge Valley for visitors to understand and enjoy the special qualities of the National Park thereby meeting one the Authority's statutory purposes as set out in the 1995 Environment Act. In particular the provision of the new footbridge at the southern end of the boardwalk will enable new circular walk opportunities for tourists in the locality and provide opportunities for the local school and the residents of East and West Ayton to explore the lower end of Forge Valley and the castle with short circular walks.

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Background continued

In support of the application the Authority's Head of Recreation and Ranger Services has commented that the proposal would provide disabled access and a second access point to the very popular boardwalk, which is due to be replaced in early 2020 subject to funding approval. The current car park (Old Man's Mouth) which provides access to the boardwalk is difficult to negotiate for many drivers and cannot be readily altered due to archaeological constraints. The car park is often full meaning that disabled users can't be sure of having enough space to get out of their car safely.

Many of the objections which have been raised about the boardwalk proposal – dog mess, erosion etc. – are unlikely to be affected by a second access point; if anything the impact may be reduced in intensity instead of concentrated in the one area, as currently. The numbers of dog walkers are unlikely to change greatly as the application proposes only 7 additional parking spaces in the new car park beside the footbridge, plus improvements to the existing car parks. These concerns relate more to existing infrastructure and the ongoing management of the site. Raincliffe Woods Community Enterprise are due to take over management of the wider site under a lease arrangement with Scarborough Borough Council and they are fully aware of the need to tackle dog fouling issues.

Natural Heritage/Ecology/Trees

The Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey identifies that the development will potentially have the following impacts upon the ecological interests of the site:

- Felling of trees may result in loss of bat roosts and therefore have a High impact.
- The works could have a Moderate impact on otters and badgers due to the disturbance caused by the works.
- The works could have a Moderate impact on water vole due to the disturbance caused by the works.
- The works could have a Moderate impact on nesting birds due if the works are carried out within the nesting bird season (March to August, inclusive).
- Loss of deciduous woodland habitat would be Low due to the possible impact areas being small and the retention of connectivity within the woodland.
- Loss of foraging habitat for bats would be Low due to the retention of the remaining woodland.

However the Authority's ecologist is satisfied that the ecological constraints of the sites have been adequately considered and the mitigation proposed proportionate to the potential impact. The survey was carried out at an appropriate time of year to adequately identify constraints present. It is recommended that if Members are minded to approve the application that section 6 of the Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey report (Mitigation and Compensation Strategy) should be a conditional requirement of the development. This covers the time limitations of works (e.g. to take place outside of the bird breeding season), additional surveys required and precautions required for working in/near aquatic habitats.

A Tree Survey and Arboricultural Impact Assessment has been undertaken for all three application sites which concludes that as a result of the works "that no significant impacts to the current established trees are predicted" and "any impacts will be within acceptable limits when the mitigation measures proposed in this report are applied". The courses of new footpaths are respectful of the tree roots of existing trees to be retained, with only minor intrusion into their RPAs which will be protected with sensitive installation of new surfacing. The Authority's Woodland Officer is pleased to note that overall the woodland around area will have increasing protection as there are some very fine trees which are being damaged through current land use.

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Background continued

However the proposed new car park and footbridge will require the removal of a small number of trees and shrubs and whilst this can be mitigated with the new planting or management of existing vegetation, the works fall partly within the area recorded as Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland on the Natural England Inventory. The NPPF states “development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as Ancient Woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists”. In this case there will be a loss of Ancient Woodland area to the new car park, footpaths and footbridge and potentially some deterioration to adjacent habitat from the use of the proposed facilities (Natural England guidance stipulates at least a 15m buffer between new development and Ancient Woodland).

The Authority’s Woodland Officer acknowledges that this is a small scale development in what is an extensive area of woodland, and if it were outside of the Ancient Woodland area he would support the proposal given the overall benefits and the mitigation proposed, but he has concerns that a precedent will be set for permitting development contrary to Core Policy C and the advice in the NPPF.

However there appears to be some discrepancy over the boundary of the designated Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland area where the new car park is to be located. Whilst there is no doubt that the valley is a long standing woodland or wood pasture, there is evidence that parts of the flatter ground may have been managed as open ground in more recent times which is supported by OS maps from 1850 onwards, which show a line of trees along the river with an area of grassland between the trees and the road to the east, including on some maps a field number. The lack of tree cover for a short period does not necessarily mean a loss of woodland continuity unless the land was farmed or managed in a way where the woodland soils would be changed irreversibly but on the evidence the Authority has there is some doubt whether this area has been in continuous forestry cover since 1600AD to warrant designation as Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland. Unfortunately Natural England are unable to comment further on this matter and have advised that it is the responsibility of the landowner, developer and the determining Authority to gather sufficient evidence (such as possible past woodland clearance) that casts doubt over the boundary of the area of designated Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland. The agent has been asked to gather any evidence they may have to support our concerns that the area has not been correctly classified as Ancient Woodland and Members will be updated at the Meeting.

Natural England have not raised an objection to the scheme but have advised that appropriate mitigation should be secured, without which the proposal would damage or destroy the interest features for which Raincliffe and Forge Valley Woods SSSI has been notified. In order to mitigate these adverse effects and make the development acceptable Natural England have requested an updated Construction Management Plan which incorporates the recommendations within Appendix H in the Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey; a biosecurity risk assessment/protocol requiring prevention measures to be put in place to ensure any equipment and construction workers do not accidentally introduce nor spread non-native species in the SSSI/NNR; and an updated schedule of tree works which only proposes removal of trees for health and safety purposes. The agent has been advised of the amended/additional information that Natural England has requested and Members will be updated at the Meeting.

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Cultural Heritage/Archaeology

Two of the three sites included in the above application require no archaeological mitigation, although the northernmost, 'Old Man's Mouth' car park will. The carpark and path is the site of the Ayton Forge, about which Scarborough Archaeological and Historical Society have recently supplied a survey report. This report identifies the high importance of the site within the local industrial heritage, and the areas about which more could be known.

Whilst the application takes into account the importance of the archaeology here, should the application be successful the groundworks at this site will still require an approved WSI and watching brief to be completed. Given the limited nature of the works, and their existing association with the site, it is suggested that SAHS might wish to carry the archaeological mitigation out here. NPA archaeologists would be supportive of this involvement.

Highway Safety

The application aims to improve the existing facilities within the Forge Valley Woods National Nature reserve for all users. There are three separate sites where development is proposed which would affect access to and from the highway to which the Highway Authority has no objection.

The formalisation of the existing small parking area at Seavegate Gill will require improvement to the existing access to ensure it meets the specification of the local highway authority. The works opposite this parking area, which comprise soil bunds with log tops on the highway boundary, will reduce the availability of parking immediately adjacent to the highway, where currently vehicles park damaging the verge and adjoining woodland and as such is welcomed. As are the proposals for new footpaths through the woods and the clearing out of the existing footway leading to this area.

With regard to the existing car park at Old Man's Mouth, the access is steep and does not meet the current highway visibility requirements but it is not possible to improve this without significant engineering works which would not be reasonable within the reserve.

As with Seavegate Gill, the proposed development will formalise the existing parking at Wallis Quarry but the existing access to the highway will need improving as it is not constructed to the specification of the local highway authority. Opposite the existing Wallis Quarry car park, the new car park proposed will provide seven car parking spaces (including two disabled spaces) and a space for a mini-bus. The car park will provide more level access for pushchairs, wheelchairs and mobility scooters and access to the proposed new foot bridge over the river. There is adequate visibility available at the location of the new access provided that the overgrown verge is cut back and maintained so as to maximise the available achievable visibility. It is not considered that the additional vehicle movements which would be generated by the proposed eight space parking area at Wallis Quarry would not have a significant increase on the highway and would be offset by the reduced opportunity to park opposite Seavegate.

Conclusion

It is considered that the proposal will improve the existing facilities available at the Forge Valley National Nature Reserve for the benefit of visitors to the National Park and local residents without having an unacceptable impact on the wider landscape or quiet enjoyment of the National Park nor detract from the quality of life of local residents or the experience of visitors whilst also maintaining and enhancing the natural environment, subject to resolving the matters raised by Natural England. As such the proposal accords with Core Policies A, C

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Background continued

and G and Development Policies 1, 2, 3, 7 and 14 of the Core Strategy and Development Policies Document and approval is recommended.

Contribution to Management Plan Objectives

Approval is considered likely to help meet Policy U3 which seeks to ensure opportunities to enjoy the National Park will be available to a wide cross section of society; Policy U7 which seeks to improve access to recreational activities for local communities; Policy U14 which seeks to increase visitors and residents understanding of the special qualities of the National Park.

Explanation of how the Authority has Worked Positively with the Applicant/Agent

The Local Planning Authority has acted positively in determining this application by assessing the scheme against the Development Plan and other material considerations and subsequently granting planning permission in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development, as set out within the National Planning Policy Framework.