



Northamptonshire County Council

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Please ask for: Phil Watson
Tel: (01604) 236638
Our ref: 11.00005.SCO
Your ref: R15/1
Date: 6th December 2011

Dear Mr Gough

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT) (ENGLAND AND WALES) REGULATIONS 1999: REGULATION 10 SCOPING OPINION FOR A PROPOSED LIMESTONE QUARRY (TO BE RESTORED WITH INERT FILL) AT RINGSTEAD GRANGE, RINGSTEAD, NORTHAMPTONSHIRE.

I refer to your letter dated 11th October 2011 and the accompanying scoping report. The scoping report has been the subject of consultation in accordance with the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Regulations and copies of the responses received are attached for your information.

Guidance on the information to be included in an Environmental Statement appears in Schedule 4 of the 1999 Regulations.

Overall I can confirm that the approach that you are advocating in the scoping report is considered to be generally acceptable and appropriate and this is reflected in the nature of the consultation responses. You will note the specific points which have been made by the consultation bodies and you are required to have regard to these. In particular I would draw your attention to the following:

Amenity Impacts

The Environmental Protection Officer at East Northamptonshire Council has commented on the importance of an assessment of potential noise and dust impacts from the proposed operations and this should also relate to the additional traffic movements. A dust management /action plan as proposed is essential. A detailed noise assessment should be undertaken in accordance with the recently updated 2009 version of BS5228. The impact of any proposed lighting, both permanent and mobile should also be assessed. Proposed planning conditions to mitigate the amenity impacts of the development should also be considered and identified.

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In terms of sensitive receptors an assessment should be made of any new developments permitted and proposed in the vicinity of the site and the impact on these should be considered.

Landscape and Visual Amenity

The proposal to undertake a landscape and visual amenity assessment of the proposed development is appropriate and the latest guidance on methodology should be followed, in particular the Advice Note on 'Photography and Photomontage in Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment' published in 2011 should be used.

Access, Highway Safety and Traffic Routing

As proposed in the scoping report a full Transport Impact Assessment would be expected to accompany any application for this proposal and the access would need to be appropriately designed.

The impact on pedestrians and cyclists on the public highway and on public rights of way users needs to be assessed. The opportunity to improve the safety for pedestrians and cyclists along the road from the A45 to Ringstead should also be considered.

I await comments from the Highways Agency and these will be forwarded to you separately.

Biodiversity

I refer to attached comments received from Natural England, The Wildlife Trust and the County Council's own environmental advisor.

The Phase 1 survey and assessment to be provided should include any species and habitats of principal importance and an assessment of negative and positive effects on biodiversity. The survey and assessment should not necessarily be limited to just the application site, where proposals have the potential to impact directly or indirectly on biodiversity surrounding habitats. Opportunities for biodiversity enhancement should be explored and identified in the context of the site and the wider area. The report states that the ecological assessment will include a description of the mitigation measures introduced to reduce potential impact, however consideration should be given to the need for any long term species monitoring.

Designated Sites

The Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits is now a Special Protection Area (SPA) and not a pSPA as stated in the Scoping report. The Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits is approximately 600m from the proposed development. However, a number of the bird species for which the SPA is designated, including golden plover and lapwing, forage on arable land. The application site therefore has some the potential to support SPA species and any Environmental Statement must consider the potential for loss of bird foraging habitat and

indirect impacts on protected species. Natural England recommends that specific surveys are undertaken to assess the use of the site by foraging Golden Plover and/or Lapwing during the winter period.

The Environmental Statement must have regard to the Habitats Directive as the Mineral Planning Authority would need to undertake a Habitats Regulations Assessment to assess whether the proposals require preparation of an Appropriate Assessment. The Environmental Statement should provide sufficient information in order for the Authority to undertake the Habitats Regulations Assessment. Part of this information should include detailed over-wintering bird surveys of the site and any surrounding feeding habitats that could be directly and indirectly affected. The scope of the assessment work should ideally be agreed with the Authority and Natural England in advance of preparation of any application.

Hydrology and Hydrogeology

I refer you to the attached comments received from the Environment Agency and in particular the requirements to be included in the Flood Risk Assessment which will be provided.

Soils and Agriculture

I refer you to the attached comments made by Natural England which endorses the intended comprehensive soil survey and also recommends a number of issues relating to soils and agriculture which should be considered in detail in the Environmental Assessment.

Cultural Heritage

I refer to comments attached from the County Council's Archaeology Advisor. The approach advocated in the scoping report is considered appropriate. Cultural Heritage is omitted in error from the list in paragraph 28 of the scoping report and should be appropriately addressed in the Environmental Statement.

Cumulative Impacts

In assessing the likely effects of the development in respect of the various topics which are scoped in for Environmental Assessment consideration should be given to any cumulative impacts. In particular there have been permissions granted for industrial development in Raunds to the west of the A45 Road and consideration should be given to these, and any other permitted developments.

Local Community Comments

Comments on the scoping report have been received from Ringstead Parish Council and Raunds Town Council (see attached). These should be considered and taken into account in the preparation of the Environmental Statement where appropriate, or addressed in the planning application supporting statement. I understand that comments are due to be

submitted by Great Addington Parish Council and any received will be forwarded for you information.

Please let me know if I can be of further assistance.

Yours sincerely

G.P. Watson

Development Control Manager

Encl: Responses from

- 1) Highway Authority (Memo dated 17.10.11)
- 2) Natural England (Letter dated 21.10.11)
- 3) Environmental Protection at ENC (Letters dated 19.10.11 & 01.11.11)
- 4) Environment Agency (Letter dated 08.11.11)
- 5) Planning at ENC (Letter dated 28.10.11 and e-mail dated 19.10.11)
- 6) Wildlife Trust (Letter dated 07.11.11)
- 7) NCC Senior Environmental Planner (Memo dated 07.11.11)
- 8) NCC Archaeology Advisor (Memo dated 03.11.11)
- 9) Ringstead Parish Council (04.11.11)
- 10) Ruands Town Council (Letter 15.11.11)