

Our Ref: 2/2014/0079/PLNG
Case Officer: Stephen Clark
Email: devcontrol@north-dorset.gov.uk

Date: 05-Mar-2014

*Mr M Brown,
Sibbett Gregory
3 Winchester Place
North Street
Poole
Dorset
BH15 1NX*

Dear Sir,

**Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2011
Regulation 13 - Scoping Opinion of the Local Planning Authority**

SCOPING OPINION REF NO: 2/2014/0079/PLNG

PROPOSAL: Request for EIA Scoping Opinion under EIA Regulations 2011 to erect 150 dwellings with associated landscaping, infrastructure and cycleway link.

LOCATION: Land South West Of, Blandford Forum Bypass, Blandford St Mary, Dorset

I write with reference to your email dated 26th January 2014 concerning the proposed erection of 150 dwellings at land southwest of Poole Road (A350) and south of the A354 Blandford by-pass at Blandford St Mary. Your email requests a formal Scoping Opinion from the Local Planning Authority under Regulation 10(1) of the EIA Regulations.

From the information submitted the proposal consists of 150 dwellings which represent a first phase of development on the field which has an estimated capacity (by the applicant) of approximately 300 dwellings. The development would have a single point of access from the A350 and would include a cycleway link across or over the A354, associated parking, garaging and landscaping.

Further to the scoping opinion request, the Council has consulted with the following bodies:

The Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB
Planning Policy
Principle Technical Officer
Trees and Landscaping Officer
County Archaeological Office
The Dorset Wildlife Trust
Natural England
The Environment Agency
Dorset County Highway Authority
Wessex Water

Note: Excludes English Heritage

I have received correspondence from Wessex Water, Natural England, Dorset County Highway Authority, Trees and Landscaping Officer, County Archaeological Office, The Environment Agency and the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB. I attach copies of their submissions.

In adopting this scoping opinion North Dorset District Council has taken into account the specific characteristics of the site and the type of development proposed as well as the environmental features likely to be affected by the development.

The Council expects that the Environmental Statement will include the information as set out in Schedule 4 of The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2011.

The consultation process has identified that the central themes for an Environmental Statement should include the following.

Landscape Impact Assessment (Incl. AONB)

The development has the potential to cause a significant landscape and visual impact due to the scale of the development proposed, topography of the land and proximity to the AONB's. The ES will need to identify how the site selection and design process has sought to minimise landscape and visual impact with any proposed mitigation included. The impact of the revised by-pass location and any additional features such as pedestrian footpath bridges over roads and lighting will also need to be considered. The affected landscape character areas and AONB's should be considered within the ES and the impact on the significance of these areas and designations identified and fully considered.

Ecology / Biodiversity:

Natural England has confirmed that it does not hold information on the location of significant populations of protected species. The existing use of the land and the presence of mature hedgerow and a coppice of trees result in suitable habitat for protected species. The Council would therefore expect that habitat and biodiversity will be considered in detail in the ES. The ecological assessments will need to be supported by a full Dorset Environmental Records Centre data search of the site and neighbouring areas.

The ES should cover baseline conditions for wildlife, identification of valued ecological receptors and habitat, potential impact to these receptors and appropriate avoidance, mitigation and enhancement. The Council therefore considers that the impact upon ecology, habitat and protected species should be included within the ES.

Transportation:

The development of 150 dwellings has the potential to impact significantly upon the Transport Network during both the construction phase and post completion. The Council's Policy Manager has previously indicated three issues that need to be addressed which include:

- The Highways Agency response to the Draft Local Plan consultation process (October 2012) regarding potential impacts from development in Blandford

Forum on the A31/A35. The key issue here is current and future traffic flows and the impact on reliability and resilience of the future road network.

- Spetisbury / Charlton Marshall by-pass and the associated impact of moving the proposed location. A balance between transport and landscape impact must be considered in the ES.
- Trailway and linkage through the application site to Blandford Forum crossing the A350 and A354.

The County Highway Authority has indicated that the ES should include a comprehensive Transport Assessment and Travel Plan and address the following transportation and access related effects.

- Temporary disruption to pedestrians, cyclists, buses and road vehicle users during the construction works.
- Temporary generation of construction-related traffic during the construction works.
- Effects upon traffic flows and capacities of the local highway network.
- Effects upon pedestrian and cycle accessibility and facilities, including safety issues.
- Effects on public transport and accessibility.

Archaeology:

The site is located in close proximity to two sites of archaeological importance to the north east and north west. These sites are located on the opposite side of the A350 and A354 respectively but with required linkage over the A354 consideration regarding the impact on these locally important sites will be necessary.

The County Archaeological Officer has also commented indicating that a geophysical survey would be appropriate. If nothing of potential significance is found then archaeology could be scoped out of the Environmental Statement. If however the survey reveals the presence of significant archaeological material then further evaluation by trial trenching would be necessary and archaeology would form part of the scope for the ES.

Impacts upon Geology and Hydrology:

The ES should consider the impacts through construction to permanent occupation of development and should specifically cover hydrology and hydrogeology, including surface water runoff, flood risk and potential contamination.

Given the introduction of areas of hard surfacing you will need to clarify surface water drainage proposals and the use of sustainable drainage measures is recommended.

Drainage:

Wessex Water have identified that a 250mm public water main crosses the site and an easement of 5 metres either side of the main will be necessary for the purposes of maintenance and protection. No trees should be planted within 6 metres of the water main. Given the number of dwellings proposed the development is also likely to have implications on existing foul and surface water drainage infrastructure.

I trust the information set out in this scoping opinion is clear, if however, you have any further queries, please do not hesitate to contact me on the above details.

Yours faithfully

John Hammond
Development Services Manager