

Appendix A01  
Scoping Report and CDC Scoping Opinion



## SCOPE OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

### Heyford Park, former RAF Upper Heyford

This scope is a summary of the formal scoping opinion of Cherwell District Council, 20 September 2006

#### **INITIAL DESCRIPTION OF THE NATURE AND PURPOSE OF THE DEVELOPMENT FOR THE PURPOSES OF REQUESTING A SCOPING OPINION**

It is the intention of the applicants to work within the principles for development set out in the RAF Upper Heyford Revised Comprehensive Development Brief (July 2006) prepared by Cherwell District Council Planning and Development Services. As set out in the Brief in Part E, there are three broad aspects of development:

- Environmental improvements, chiefly involving removal of existing structures and works
- Conservation of the built heritage
- Provision of a new settlement

As stated at 30.1, 'the vision for the new settlement is to be achieved through:

- provision of about 1000 dwellings with an appropriate mix of tenures and sizes and a range of employment promises to accommodate 1300 jobs reflecting the number of economically active residents anticipated;
- provision of a primary school and other local facilities to reduce the need to travel;
- provision of recreation and community facilities to encourage healthy lifestyles and social well being;
- provision of high quality design guided by the character of existing development where appropriate; retention and reuse of buildings of historic interest and representative of the development of the site to engender a sense of place;
- development of a compact settlement and design to encourage walking [and] cycling rather than travel by private car;
- provision of necessary infrastructure to serve the proposed development'

We anticipate that in seeking to achieve the objectives of the brief in these three areas it will be necessary to explore a number of alternative schemes. Key variables in the options will include the number of existing buildings to be retained, the proportion of different uses, the intensity of new development and the spatial extent of significant redevelopment. It is not possible at this stage to provide any meaningful information as to the detail of the options. We therefore propose to include within the EIA a description and appraisal of the options considered in working up the final proposal.

## Heyford Park Environmental Statement

Whatever the range of options considered, it is the intention that all options remain within the principles of the Development Brief in order to ensure that an EIA based on the Development Brief will cover the submitted proposal.

### STRUCTURE AND CONTENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT

The following outline and notes sets out the structure and scope of the ES.

#### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

#### 1.2 ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

#### 1.3 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT AND ALTERNATIVES

A description of the proposals and the range of alternatives considered in arriving at the preferred option, to be referred to as the 'Assessment Plan'. The alternatives should include a do-nothing option as a point of reference. Key variables in the options should include the number of existing buildings to be retained, the proportion of different uses, the intensity of new development and the spatial extent of significant redevelopment.

Points included in the Council's scoping opinion:

- The application and ES should include and cover Camp Road
- Include 'information on density of dwellings (including providing layouts for a range of densities and character areas)'
- The Council will need to understand the assumptions behind the density, areas, dwelling numbers and buildings heights of the Assessment Plan. Of particular concern is the possibility of the overall density of the proposal, including retention of existing dwellings, being below 30 dwellings per hectare.

#### 1.4 POLICY CONTEXT (P)

Demonstrate consistency with district, county, regional and national planning policy.

#### 1.5 SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC IMPACT (S)

Identify impact of increased population on the local economy, shopping, employment and health, education and community facilities.

#### 1.6 TRAFFIC AND MOVEMENT (T)

Assess the impact of proposals on the external highway network in terms of traffic generation, as well as impact on and scope for public transport and other alternatives to the private car in particular walking and cycling as well as rail. The transport assessment should include potential impacts, both positive and negative, on the footpath network and the possibility of reconnecting routes.

Points raised in the Council's scoping opinion include:

- Terms of TIA to be agreed with the highway authority

- Capacities of relevant junctions and corridors within the agreed assessment area to be tested
- Predict other environment impacts caused by additional traffic movements through adjacent settlements and propose mitigation measures
- Assessment to apply to both construction and occupation phases of development

Points included in the County Council's comments:

- Assess potential impacts on internal and surrounding rights of way and accessible open countryside network, with particular reference to the Oxfordshire Rights of Way Improvement Plan and other Strategies
- All categories of non-motorized user should be considered.

### **1.7 UTILITY SERVICES AND WASTE (U)**

Assess current provision of utility services (water, sewerage, electricity, gas, telecommunications) and the impact of increased demand due to development. The assessment should also include the issue of ongoing waste collection and disposal with higher density occupation of the site.

### **1.8 CONSTRUCTION, WASTE AND CONTAMINATION (C)**

Assess the impact of undertaking necessary mitigation/remediation of contaminated and/or polluted sites, demolition and disposal of existing structures or engineering works and disposal of new construction waste. Mitigation should include strategies for on-site reuse or recycling of materials. The assessment should include other potential, and cumulative, impacts during the construction period including haul roads and construction traffic.

### **1.9 NOISE, AIR AND WATER QUALITY (N)**

Assess noise and air quality during both construction and occupation phases. Consider the impact of the proposed development on water quality and water use at any Special Protection Area or Special Area of Conservation. The assessment should consider the likely increase of hydrocarbon run-off due to increased vehicular activity. Methods of protecting watercourses should be proposed.

### **1.10 GEOLOGY AND SOILS (G)**

Identify potential impact on the topsoil within the site with a view to storage and reuse of any topsoil removed as part of construction

### **1.11 SURFACE WATER DRAINAGE, HYDROLOGY AND HYDRO-GEOLOGY (W)**

Describe the drainage system on the site and its relation to the wider hydrological system, both surface and sub-surface and assess the impact of the proposed development and surface water drainage arrangements on the systems, having regard to the scope for inclusion of sustainable urban drainage systems. The assessment should cover, in particular, storm-water flows over areas of hardstanding and any impact on local canal feeders, either increasing or decreasing flow.

**Heyford Park Environmental Statement****1.12 LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AND VISUAL IMPACT (L)**

Identify and assess impacts on the character and visual quality of the site as a whole and the surrounding area with particular regard to the status of the site as a conservation area as well as the Oxfordshire Landscape and Wildlife Study (OWLS).

Points included in the District Council's scoping opinion

- This part of the ES should draw on work already undertaken and there should be a consistency in the identification of character areas to assist with comparison.
- Night time and winter impacts should be assessed.
- Receptor points should reflect previous work and should be agreed in advance with the Council.
- Trees to be retained or, with justification, felled as well as any replacement of evergreen species with 'indigenous broadleaved species' should be assessed.
- Further assessment of ZVI should be undertaken on individual structures.
- Include specific reference to the County Wildlife in the assessment of landscape character and visual impact

Points included in the County Council's comments:

- A landscape character assessment should be required with reference to CDC's LCA and the county's OWLS

**1.13 ECOLOGY AND NATURE CONSERVATION (E)**

Identify species and habitats present with particular attention to protected species and Priority Habitats identified in OWLS/BAP and assess the impact of the proposals on the habitat and species as well as scope for habitat improvement/creation.

Points included in the County Council's comments:

- Particular attention should be paid to the grassland areas running through the centre of the site for their botanical interest as well as bird and invertebrate habitat
- A full assessment will be required to determine the potential direct and indirect impacts on the range of habitats and species associated with the site and mitigation and/or compensation measures proposed as well as indications for a management plan.

**1.14 ARCHAEOLOGY AND CULTURAL HERITAGE (A)**

Identify the significance of the site in terms of archaeological interest and cultural heritage, in particular relating the conservation area status of the site. Assess the impact of the proposals on the archaeological and cultural heritage.

Points included in the Council's scoping opinion:

- The assessment should include and make reference to the conservation area status of the site, any buildings or structures proposed for listing and/or scheduling and any others identified by English Heritage as of national importance.

- In accordance with Paragraphs 49.9 - 49.21 of Draft Revised Comprehensive Planning Brief, the ES should cover and include:
  - ♦ a master plan
  - ♦ sufficient information to assess the impact on the conservation area
  - ♦ identification of buildings to be retained and demolished, justification, criteria for inclusion and design of any replacement buildings 'in the vicinity of' retained buildings
  - ♦ identification of buildings to be re-used, proposed uses for retained buildings and land and, where there is uncertainty, how this may be resolved within the framework of the application.
  - ♦ The impacts of re-use of retained buildings will need to be assessed, including the impacts of associated vehicle movements, car parking, outdoor storage, clutter, lighting, signage (identifying signage/company logos on buildings and directional signage) and any changes to the buildings to make them usable, with consideration given to their setting and integrity as a group
  - ♦ management and maintenance plan for the site, drawn up with the involvement of the Council, identifying mechanisms for consultation, review and change;
- The effect on the setting and curtilages of protected buildings and structures should be assessed, as agreed with the Council and English Heritage.
- The functional and spatial relationship and cumulative and group interest of buildings and structures should be considered

Points included in the County Council's comments:

- Archaeological features identified in the previously undertaken field evaluation should be evaluated in more detail to determine their significance and assess the potential for loss or damage due to the development.

Appendix A01  
ES Report and CDC Scoping Opinion





## Planning and Development Services

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20 September 2006

Dear Mr Evans

### TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT) REGULATIONS 1999 – REQUEST FOR A SCOPING OPINION

**PROVISION OF ABOUT 1,000 DWELLINGS OF A MIX OF TENURES AND SIZES AND A RANGE OF EMPLOYMENT PREMISES TO ACCOMMODATE 1300 JOBS; PROVISION OF PRIMARY SCHOOL AND LOCAL FACILITIES; PROVISION OF RECREATION AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES; RETENTION AND RE-USE OF BUILDINGS OF HISTORIC INTEREST; PROVISION OF NECESSARY INFRASTRUCTURE TO SERVE THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT – RAF UPPER HEYFORD**

I write in response to your request that the Council adopts a formal scoping opinion on the Draft Scoping Document for RAF Upper Heyford, submitted with your letter of 10 July 2006. As you are aware, an extension of time was agreed, when I undertook to provide you with a full scoping opinion by 20 September 2006.

I have consulted with relevant colleagues within the Council, at Oxfordshire County Council and with statutory and other consultees as defined in Circular 02/99, the EIA Regulations 1999 and the Town and Country Planning (General Development Procedure) Order 1995.

I have now received virtually all of the necessary responses from colleagues and consultees and for ease of reference I attach in full copies of the comments received from Oxfordshire County Council, English Nature, Highways Agency, Thames Water, British Waterways and Countryside Agency. These should be read together with and as an integral part of the Council's formal scoping opinion under Regulation 10 of the EIA Regulations.

In relation to other comments received on the scoping of the Environmental Statement, these can be summarised as follows:

This will be a complex application as the entire site is designated as a conservation area, there are a number of buildings and structures proposed for listing and scheduling and many



others are identified by English Heritage as of national importance for preserving although they are not to be statutorily protected.

I am pleased to see that the intention is to submit an application in accordance with Structure Plan Policy H2 with respect to the number of dwellings and the number of jobs. The Council will need information on the density of dwellings (including providing layouts for a range of densities and character areas) and the type of employment and employment generation rates proposed to ensure that dwelling numbers and employment levels do not exceed these figures which are intended by the Policy to be a lasting arrangement.

Policy H2 also requires a comprehensive scheme for the whole site.

I note that your letter refers to it being necessary to explore a number of alternative schemes. The Regulations require the consideration of alternatives and as it would not seem appropriate to consider alternative sites nor to consider a do nothing option I imagine that the alternatives will relate to varying levels of demolition and new build. However there will need to be one option that forms the Assessment Plan and I am not sure that your letter makes this clear. This should be rectified in the submitted Environmental Statement (ES).

I note that the "red line" excludes Camp Road. I understand that there may be some changes to the configuration of Camp Road (e.g. the introduction of traffic lights) and so the application will need to include Camp Road and so will the ES.

Paragraphs 49.9 – 49.21 of the Draft Revised Comprehensive Planning Brief makes reference in broad terms to the level of detail to be supplied and what the ES would be expected to cover and includes:

- A master plan
- Sufficient information to assess the impact on the conservation area
- Identification of buildings to be retained and demolished, the justification, the criteria for [the design of] any replacement structures in the vicinity of retained buildings
- Proposed uses for retained buildings and land and where there is uncertainty how this may be resolved within the framework of the application
- Management plan for the site, identifying mechanisms for consultation, review and change.

The key areas for consideration will be the effects on:

#### **Landscape character and visual impact.**

- This should draw upon the work already undertaken and there should be a consistency in the identification of character areas to assist with comparison.
- Caution should be used in balancing the sometimes competing objectives in Policy H2 of landscape restoration / environmental improvement and protection of the historic assets of the flying field, particularly with reference to the effects on the landscape character of the flying field itself.
- Receptor points should also reflect previous work and the severity of intrusion, relative numbers of viewers, and sensitivity of receptor points should be first agreed with the Council.
- A wider area plan would be necessary to identify key viewpoints within and outside the site. In view of the plateau location some of the wider viewpoints that would need assessment would be relatively widespread.
- Night time and winter impacts should be assessed.
- The impact of replacing inappropriate evergreen species with indigenous broadleaved species should be assessed
- The work that the Cooper Partnership has been undertaking to assess the ZVI of individual structures in the NW of the site should be continued elsewhere

- what does this mean*
- The impacts on the new residents and workforce in the new settlement of the proposals for the rest of the site should be assessed.
  - There is no reference to the effects on the County Wildlife site.
  - The Council will need to understand the assumptions behind the Assessment Plan in terms of density, areas, resulting numbers of dwellings, building heights etc.
  - It appears from preliminary conversations, that a substantial number of the existing bungalows and houses are to be retained. These are at a very low density and both in themselves and possibly even when considered together with the new build, could pull the density down below 30 dph. As this Council has experience of applications with an average density of 30dph being "called in" the Council is seeking advice from GoSE as to how this could be avoided.
  - An indication of trees to be retained or felled (with justification) will be required.

### **Archaeology and cultural heritage, the conservation area, listed buildings and SAMs**

- Your letter twice refers to part of the site being a conservation area. In fact the whole site is so designated and the character, appearance and setting of the area (and listed buildings/SAMs) should be protected and/or enhanced.
- The effect on the setting and curtilages of protected buildings and structures should be assessed and these will need to be defined and agreed with the Council and English Heritage
- The functional and spatial relationship and cumulative and group interest of buildings and structures should be considered
- Buildings for retention and demolition should be indicated and the effects of this assessed
- The buildings proposed for re-use should be indicated and the uses indicated
- The future maintenance of existing buildings should be covered
- The impacts of any re-use of retained buildings will need to be assessed, including the impacts of associated vehicle movements, car parking, outdoor storage, clutter, signage (both company logos on the buildings and directional signage), lighting, interventions to the structure to make them usable etc. on both the buildings and their settings but also in relation to the effect on the integrity of the group.

Finally the Council should be involved in drawing up the issues to be covered by the Conservation Management Plan and this should be submitted with the application so the future management of the whole site can be assessed with some certainty.

### **Other matters**

Assessment of contamination and pollution across the whole of the site should be included together with remediation and mitigation measures.

The Council's Environmental Protection Manager has requested that an assessment of noise and air quality during both the construction phase and at the finished state.


The Council's Chief Engineer has indicated that the Traffic Impact Assessment should be agreed with the highway authorities and will need to test the capacities of the relevant junctions and corridors within the agreed Assessment area. The Assessment will also need to predict other environmental impacts that could be caused by the additional traffic movements through adjacent settlements and mitigate these either by restraining the traffic or its effects. This Assessment should apply to the construction phase of the development as well as after it has been completed. This is related to the point made above.

The ES should also consider the impact of the proposed development upon the water quality and water use at any SPA or SAC. The only European site within 20km of Upper Heyford is Oxford Meadows, which requires a good grazing regime (which the development would have no impact upon) but also a balanced hydrological regime (i.e. the River Thames should not dry up too much) and good water quality. There may be some other European sites on the River Thames (outside the district) that could be similarly affected.

I trust that you find these comments useful.

If you require any clarification then please let me know.

Yours sincerely

  
Duncan Chadwick  
Planning Control Manager



**British  
Waterways**



Your Ref: DC/RAF/Upperheyford/EAScoping

Our Ref: SET-CHW-06-803

Email: [planning.southeast@britishwaterways.co.uk](mailto:planning.southeast@britishwaterways.co.uk)

Mr D Chadwick  
Cherwell District Council  
Bodicote House  
Bodicote  
BANBURY  
Oxfordshire OX15 4AA

13 August 2006

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT					
HPDS	PPM	PDM	SDC	SCM	AM
18 AUG 2006					
PASS TO:			COPY TO:		
			FILE:		

Dear Mr D Chadwick

**The Town & Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (England & Wales) Regulations**

**Application:** DC/RAF/Upperheyford/EAScoping  
**Site:** R.A.F. Upper Heyford  
**Development:** Scoping Opinion for Provision of approx 1,000 dwellings, range of employment premises, primary school, local facilities, recreation and community centre etc.  
**Waterway:** Oxford Canal

Thank you for consulting British Waterways on the above matter.

Please be advised that British Waterways supports the principle of the proposed re-development. We have a number of comments in respect of the Environmental Impact Assessment which we would hope to see addressed.

**1. Noise Impact**

Noise impact on the wider environment during and after construction will be an important consideration. Whilst we would anticipate that noise levels of the new uses combined would be lower than that of the previous use as an airfield it is necessary for British Waterways to have a comparative assessment.

**2. Hydrological Impacts**

This is the most significant concern for British Waterways. We need to have a full understanding of the impact of proposed surface water drainage arrangements, and the infrastructure that will be used to provide for foul water disposal. It is possible that the development of the site could impact upon local canal feeders either increasing or decreasing flow of water in canal-related courses.

Proposed mitigating measures should be indemnified, and the methods of sustainable construction to be used in order to diminish/protect waterflow off hard-standings. The impact on storm-water flows off the hard-surfaced areas of the site into the local drainage basin is key. It would prove useful to have an assessment of the level of hard-standings of the new settlement in comparison to existing circumstances.

South East Waterways

British Waterways Ground Floor Witan Gate House 500-600 Witan Gate Central Milton Keynes MK9 1BW

T 01908 302500 F 01908 302510 E [enquiries.southeast@britishwaterways.co.uk](mailto:enquiries.southeast@britishwaterways.co.uk)

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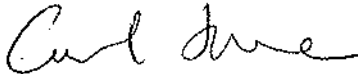


### 3. Water Quality

In relation to point 2, the quality of surface drainage water must be addressed as the development of the site is likely to increase vehicular activity locally thereby increasing hydrocarbon run-off. Methods of protecting watercourses from poor quality run-off must be provided.

So that we may monitor our involvement as a statutory authority responding to applications we ask that we are provided a copy of the decision notice for future reference.

Regards



Conal Stewart  
Environmental Planner

Our ref  
Your ref DC/RAF Upper Heyford/EIA Scoping  
Date 23 August 2006

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**EIA SCOPING – PROVISION OF ABOUT 1000 DWELLINGS AND  
EMPLOYEMENT PREMISES TO ACCOMMODATE 1300 JOBS AND  
ASSOCIATED FACILITIES, RAF UPPER HEYFORD**

Thank you for your inviting us to comment on the above.

The Countryside Agency is the statutory body that advises Government on matters affecting Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and National Parks, and is a statutory consultee under the provisions of the Town & Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (England & Wales) Regulations 1999.

**Environmental Information**

The Countryside Agency holds the following information which is considered to be of relevance in this matter.

**Countryside Rights of Way Act (CROW) 2000 - New Access Rights:** Elements of the new CROW Act 2000 may have a bearing on the proposed development. I have enclosed an explanatory leaflet “*New Rights, New Responsibilities*” to help provide further information.

The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 grants a general right of public access to access land for the purpose of open-air recreation. In preparation for the new rights, the Countryside Agency has prepared new maps of all open countryside and registered common land in England. The access rights for mapping area 1, which cover Kent, East and West Sussex and the outer The area covered by Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire, including Milton Keynes, falls within Area 7 (The West). The conclusive map for area 7 was published on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2005 and the new rights will commence on 31<sup>st</sup> October 2005. Further information can be found on the Agency’s web-sites





[www.countryside.gov.uk](http://www.countryside.gov.uk) and [www.openaccess.gov.uk](http://www.openaccess.gov.uk) or call our Open Access Contact Center on 0845 100 3298.

**Heritage Landscapes:** You should consider whether there is land in your area qualifying for conditional exemption from capital taxes on the grounds of outstanding scenic, scientific or historic interest. These are considered to be designated landscapes of national importance and the impact of your plan on these should be assessed where appropriate. An up to date list for the SE Region may be obtained at [www.hmrc.gov.uk/heritage/lbsearch.htm](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/heritage/lbsearch.htm) and further information can be found on the Countryside Agency's LAR landscape pages at [www.countryside.gov.uk](http://www.countryside.gov.uk).

**Landscape Character:** The Agency, together with English Nature and English Heritage, analysed and mapped the distinctive features of the whole of the English countryside to produce the "*Countryside Character*" series of volumes which describe England's landscape character areas. This provides a national framework for more detailed assessments by local authorities and others. Information regarding the Character Area(s) within which the proposal site lies is contained in Volume 7 of the Countryside Character series (South East & London) (publication reference CA13). These character area descriptions are also available from our website at [www.countryside.gov.uk](http://www.countryside.gov.uk).

The Agency has also co-published "*Landscape Character Assessment: Guidance for England and Scotland*" April 2002 (publication reference CAX 84). This guidance reflects how methods and techniques have developed in recent years and builds upon the Agency's interim guidance which was the subject of consultation in 1999.

Copies of both "*Countryside Character: Volume 7*" and "*Landscape Character Assessment - Guidance for England and Scotland*" can be obtained from the following:

Countryside Agency Publications  
PO Box 125  
Wetherby  
West Yorkshire  
LS23 7EP

Tel: 0870 120 6466

Fax: 0870 120 6467

E-mail: [countryside@twoten.press.net](mailto:countryside@twoten.press.net)

Further information regarding countryside character and landscape character assessment can also be found at a new website [www.ccnetwork.org.uk](http://www.ccnetwork.org.uk), which is run by the Countryside Character Network. This informal network is open to anyone who has an interest in Landscape Character Assessment and its applications. On this website you will find background information about the CCN, the CCN newsletter and workshop proceedings. You will also find a discussion forum where members can discuss issues, projects and practice related to Landscape Character Assessment.

**MAGIC - (Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside:** MAGIC is a one-stop shop for rural and countryside information, bringing together definitive rural designation boundaries and information about rural land-based schemes into one place for the first time. Amongst other things it provides spatial information on a wide range of land management schemes (such as Environmentally Sensitive Areas), countryside and environment designations (including Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Scheduled Ancient Monuments and National Parks) and landscape character areas.

The project is being led by DEFRA's Geographic Information Unit in partnership with English Nature, English Heritage, the Countryside Agency, the Forestry Commission and the Environment Agency, as well as DEFRA and the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM). All of these organisations are involved in the development and implementation of rural policies in England.

MAGIC has been designed primarily to meet the needs of the seven partner organisations but summary data is available to the public on the MAGIC web-site <http://www.magic.gov.uk/>. All of the information provided above can be found on the MAGIC web-site.

#### Comments regarding the environmental scoping report

The Agency's planning policy statement 'Planning Tomorrow's Countryside', recognises the importance of the planning system in helping to secure its social, economic, and environmental objectives for the countryside. The policy statement goes on to emphasise that the Agency's main role in the planning system is at a strategic level and involvement in development control and site based planning will be restricted to those proposals that:

- set a national precedent where government advice is lacking; or
- have a major impact on an important Countryside Agency initiative; or
- have a fundamental effect on the intrinsic character of a National Park, Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, or Heritage Coast.

In view of our strategic policy involvement and the priorities outlined above, the Agency has **no formal representations** to make in this instance.

However, to ensure that the proposed scheme does not adversely affect the character of the surrounding landscape, we recommend that consideration should be given to the following aspects in the environmental impact assessment:

- The potential impact of the scheme on the landscape character and visual amenity of the surrounding area and on the site itself
- The potential impact of the scheme on the recreational opportunities of the area

- The potential of the site as a whole as well as the detailed design to respect and enhance local character and distinctiveness, and use appropriate materials and designs in all new built features
- Alternatives to the proposed scheme, including alternative mitigation measures, and alternative detailed developments (with a range of densities as well as a range of site layouts, designs and materials).

**Landscape Character:** In helping to bring about development which is sensitive to its landscape context, the Agency strongly advocates the use of Landscape Character Assessment (LCA). This approach can provide a structured approach to identifying landscape character and distinctiveness as well as value. A fundamental part of sustainable development is the need to incorporate landscape considerations into decision-making and LCA is a powerful tool which can make significant contributions to achievement of sustainable development objectives. This fact is recognised in the Government's Rural White Paper as well as PPS 1, 7 and 15, all of which endorse the use of LCA as a way of informing planning decisions.

The Agency advocates the LCA approach as one which can help in accommodating necessary change without sacrificing local character as well as help to ensure that development respects or enhances the distinctive character of the land and built environment.

**Landscape Character and Quality of Design:** The issues of landscape character and design quality are to a certain extent interrelated where new development is proposed in the countryside. The Agency promotes the use of the landscape character approach, as endorsed in PPS7, to help ensure proposed development fully considers local landscape character and distinctiveness. Ensuring good quality design is also central to the Agency's objective of promoting the concept that development should be *'good enough to approve'* as opposed to being *'bad enough to refuse'*, an approach also endorsed in PPS7 as well as PPS1.

In order to foster high quality development that respects, maintains, or enhances, local landscape character and distinctiveness, the Agency would encourage all new development to consider the character and distinctiveness of the area, with the design and outlay of all elements of a proposed development reflecting local design characteristics and wherever possible using local materials. There is indeed a need **in the Environmental Statement** to detail what measures will be taken to ensure the Building design will be of high standard, and what materials will be used, and further detail on the different layouts and the reason to choose them (landscape benefits).

In order to help promote this approach, the Countryside Agency has recently published a report *Towards a "New Vernacular"* (2004) which promotes the development of new buildings in the countryside that re-connect their design and construction with the environment and encourages innovative, sustainable, high quality buildings that enhance local character and respect their context. Copies of this report are available from the Countryside Agency's website at [www.countryside.gov.uk/positiveplanning](http://www.countryside.gov.uk/positiveplanning).

## Landscape and Visual Assessment

Assessing the landscape and visual impact of development proposals is one of the main components of an EIA.

If a Landscape and Visual Assessment has not been carried out for this development, we strongly recommend that one is undertaken as soon as possible.

Guidance has been prepared by the Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Assessment *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 2002* which will help provide advice on how landscape and visual assessments should be effectively carried out.

**Greenspace Networks:** Greenspace has an important role to play in helping to enhance and improve people's quality of life and one of the Agency's main objectives is for everyone to have access to attractive, well-managed greenspace within a short walk of home, which they feel confident and safe to use.

To help achieve this, the Agency encourages all new planned development to contribute towards a strategically planned greenspace network. Planned urban development should retain existing green corridors, wedges and greenspaces as well as provide new greenspaces, which reflect and help to strengthen the character and distinctiveness of the local landscape. An integral part of the greenspace network is a strategic greenways network - safe, non-motorised routes which to link settlement areas to public transport facilities and greenspaces as well as to the surrounding countryside.

As part of the ongoing initiative to promote greenways, a handbook providing advice and guidance has been published. Information regarding this and greenways in general can be found on the web at [www.greenways.gov.uk](http://www.greenways.gov.uk).

## Conclusion

These comments are made without prejudice. It should be noted that the absence of comment or direct involvement by the Agency is simply an expression of our priorities. It should not be taken as implying a lack of interest, or indicate either support for, or objection to, any proposal.

If you wish to discuss this matter further, please do not hesitate to contact me at the above office.

Yours sincerely

JULIE DELCROIX  
Countryside Advisor (Planning)



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



**OXFORDSHIRE  
COUNTY COUNCIL**

**ENVIRONMENT & ECONOMY**

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Planning Control  
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23 August 2006

**Direct line: 01865 810432**

Your ref:  
DC/RAF/Upper  
Heyford/EA scoping

Please ask for: Linda Currie

e-mail: Linda.currie@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Dear Duncan

**Proposed Residential and Employment Development including supporting infrastructure on land at RAF Upper Heyford: Environmental Impact Assessment Scoping opinion**

Thank you for consulting the County as Structure Plan Authority on the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Scoping report for the proposed development on land at RAF Upper Heyford. We have the following officer comments:

Landscape/ecology

The County Ecologist comments that a landscape character assessment should be required and reference should be made to Cherwell District Council's own landscape character assessment as well as Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Study (OWLS) which can be accessed via <http://owls.oxfordshire.gov.uk> down to the relevant parish level.

The application area includes a County Wildlife Site, and an ecologically important landscape which is largely associated with the grassland areas running through the centre of the site. These need to be resurveyed for their current botanical value along with any other associated interest, including breeding /wintering birds and invertebrate species.

There are a number of protected species, such as bats and great crested newts which have been specially mentioned but there may be other species which need checking if only to verify their absence from the site.

There is an opportunity to make a significant contribution to the actions and targets outlined in the Oxfordshire and Cherwell Biodiversity Action Plans and these should be taken into account particularly in relation to UK BAP priority habitats and species.

A full assessment will be required to determine the potential direct and indirect impacts of the proposed development on the range of habitats and species associated with the site.

Richard Dudding - Director for Environment & Economy      Chris Cousins - Head of Sustainable Development

If any habitats/species/landscape features are to be affected then there needs to be clear mitigation measures in place to help minimise the potential impact of the development particularly if protected species are present, which may require their own mitigation strategy/licensing procedures.

Any loss or damage to the landscape/biodiversity of the site will need to be compensated for, either within or outside the application area. There is potential for habitat creation throughout the site particularly establishment and long term management of additional areas of limestone grassland. OWLS provides landscape/biodiversity guidelines appropriate to the landscape types associated with the area and, where appropriate, these should be incorporated into any landscape master plan for the site.

Provision will have to be made for the long term management of any retained habitats/species associated with the site, this will need to be covered as part of a S106 agreement accompanying the application including the preparation of and financial provision for implementing an agreed management plan.

### Rights of Way

Section 1.6: The transport assessment should include potential impacts, both positive and negative, on the internal and surrounding public rights of way and accessible open countryside network and the possibility of reconnecting and integrating this access in line with the Oxfordshire Rights of Way Improvement Plan and other Strategies”

All categories of non motorized user should be considered; walkers, cyclists, equestrians, plus users with disabilities and lower abilities. We would also recommend that the buffer for the assessment (for countryside access and RoW) extends from the site to include the settlement of Bicester (west), Bucknell, Somerton, Fritwell, Ardley, Middleton Stoney, Heyfords and Caulcott and the Oxford Canal and the railway stations and halts.

### Archaeology

Paragraph 1.14 is acceptable, as part of the draft scoping EIA.

We are aware of a number of possible archaeological areas within the former airbase that the EIA would have to identify and assess the potential damage that any development may have. The site has been the subject of an archaeological field evaluation that recorded a small number of archaeological features and further work will be required in some areas of development. The evaluation also showed that some areas within the site have been subjected to large scale below ground disturbance and these will not require any further work (such as the southern Bomb Stores and part of the Technical Area).

In order to assess the impact of this development the EIA will need to identify the significance of, and potential damage to, the archaeology, in relation to the particular proposals for each of these areas.

### Transport

The County Council Transport Authority are working with the transport consultants on the Transport Assessment and have agreed various areas of study. When addressing public transport the developer would need to look at all forms, including rail.

#### Developer funding

The Environmental Statement should consider the impact of the extra demands, on local services and infrastructure, generated by the development together with the measures required to mitigate the identified impacts.

Contributions would be sought to the appropriate provision of County Council service infrastructure where there is insufficient capacity to satisfactorily accommodate the additional demands.

Impacts on County Service infrastructure which should be considered include:

- a) Primary School, Post Primary Education, and Special Educational Needs.
- b) Library: the current facility at Bicester is at capacity and relocation is of the highest priority. Contributions would be sought to address the impact of the additional demands on the service in line with adopted standards.
- c) Social & Healthcare: The Day Centre in Bicester is being extended to address existing shortfall and a new day centre is planned to provide for demands placed on this area by new development. Contributions would be sought to facilitate this.
- d) Waste Management: The existing centre at Ardley has a limited life and is operating at capacity. Contributions would be sought to facilitate an improved facility to meet with any additional demand.
- e) Fire & Rescue. Demands on this service must be considered.

Contributions will only be sought which are fair in scale & kind, fulfilling the tests of Circular 05/2005. If you have any queries on the comments made in this letter please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Linda Currie  
Planning Officer - Strategic Sites

Cc  
Tony Clark  
Suzanne Roberts  
Howard Cox  
Paul Smith  
Richard Oram  
Sarah Aldous  
Paul Harris  
Craig Blackwell

## **Duncan Chadwick**

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**From:** Mark.J.Dickinson@thameswater.co.uk  
**Sent:** 24 August 2006 17:18  
**To:** duncan.chadwick@cherwell-dc.gov.uk  
**Cc:** Jill.Ford@thameswater.co.uk  
**Subject:** Your Ref - DC/RAF Upper Heyford/ EA Scoping - EIA Scoping Option - RAF Upper Heyford

Dear Mr Chadwick

Thank you for giving Thames Water the opportunity to comment on the above document we have the following observations which need to be considered as part of the EIA

### Water

We have concerns regarding Water Supply Capability in relation to this site. Specifically, the water supply network in this area is unlikely to be able to support the demand anticipated from this development. It will be necessary for us to undertake investigations of the impact of the development and completion of this will take several weeks. It should be noted that in the event of an upgrade to our assets being required, up to three years lead in time will be necessary. In this case we ask that the following paragraph is included in the Development Plan. "Developers will be required to demonstrate that there is adequate water supply capacity both on and off the site to serve the development and that it would not lead to problems for existing or new users. In some circumstances it may be necessary for developers to fund studies to ascertain whether the proposed development will lead to overloading of existing water infrastructure."

### Waste

We have concerns regarding Waste Water Services in relation to this site. Specifically sewage treatment capacity in this area is unlikely to be able to support the demand anticipated from this development. It will be necessary for us to undertake investigations into the impact of the development and completion of this, on average, takes 12 weeks. It should be noted that in the event of an upgrade to our assets being required, up to three years lead in time will be necessary. In this case we ask that the following paragraph is included in the Development Plan. "Developers will be required to demonstrate that there is adequate waste water capacity both on and off the site to serve the development and that it would not lead to problems for existing or new users. In some circumstances it may be necessary for developers to fund studies to ascertain whether the proposed development will lead to overloading of existing site water infrastructure."

We have concerns regarding Waste Water Services in relation to this site. Specifically, the sewerage network capacity in this area is unlikely to be able to support the demand anticipated from this development. It will be necessary for us to undertake investigations into the impact of the development and completion of this, on average, takes 12 weeks. It should be noted that in the event of an upgrade to our assets being required, up to three years lead in time will be necessary. In this case we ask that the following paragraph is included in the Development Plan. "Developers will be required to demonstrate that there is adequate waste water capacity both on and off the site to serve the development and that it would not lead to problems for existing or new users. In some circumstances it may be necessary for developers to fund studies to ascertain whether the proposed development will lead to overloading of existing waste water infrastructure."

It is important not to under estimate the time to design and construct new infrastructure. Network upgrades can take up to 3 years, large engineering projects such as water or waste treatment works upgrades can take 3 - 5 years and new sewage works or reservoirs 8 - 10 years

Please do not hesitate to contact me on 01923 898073 should you wish to discuss any of the above in further detail

Yours Sincerely



Mark Dickinson  
Development Planning Manager

Beat the drought: Taking a refreshing shower instead of a bath can save over 300 litres of water a week. Be careful though, a power shower can use more water than a bath! Visit [thameswater.co.uk/waterwise](http://thameswater.co.uk/waterwise) for more water saving tips.

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31 August 2006

Dear Mr Chadwick

**RAF UPPER HEYFORD, REQUEST FOR SCOPING OPINION ON PROVISION OF 1000 DWELLINGS, PREMISES FOR 1300 JOBS ETC; M40**

Thank you for your consultation of 31 July; I am sorry about the delay. I am pleased to say The developer has already started discussions with us and at our request is collecting traffic data as far as M40 J9 and J10, and will consider impact on Junction 10 and possibly J9 in the eventual Transport Assessment [TA] required by PPG13 policy. Given the stated development there is no need to consider the A34, but of course we hope that the forthcoming LDF will consider the impact of all its development on A34, A43 and M40.

The TA might identify the net, not gross, amount of additional development and of course the planning system deals with sqm of B1/B2B8, not jobs. This might require some discussion with yourselves and the developer first, taking a view on the possible re-use of existing facilities and possibly a condition preventing their reuse if that is an assumption in the TA.

Yours sincerely



Douglas Rounthwaite  
senior engineer  
Network Strategy - Development control  
Email: [douglas.rounthwaite@highways.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:douglas.rounthwaite@highways.gsi.gov.uk)

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT				
HPDS	PPM	PO		AM
04 SEP 2006				
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		FILE:		

Cc Tony Clark OCC; D Rhoden



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PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT					
CHDS	PPM	PCM	EDO	BCM	AM
13 SEP 2006					
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our ref: DC/RAF Upper Heyford/EA Scoping

Our ref: PP 2.4.1

11 September 2006

Dear Mr Chadwick

## Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 1991 - Request for a scoping opinion

### Provision of about 1000 dwellings of a mix of tenures and sizes etc

#### <sup>F</sup> RAP Upper Heyford

Thank you for consulting English Nature on the above proposal. The opportunity to assist in the preparation of the above Environment Statement at this early stage is welcomed. We are of the opinion that the following issues need to be addressed in all Environment Statements.

#### The potential for sustainable development

- Include references to structure and local plan policies;
- Identify any existing public transport, cycle routes and pedestrian provisions in the vicinity of the development site, highlighting improvements that can be made with regard to new links within the development and with adjacent areas.

#### Ecological assessment

- Identify the current land use and review the existing landscape and features of the site;
- Undertake a Phase 1 habitat survey of that land and 250m outside the development land boundary (including the woods to the west of the site) and an NVC survey;
- Survey for all legally protected species at an appropriate time of year in addition to consulting with local protected species record holders;
- Identify all nature conservation sites within 2km of the development, eg, European site, Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Local Nature Reserves, Regionally Important Geological Sites, County Wildlife Sites, Tree Preservation Orders;
- Assess the impact of the development on the existing ecology of the site and within 2km of the site if appropriate;

- Undertake a hydrological survey of the development area and within 250m of the boundary of the site.

### **Contributing to biodiversity**

- Establish the potential for landscaping and tree planting with native species;
- Identify the opportunities for the creation and restoration of habitats appropriate to the locality, include plans to retain existing landscape features such as semi-natural grassland, mature trees, hedgerows and ponds within the development site. This should take into account extending the adjacent SSSI habitats. English Nature would wish to see natural regeneration of tree species adjacent to any woodland SSSIs;
- Explore opportunities for enhancing biodiversity on the site with reference to the *Oxfordshire Biodiversity Action Plan*.

English Nature would expect to see a commitment by the developer to maintain the site, but also to enhance the biodiversity value of the site which includes long-term management.

If you have any queries on the above, please do not hesitate to contact us at the above address.

Yours sincerely



DR REBECCA TIBBETTS  
Conservation Officer