

Date: 16 April 2015
Our ref: 150205
Your ref: 15/00107/DISC



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BY EMAIL ONLY

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Dear Linda Griffiths

Planning consultation: Partial discharge of condition 16 of TWA/10/APP/01 - Relating to the Wendlebury Meads and Mansmoor Closes Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
Location: Oxford To Bicester Rail Link Buckingham Road Bicester

Thank you for your consultation on the above dated 02 April 2015 which was received by Natural England on the same date.

Natural England is a non-departmental public body. Our statutory purpose is to ensure that the natural environment is conserved, enhanced, and managed for the benefit of present and future generations, thereby contributing to sustainable development.

WILDLIFE AND COUNTRYSIDE ACT 1981 (AS AMENDED)

Objection – further information required

This application is in close proximity to Wendlebury Meads and Mansmoor Closes Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). Natural England objects to this development on the grounds that the application, as submitted, is likely to damage or destroy the interest features for which Wendlebury Meads and Mansmoor Closes SSSI has been notified. Our concerns are set out below.

Surface Water Runoff

Paragraph 4.1.2 of the Wallingford Hydrosolutions Limited report states that 'The increased semi-permeable hardstanding and impermeable foundations and track have the potential to increase runoff rates from these areas.' These areas also have the potential to have pollutants/nutrients which may be damaging to the SSSI. Section 4.1.1 states that 'due to the slight ridge along the edge of the field to the south east of the proposed barn, surface runoff from the barn would flow south away from the SSSI.' However when you look at figure 1 from the same report any runoff from the barn that travelled south would be flowing into the SSSI. Maybe the LiDAR data is not of a high enough resolution to show the slight ridge in figure 1, so some further information on why runoff would not flow into the SSSI would be required.

Relating to this the last bullet point under 4.2. of the Wallingford Hydrosolutions Limited report states that 'Long term drainage from the hardstanding and barn would be directed away from the SSSI.' Some detail of the proposed drainage is needed to justify this statement.

Groundwater Flows

Whilst the Wallingford Hydrosolutions Limited report deals with surface water runoff issues, there is no mention of potential impacts to the SSSI as a result of any changes in groundwater flows. The access track and barn foundations could be changing groundwater flows towards the SSSI and so changing the conditions. Indeed in section 4.1.1 of the report it is stated that groundwater levels could need controlling during excavations of the barn foundations. This would suggest that

groundwater levels are high enough to be impacted by the foundations of the barn at least. If there will be no impact then this needs to be justified.

Extent of Access Track

Figure 2a in the Wallingford Hydrosolutions Limited report shows the extent of the proposed barn and access track in light blue and an access track in red. The blue line is completely outside of the SSSI as explained in the report and method statement. However the red access track line encroaches on the SSSI by roughly 60m (using the scale on figure 2a). Can it be clarified if this is a mapping error, or if there is the intention for an access track to cross the SSSI?

Should the application change, or if the applicant submits further information relating to the impact of this proposal on the SSSI aimed at reducing the damage likely to be caused, Natural England will be happy to consider it, and amend our position as appropriate.

If your Authority is minded to grant consent for this application contrary to the advice relating to Wendlebury Meads and Mansmoor Closes SSSI contained in this letter, we refer you to Section 281 (6) of the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981* (as amended), specifically the duty placed upon your authority, requiring that your Authority;

- Provide notice to Natural England of the permission, and of its terms, the notice to include a statement of how (if at all) your authority has taken account of Natural England's advice, and
- Shall not grant a permission which would allow the operations to start before the end of a period of 21 days beginning with the date of that notice.

We really value your feedback to help us improve the service we offer. We have attached a feedback form to this letter and welcome any comments you might have about our service. If the form is not attached, it can also be accessed on our website.

We would be happy to comment further should the need arise but if in the meantime you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact us.

For any queries relating to the specific advice in this letter only please contact Charlotte Frizzell on 07824 597885. For any new consultations, or to provide further information on this consultation please send your correspondences to consultations@naturalengland.org.uk.

We really value your feedback to help us improve the service we offer. We have attached a feedback form to this letter and welcome any comments you might have about our service.

Yours sincerely

Charlotte Frizzell
Sustainable Development and Regulation
Thames Valley Team