

From: Euesden, Olivia (NE)
Sent: 09/08/2010 15:12:57
To: Planapps
Subject: 10.01695.COMIND - Replacement of hydrodynamics research facility - AWE Aldermaston - SEG46.02.010 - OB
Attachments: 10.01695.COMIND - Replacement of hydrodynamics research facility - AWE Aldermaston - SEG46.02.010 - OB.pdf

Please find attached Natural England's response to the above planning consultation.

FAO Hazel Evans

<<10.01695.COMIND - Replacement of hydrodynamics research facility - AWE Aldermaston - SEG46.02.010 - OB.pdf>>

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Date: 9 August 2010
Our ref: SEG/46/02/010
Your ref: 10/01695/COMIND



Hazel Evans
West Berkshire District Council

By email only, no hard copy to follow

Dear Ms Evans

**Wests Meadow Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Decoy Pit, Pools and Woods SSSI,
Wasing Wood Ponds SSSI, Pamber Forest and Silchester Common SSSI**

Location: AWE Aldermaston, Aldermaston, Reading, Berks

Proposal: Replacement hydrodynamics research facility including an operations building with lightning protection system, a support building, an electrical substation, and associated landscaped areas including a Sustainable Drainage System together with construction related infrastructure including access roads, construction compound, fencing, gates and ancillary facilities.

Thank you for your letter dated 19 July 2010 consulting Natural England about the above application.

The application site is likely to affect Wests Meadow Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Decoy Pit, Pools and Woods SSSI, Wasing Wood Ponds SSSI, and Pamber Forest and Silchester Common SSSI, and may affect other SSSI's within 10km of the application site. This reply comprises our statutory consultation response under provisions of Article 10 of the Town and Country Planning (General Development Procedure) Order 1995 and Section 28 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

Having considered the information provided in support of this application **Natural England objects to the above proposal** on the grounds that:

- there is insufficient information to determine the impact of air pollution resulting from this development on the SSSI's above;

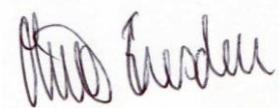
Natural England's detailed comments in relation to this proposal are listed in Annex One appended to this letter.

Under S281 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 your authority must take Natural England's advice into account in deciding whether or not to grant permission. If your authority resolves not to follow this advice then it must notify Natural England of the permission, the terms on which it is proposed to grant it and how, if at all, it has taken our advice into account. You must then allow a further period of 21 days before the development can commence to allow us to consider any further action. For further details of these requirements, and a summary of the legislations protecting SSSI's and the duties which apply to planning authority, please refer to Part II of Circular 06/2005¹.

¹ Government Circular: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation – Statutory obligations and their impact within the planning system ODPM Circular 06/2005/Defra Circular 01/2005
<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planningandbuilding/circularbiodiversity>

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 Olivia Euesden at the above address, by telephone on 0300 060 4924 or by email to Olivia.euesden@naturalengland.org.uk

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Olivia Euesden".

On behalf of Michelle Leek
Team Leader Government Team, Western Area South East Region

As mentioned above, our records show that the application site is within 2km of Wests Meadow Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Decoy Pit, Pools and Woods SSSI, Wasing Wood Ponds SSSI, Pamber Forest and Silchester Common SSSI, and within 10km of: Ashford Hill Woods and Meadows SSSI, Ron Wards Meadows with Tadley Pastures SSSI, Aldermaston Gravel Pits SSSI, Old Copse, Beenham SSSI, Sulham and Tidmarsh Woods and Meadows SSSI, Woolhampton Reed Bed SSSI, River Kennet SSSI, Brimpton Pit SSSI, King's Copse SSSI, Briff Lane Meadows SSSI, Greenham and Crookham Commons SSSI, Bowdown and Chamberhouse Woods SSSI and Thatcham Reed Beds SSSI. As you are aware, where SSSIs are involved, Section 28G of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) includes a duty on public bodies, including local planning authorities, to "take reasonable steps, consistent with the proper exercise of the authority's functions, to further conservation and enhancement of the flora, fauna or geological or physiographical features by reason of which the site is of special scientific interest". In addition, public bodies are required under the Act to give notice to Natural England before carrying out (S28H), or authorising others to carry out (S28I), any operation likely to damage any of the features by reason of which the site is of special scientific interest.

Natural England objects to the proposed development. We recommend that as submitted the local planning authority refuse planning permission on the grounds that the application contains insufficient information to satisfy Natural England that there would be no adverse effects on features of interest for which the SSSIs are notified. In order to assess the potential implications for the SSSIs, any subsequent or amended planning application should include the following additional information:

An Air Quality Assessment which specifically addresses the effects of the development on all SSSI's within 10km. The applicant can consult www.apis.ac.uk for further details.

Water Quality

Natural England agrees with the conclusions of the Water Resources Chapter (8) of the DEEA, and recommends that the recommendations for working practises are attached as conditions, should the LPA be minded to grant planning permission.

Landscape

Having considered the details of the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Natural England agrees with the conclusions drawn regarding impacts on landscape. Natural England broadly agrees that the mitigation suggested is appropriate, and recommends as conditions the inclusion of the recommendations in paragraphs 13.6.4.4 and paragraph 13.6.4.5 of Chapter 13 Landscape and Visual of the DEEA. This advice is in line with Natural England's published guidance.

Protected species

Natural England welcomes the submission of the ecological survey and we recommend that you consult your in-house/retained ecologist with regards to the results of the survey and the appropriateness of the mitigation proposed. This is in line with Natural England's standing advice which can be found at
http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/regions/south_east/ourwork/standingadvice/protectedspecies/standingadviceconsultation/default.aspx

Local wildlife sites

The proposal site is close to several wildlife heritage sites (WHS). The local Wildlife Trust should be contacted for their views on this application.