

Date: 12/02/10  
Our ref: TQ32  
Your ref: WSCC/027/10/BA

The logo for Natural England, featuring the words "NATURAL" and "ENGLAND" in a bold, sans-serif font. "NATURAL" is in white and "ENGLAND" is in a dark purple color, both set against a bright yellow-green rectangular background.

Mike Vine  
West Sussex County Council

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East Sussex  
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**By email only, no hard copy to follow**

Dear Mike Vine

**Proposal: To upgrade existing stoned platform and drill an exploratory borehole for oil and gas exploration.**

**Location: Lower Stumble Hydrocarbon Exploration Site, London Road, Balcombe, Haywards Heath, West Sussex, RH17 6JH**

Thank you for your letter dated 28 January 2010 consulting Natural England on the above planning application.

#### **Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty**

The proposal site lies within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and as such we recommend you contact the AONB Unit to ensure that planning issues regarding this proposal take into account any issues that may arise from this development as a result of this designation.

#### **Protected Species**

Natural England welcomes the submission of the ecological survey and we recommend that you consult your in-house 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/default.aspx](http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/regions/south_east/ourwork/standingadvice/protectedspecies/default.aspx)

#### **Ancient Woodland**

In addition, Natural England advises that the proposals as presented have the potential to adversely affect woodland classified on the Ancient Woodland Inventory. Natural England refers you to our Standing Advice on ancient woodland

[http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/regions/south\\_east/ourwork/standingadvice/default.aspx](http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/regions/south_east/ourwork/standingadvice/default.aspx)

#### **Biodiversity enhancements**

This application may provide opportunities to incorporate features into the design which are beneficial to wildlife, such as the incorporation of roosting opportunities for bats or the installation of bird nest boxes. The Council should consider securing measures to enhance the biodiversity of the site from the applicant, if it is minded to grant permission for this application. This is in accordance with Paragraph 14 of PPS9. Additionally, we would draw your attention to Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006) which states that 'Every *public authority must, in exercising its functions, have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity*'. Section 40(3) of the same Act also states that '*conserving biodiversity includes, in relation to a living organism or type of habitat, restoring or enhancing a population or habitat*'.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Julia Coneybeer". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'J'.

**Julia Coneybeer**

Environmental Planning Advisor

Government Team – Surrey, Sussex & Kent

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