

Date: 11 September 2012
Our ref: 63505
Your ref: WSCC/052/12/WC



West Sussex County Council,
County Hall,
Chichester
PO19 1RQ

Customer Services
Hornbeam House
Crewe Business Park
Electra Way
Crewe
Cheshire CW1 6GJ

BY EMAIL ONLY

chris.bartlett@westsussex.gov.uk

T 0300 060 3900

Dear Sirs,

Planning consultation: The siting and development of a temporary borehole, well site compound and access road including all ancillary infrastructure and equipment, on land at Wood Barn Farm, Broadford Bridge, for the exploration, testing and evaluation of hydrocarbons in the willow prospect.

Location: Wood Barn Farm, Adversane Lane, Broadford Bridge, Billingshurst, West Sussex

Thank you for your consultation dated and received by Natural England on 03 September 2012.

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.

It is for the local authority to determine whether or not this application is consistent with national or local policies on biodiversity and landscape and other bodies and individuals may be able to help the Local Planning Authority (LPA) to fully take account of the environmental value of this site in the decision making process, LPAs should seek the views of their own ecologists when determining the environmental impacts of this development.

Soils, Land use and Reclamation

In view of the small size of the site, Natural England does not propose to make any comments. If you consider that the proposal has significant implications for the further loss of agricultural land or other considerations which we should take into account, we would be pleased to discuss these matters further.

Advice for planning authorities on the agricultural aspects of site working and reclamation can be found in the Defra [Guidance for successful reclamation of mineral and waste sites](#).

We would, in any event, expect the LPA to assess and consider the possible impacts resulting from this proposal on the following issues when determining this application:

Protected species

If the LPA is aware of, or representations from other parties highlight the possible presence of a protected or Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) species on the site, the authority should request survey information from the applicant before determining the application. The Government has provided advice¹ on BAP and protected species and their consideration in the planning system.

¹ Paragraph 98 and 99 of ODPM Circular 06/2005

[Natural England Standing Advice](#) is available on our website to help local planning authorities better understand the impact of this particular development on protected or BAP species should they be identified as an issue at particular developments. This also sets out when, following receipt of survey information, the authority should undertake further consultation with Natural England.

Local wildlife sites

If the proposal site could result in an impact on a Local Site², Local Nature Reserve (LNR) or priority habitat the authority should ensure it has sufficient information to fully understand the impact of the proposal on the local site before it determines the application, ensuring that it does so in conformity with the wording of paragraph 168 of the National Planning Policy Framework. For further information on Local Sites, your authority should seek views from your ecologist, or the Local Sites designation body in your area.

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 authority 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 118 of the NPPF. 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'*.

Local Landscape

This proposal does not appear to be either located within, or within the setting of, any nationally designated landscape. All proposals however should complement and where possible enhance local distinctiveness and be guided by your Authority's landscape character assessment where available, and the policies protecting landscape character in your local plan or development framework.

Should the proposal be amended in a way which significantly affects its impact on the natural environment then, in accordance with Section 4 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, Natural England should be consulted again.

Yours faithfully



Judy Connell
Customer Service Consultation Team

² As defined in the DEFRA Local Sites guidance