

11/11/2013

WSCC Ecological Response to...

**APPLICATION No.:** WSCC/083/13/KD

**PROPOSAL:** Land south of Boxal Bridge, Northup Field, Wisborough Green, West Sussex, RH14 0DD

**SITE:** The installation of a well and associated infrastructure, including access road and soil bunds, for the drilling of a vertical borehole and contingent horizontal borehole from the same well for the exploration, testing and evaluation of hydrocarbons for a temporary period of three years

**GRID REF:** 503706 126696

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Interim response: Further information is required to allow a suitable determination.

#### Lighting and bats

Prior to providing a final response to this application I need to assess the latest proposed lighting scheme. The derrick tower and wider application site must be lit. However, it is lighting that has the potential to cause the substantive impact on legally protected bats with one species, the barbastelle being a qualifying feature for the European protected Special Area of Conservation 'The Mens'. At the time of submission few details pertaining to lighting were provided. More recently (28/10/2013) draft isolux contours were shared with me (but not formally submitted) that indicated that light spill would be highly localised and that light levels outside the compound were less than 1 lux. Following discussions with the applicant and their consultants responsible for lighting it appeared that the modelling software hadn't taken into account the proposed bunds and some questions remained:

1. The derrick tower is a lattice structure therefore, how would light-spill on the horizontal plane be eliminated?
2. How would the tower be cowled?
3. How would bulk-head lights be shielded to prevent upwards light-spill?
4. A substantial security fence is proposed to be erected to 3.4m, therefore could this have an opaque awning placed on it to eliminate light spill between the bunds and flare?

I note that Chapter 12 on lighting is expected to be amended in the light of the above.

Regarding the question raised about the potential impact on the adjacent ancient woodland from lighting this will be similarly assessed once the additional details of the lighting scheme have been submitted.

The consultant ecologists have informed that following submission of the application bat data continued to be collected to inform the project. The data has yet to be submitted.

5. All available survey data and methodology pertaining to this site must be submitted to inform the decision making process.

The HRA screening for WSCC will be completed once the additional information has been received.

#### Drainage

A question has been raised concerning a potential for pollution to enter the Boxal Brook and then travel down to the River Arun affecting the SSSIs there. With regard to polluting controlled waters section 11.17 states that "*Specific conditions may be included in the permission to ensure that appropriate action is taken.*"

Section 11.70+ lists the mitigation measures. As a result of this Chapter 7 (7.132, 7.133, 7.163, 7.170, 7.173) concludes that there would no impact.

Section 11.73 states:

“The site boundaries are a ditch system that that [sic] leads to a Class 2 Interceptor so that only uncontaminated run-off water is released from the drill site area. These mitigation measures, such as the size of the interceptor, are to be finalised as part of detailed design.”

6. Whilst a pre-commencement condition might be imposed to secure all final details and to regularly monitor the outflow from the interceptor to the brook, given the sensitivity of the area and the connecting ‘sensitive’ receptor it would be helpful to see all the drainage details up front.

### Badgers

The map plotting the setts indicates that there is a major sett close to the redline application boundary. The scale of the map puts it at about 15m from the development. Section 6.2 of the Protected Species Report states that there will be a 20m buffer zone (in line with Natural England guidance) between the development and the badger sett.

7. A plan that superimposes the sett onto the development Masterplan would be helpful to determine likely impacts under the Badger Act 1992.
8. Additional analysis on the potential impacts of noise and vibration on badgers arising from this development would also be helpful in the light of source data arising from ES Chapter 9.

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