

Date: 28 September 2013
Our ref: 98029
Your ref: WSCC/083/13/KD



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BY EMAIL ONLY

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Dear Ms Moseley,

Planning consultation: 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.

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

Thank you for your consultation on the above dated and received by Natural England on 16 September 2013.

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.

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended)

The National Park and Access to the Countryside Act 1949

Natural England's comments in relation to this application are provided in the following sections.

Protected landscapes

Having reviewed the application Natural England does not wish to comment on this development proposal.

The development however, relates to the South Downs National Park. We therefore advise you to seek the advice of the National Park Authority. Their knowledge of the location and wider landscape setting of the development should help to confirm whether or not it would impact significantly on the purposes of the designation. They will also be able to advise whether the development accords with the aims and policies set out in the National Park management plan.

Protected species

We have not assessed the application and associated documents for impacts on protected species.

Natural England has published [Standing Advice](#) on protected species. The Standing Advice includes a habitat decision tree which provides advice to planners on deciding if there is a 'reasonable likelihood' of protected species being present. It also provides detailed advice on the protected species most often affected by development, including a flow chart for each species to enable an assessment to be made of a protected species survey and mitigation strategy.

You should apply our Standing Advice to this application.

As Standing Advice it is a material consideration in the determination of applications in the same way as any individual response received from Natural England following consultation. If you have any specific questions not covered by our Standing Advice or have difficulty in applying it to this application please contact us at consultations@naturalengland.org.uk.

Ancient Woodland

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/Images/standing-advice-ancient-woodland_tcm6-32633.pdf

Local wildlife sites

If the proposal site is on or adjacent to a local wildlife site, e.g. Site of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCI) or Local Nature Reserve (LNR) the authority should ensure it has sufficient information to fully understand the impact of the proposal on the local wildlife site before it determines the application.

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 National Planning Policy Framework. 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*'.

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 sincerely,

Amy Herford

Customer Service Consultation Team