



Department for
Communities and
Local Government

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Please
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Your ref: 23210/A5/LW

Our ref: NPCU/EIASCRT/2350/74632

Date: 1 December 2014

Dear Ms Wood

**Request for Screening Direction under the Town and Country Planning
(Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2011
Proposed residential development and associated uses on land east of
Chipping Lane, Longridge**

1. I refer to your letter of 26 September 2014 submitting a request under regulation 5(7) of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2011 (S.I. 2011/1824) ("the 2011 Regulations") for the Secretary of State to make a screening direction under regulation 6(4) of those Regulations.
2. The development proposed, namely the proposed residential development, comprising 520 dwellings, a primary school, the relocation of the cricket club to provide a new cricket club with associated facilities, open space, landscaped area and ecological enhancement on 24.8 hectares of land at Longridge ("Longridge proposal") falls within the description at paragraph 10(b) of Schedule 2 to the 2011 Regulations. Since the proposal exceeds the threshold in column 2 of the table in Schedule 2 to the 2011 Regulations, the Secretary of State considers the proposal to be 'Schedule 2 development' within the meaning of the 2011 Regulations.
3. However, in the opinion of the Secretary of State, having taken into account the selection criteria in Schedule 3 to the 2011 Regulations, the proposal would not be likely to have significant effects on the environment by virtue of factors such as its nature, size or location. In reaching this decision the Secretary of State has taken into account the views expressed by bodies including the Natural England, the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Partnership, English Heritage, the Highways Agency and the County Highway Authority.

4. The National Planning Practice Guidance ("the Guidance") (March 2014) states that urban development projects, in Schedule 10(b), are unlikely to require EIA for the redevelopment of land unless the new development is on a significantly greater scale than the previous use, or the types of impact are other markedly different nature or there is a high level of contamination. It defines sites which have been intensely developed as being where:

- the area of the scheme is more than 5 ha; or
- it would provide a total of more than 10,000 m² of new commercial floorspace; or
- the development would have a significant urbanising effects in a previously non-urbanised area (e.g. a new development of more than 1,000 dwellings).

5. In terms of size, the Longridge proposal involves the provision of 520 dwellings and associated uses on 24.8 ha of land significantly below these thresholds. The Borough Council has identified 11 potential housing sites (either under construction, with permission, or the subject of planning applications) in the Longridge area which could provide about 2,400 dwellings. In cumulative terms, the scale of this development would exceed the thresholds in the Guidance and could potentially have significant urbanising effects.

6. The Guidance identifies the potential increase in traffic, emissions, noise and contamination as key considerations in determining whether urban development proposals constitute EIA development.

Traffic

7. The Longridge proposal involves the provision of 520 dwellings and associated uses on the north-eastern edge of the town. The application is accompanied by a traffic assessment and travel plan, which indicates that the level of traffic generated by the development would be accommodated within the road network without causing congestion. The Secretary of State has carefully considered all the evidence, including the comments submitted by the Highways Agency and County Highway Authority, and concludes that there is not a likelihood of significant environmental effects.

8. In cumulative terms, with the other housing proposals listed in paragraph 5, there would be an increase in traffic generated, which could potentially affect the highway network. Each of these proposals has been considered and agreed by the Highways Agency and County Highway Authority, prior to the granting of planning permission. It is acknowledged that in cumulative terms, the additional traffic generated from these developments could cause potential problems of congestion in certain parts of the local highway network. The Secretary of State is confident that the measures proposed to address them will be effective and the proposal would not be likely to have significant environmental effects.

Emissions, noise and contamination issues

8. The Secretary of State has had to regard to the information submitted with this application, and has concluded that there is no evidence to suggest that the proposal is likely to have significant environmental effects in terms of emissions, noise and contamination.

Potential impact on Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

9. The application site is located about 1 km to the south-east of the Forest of Bowland AONB, which could potentially be affected by the proposal. The Secretary of State has carefully considered the evidence including the Landscape Visual Impact Assessment, and the comments of both Natural England and the Forest of Bowland AONB Partnership and has concluded that the proposal is unlikely to have significant environmental effects.

10. In cumulative terms the housing proposals in the Longridge area, could potentially affect the Forest of Bowland AONB. The potential impact of these proposals on the AONB has been considered prior to the granting of planning permission by Ribble Valley and Preston Councils. As the other proposals will be located further away from the AONB than the Longridge proposal, the potential impact on it would be lessened. The Secretary of State has had due regard to the evidence and has concluded that, in cumulative terms, the proposals are unlikely to have significant environmental effects on the AONB.

Potential impacts on heritage issues and the use of natural resources

11. The Secretary of State has had to regard to the information submitted with this application, and has concluded that there is no evidence to suggest that the proposal is likely to have significant environmental effects on heritage issues and the use of natural resources.

12. Accordingly, in exercise of the powers conferred on him by the 2011 Regulations, the Secretary of State hereby directs that the proposed development described in your request and the documents submitted with it, is not 'EIA development' within the meaning of the Regulations. Any permitted development rights which your proposal may enjoy under the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (SI 418) are therefore unaffected.

13. You will bear in mind that the Secretary of State's opinion on the likelihood of the development having significant environmental effects is reached only for the purposes of this direction.

14. Please would you liaise with the local authority and take steps to ensure that this screening direction is placed on the Planning Register in compliance with the 2011 Regulations. I would be grateful if you could do so to ensure that the Secretary of State's view is publicly available.

15. I am sending a copy of this letter to the Ribble Valley Borough Council.

Yours sincerely



Gerry Carpenter
Authorised by the Secretary of State
to sign in that behalf

