



RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

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my ref: 3/2014/0728
your ref: Higgins Brook
date: 17th September 2014

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Dear Mr Ryan,

**TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACTS
SCREENING OPINION UNDER THE TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING
(ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT) REGULATIONS 2011**

**PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT COMPRISING UP TO 520 DWELLINGS, A PRIMARY
SCHOOL, RELOCATION OF LONGRIDGE CRICKET CLUB TO PROVIDE A NEW
CRICKET CLUB WITH ASSOCIATED FACILITIES, OPEN SPACE, LANDSCAPED
AREAS AND ECOLOGICAL ENHANCEMENT MEASURES ON LAND TO THE EAST
OF CHIPPING LANE, LONGRIDGE**

I refer to the above request for a screening opinion pursuant to Regulation 5 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2011 received by the local planning authority on 13th August 2014. Following the receipt of comments from Natural England, the Local Planning Authority requested an extension of time to consider this response until 19th September 2014 and you kindly confirmed your agreement in writing to this extension.

The request letter was accompanied by seven appendices: Appendix A: Schedule 3 EIA Assessment; Appendix B: Site Boundary Plan; Appendix C: Original EIA Screening Response; Appendix D: Agricultural Land Quality Report; Appendix E: Preliminary Landscape and Visual Overview; Appendix F: Preliminary Ecological Overview; and Appendix G: Parameters Plan.

In accordance with the Regulations and having regard to National Planning Practice Guidance, this letter constitutes the formal screening opinion of the local planning authority in respect of the above development based on the information provided. Taking into account the location, nature and characteristics of the development, in particular the significant reduction in areas previously identified for ecological enhancement compared with the development the subject of the previous screening opinion (Appendix C), the inclusion of the primary school and new cricket club, along with the cumulative impact with recently consented development in Preston, the Local Planning Authority has adopted the screening opinion that the proposal comprises development requiring Environmental Impact Assessment.

The Local Planning Authority hereby requests that an Environmental Statement be submitted in respect of the recently submitted planning application for the above development (application reference 3/2014/0764).

Reasoning:

The proposed development constitutes an 'urban development project' under Column 1 Paragraph 10(b) of Schedule 2 and the site area exceeds the threshold of 0.5ha in Column 2. The proposal is therefore Schedule 2 development. Whilst the site is not within a 'sensitive area' as defined by the Regulations, the site forms the setting of the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). Schedule 2 development is screened against the selection criteria in Schedule 3 (the characteristics of the development, the location of the development and the characteristics of the potential impact) to determine whether the development is likely to have significant effects on the environment.

Characteristics of Development

The development proposes the erection of up to 520 dwellings, a primary school, a replacement cricket club with associated facilities, landscaping, open space and ecological enhancement measures. The existing cricket pitch would be redeveloped in association with the proposed development.

Having regard to the criteria in paragraph 1 (a) – (f) of Schedule 3, it is considered that the development would have a significant urbanising effect in a previously undeveloped area and when considered in cumulation with other development in the surrounding area, including within the Borough of Preston, it is considered that the characteristics of the proposed development in respect of (a) - (c) could have significant effects on the environment.

Location of Development

The site comprises 24.80 hectares of agricultural land designated as open countryside in the Ribble Valley Districtwide Local Plan. Longridge Conservation Area lies 60m to the south of the site. Higgins Brook runs through the site and parts of the site suffer from surface water flooding. The discharge of surface water to Higgins Brook could therefore have impacts downstream. In addition to Higgins Brook, the site is known to contain other features (ponds, trees and hedgerows) which are likely to be used by protected, important and sensitive species. Whilst the site has no known archaeological or mineral significance, it lies in close proximity to the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and as such, the site is close to an environmentally sensitive area. Having regard to the criteria in paragraph 2 (a) – (c) of Schedule 3, in particular 2(a), (b) and (c) (viii) the location of the development is such that it could have significant effects on the environment.

Characteristics of Potential Impact

The development would have a significant urbanising effect in a previously undeveloped area and when considered in cumulation with other development, particularly in the adjacent Borough of Preston, the extent of the impact could be of more than local importance given the cumulative scale of development in Longridge, which includes cumulative increased vehicle movements through villages within the Borough of Preston. Having regard to the criteria in paragraph 3 (a) – (e) of Schedule 3, in particular 3(a), (c), (d) and (e), the local planning authority considers that the magnitude and complexity of impact on fauna, the impact on the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the potential impact upon the historic setting of Longridge Conservation Area require due consideration to ensure significant environmental effects are appropriately avoided, mitigated or compensated.

Conclusion

The local planning authority is of the opinion that the nature of the development, having regard to the site's location in respect of the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the characteristics of the potential impact, including in cumulation with consented development in Longridge, is likely to have significant effects on the environment and as such, comprises EIA development within the meaning of the Regulations.

You are advised that the local planning authority's opinion on the likelihood of significant environmental effects is reached only for the purpose of adopting this screening opinion under the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations 2011. This screening opinion is given without prejudice to any subsequent consideration by the planning authority, through the planning application process, of the impacts of the proposed development and assessment of the acceptability or otherwise of the proposed development relative to development plan policy and other material considerations.

Should you wish to discuss the above, or require further clarification on planning application submission requirements, please contact my planning officer, Daniela Ripa, on the direct line number at the head of this letter.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Macholc'. The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

John Macholc (Head of Planning Services)