

Date: 29 November 2013
Our ref: 103758
Your ref: 13/4355M



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BY EMAIL ONLY

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Dear Peter,

Planning consultation: SEMMMS Construction of the A6 to Manchester Airport relief road
Location: Land to the east of Mill Hill Hollow to Woodford Road, Poynton; the A555 south of Dairy House Road to the A555 north of Beech Farm; and land to the east of the A555/B5358 junction to land north of Styal Golf Course.

Thank you for your consultation on the above dated 07 November 2013 which was received by Natural England on 07 November 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.

Natural England does not consider that this application poses any likely or significant risk to those features of the natural environment¹ for which we would otherwise provide a more detailed consultation response and so does not wish to make specific comment on the details of this consultation.

The lack of case specific comment from Natural England should not be interpreted as a statement that there are no impacts on the natural environment. Other bodies and individuals may make comments that will help the Local Planning Authority (LPA) to fully take account of the environmental value of this site in the decision making process.

In particular, we would expect the LPA to assess and consider the possible impacts resulting from this proposal on the following when determining this application:

Protected species

Where there is a reasonable likelihood of a protected species being present and affected by the proposed development, the LPA should request survey information from the applicant before

¹ Cases which might affect a SSSI, Natura 2000 site, National Park, Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty or a large population of a protected species and/or cases or generic issues which affect a large suite of sites or may set a precedent and thereby affect a significant quantity of habitat across the country

determining the application (Paragraph 99 Circular 06/05)².

We have not assessed this 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 flow charts for individual 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 it is a material consideration in the determination of applications in the same way as any individual response received from Natural England following consultation.

The Standing Advice should not be treated as giving any indication or providing any assurance in respect of European Protected Species (EPS) that the proposed development is unlikely to affect the EPS present on the site; nor should it be interpreted as meaning that Natural England has reached any views as to whether a licence may be granted.

If you have any specific questions on aspects that are not covered by our Standing Advice for European Protected Species or have difficulty in applying it to this application please contact us at with details at consultations@naturalengland.org.uk.

Local wildlife sites

If the proposal site is on or adjacent to a local wildlife site, eg 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, and the importance of this in relation to development plan policies, before it determines the application. We have not assessed this application and associated documents for impacts on protected species.

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If you have any specific questions on aspects that are not covered by our Standing Advice for European Protected Species or have difficulty in applying it to this application please contact us at with details at consultations@naturalengland.org.uk.

Soils and Land Quality

We do not propose to make any detailed comments in relation to agricultural land quality and soils,

² Paragraph 98 and 99 of ODPM Circular 06/2005.

although more general guidance is available in Defra [Construction Code of Practice for the Sustainable Use of Soils on Construction Sites](#), and we recommend that this is followed. If, however, you consider the proposal has significant implications for the loss of more than 20ha of 'best and most versatile' agricultural land, we would be pleased to discuss the matter further.

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'*.

If you disagree with our assessment of this proposal as low risk, or 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, please consult Natural England again.

For any queries relating to the specific advice in this letter only please contact David Carter at david.carter@naturalengland.org.uk. For any new consultations, or to provide further information on this consultation please send your correspondences to consultations@naturalengland.org.uk.

We really value your feedback to help us improve the service we offer. We have attached a feedback form to this letter and welcome any comments you might have about our service.

Yours sincerely

Anthony Bremner, Casework Manager
Land Use Operations Crewe