



Department for Transport

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Your Ref: 70086660

25 March 2022

Reply by email

Dear Mr Baker

TRANSPORT AND WORKS ACT (APPLICATIONS AND OBJECTIONS PROCEDURE) (ENGLAND AND WALES) RULES 2006

PROPOSED CAMBOURNE TO CAMBRIDGE C2C SCHEME

1. I refer to your letter of 8 February 2022 requesting a scoping opinion under rule 8 of the Transport and Works Act (Applications and Objections Procedure) (England and Wales) Rules 2006 (“the Rules”).
2. You enclosed with your letter an ES Scoping Report (70086660-WSP-EAC-XX-RP-LE-00001) dated 7 February 2022 which describes the proposed scope of and methodology for the EIA of this scheme. This will be reported in the Environmental Statement (“ES”) to accompany an application for an Order under the Transport and Works Act 1992 to authorise the scheme. The intended scheme would involve the necessary works and land acquisition powers required for the construction of a new busway, travel hub, and a shared use path known as the Cambourne to Cambridge Better Public Transport project.
3. We have considered your request for an opinion on the proposed scope of the EIA in accordance with rule 8 of the above Rules. In formulating the scoping opinion, we have consulted the following organisations:
 - Natural England
 - The Environment Agency
 - Historic England
 - Greater Cambridge Shared Planning (“GCSP”, on behalf of Cambridge City Council and South Cambridge District Council)
4. Responses were received from Natural England, The Environment Agency, and Historic England. Comments were not received from Greater Cambridge Shared Planning. Copies of the consultation responses are included with this letter, the contents of which should be taken into account when preparing the ES.

5. The Secretary of State has considered the assessment of potentially significant effects of the scheme set out in section 4 to 18 of the Scoping Report. Subject to the comments below (some of these matters you may have already been intending to address), the Secretary of State agrees with the scope of the EIA outlined in Table 19.1 of the EIA Scoping Report.

6. The responses include detailed comments on and questions arising from the Scoping Report including suggestions as to the content of the ES. You should review these responses in carrying out the EIA and in preparing the ES for this scheme.

7. Please note that this scoping opinion is given without prejudice to our consideration of any Order application which may be made for the scheme. The giving of the opinion implies no view on the Department's part about the merits or otherwise of the scheme.

General

8. The ES should provide full details of the scheme, to include how many vehicles and passengers are expected to use the public transport, and the hours and days of operation initially and in the future.

Air quality (Chapter 5)

9. Consideration should be given to the following points when undertaking your assessment;

- the cumulative impact of all planned development within the local area;
- the risks of air pollution and how these can be managed or reduced;
- any strategic solutions which may be being developed or implemented to mitigate the impacts on air quality.

Biodiversity (Chapter 6)

10. A robust assessment of environmental impacts and opportunities based on relevant and up to date environmental information should be undertaken prior to a decision on whether to grant planning permission. Table 6-1 within the EIA Scoping Report should be kept up to date with the relevant survey guidance. The age of ecological survey work should accord with CIEEM advice note on the Lifespan of Ecological Reports & Surveys.

11. Records of protected species should be sought from appropriate local biological record centres, nature conservation organisations and consideration should be given to the wider context of the site for example in terms of habitat linkages and protected species populations in the wider area.

12. Eversden and Wimpole Woods Special Area of Conservation (SAC) is designated for the presence of barbastelle bats. There are also records of a barbastelle maternity colony at Madingley Woods SSSI. The SAC is located within 7km of the project and therefore a Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) will be required. Impacts will need to be considered alone and in combination with other plans and projects.

13. Barbastelle bats are known to forage up to 20km from their main roosting sites and habitat within this range may be important to the maintenance of the local barbastelle bat population. The EIA Scoping Report acknowledges that the Proposed Scheme is located within the potential foraging range of the SAC barbastelle population. Natural England welcomes confirmation that the potential effects of the Scheme on SAC barbastelle foraging and commuting habitat, which may be functionally linked to the SAC, will be addressed through the ES and HRA. In addition to the Bourn Airfield development, this will need to consider the findings of bat survey work undertaken for other relevant projects such as the A428 Black Cat Roundabout to Caxton Gibbet Improvement Scheme and the East West Rail project. Reference should be made to the Greater Cambridge Biodiversity Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) which provides guidance on protecting bats, including Eversden and Wimpole Woods SAC barbastelles, through development.

14. The development site is within or may impact on Madingley Wood Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI); Caldecote Meadows SSSI; Hardwick Wood SSSI; Eversden and Wimpole Woods Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). The Environmental Statement should include a full assessment of the direct and indirect effects of the development on the features of special interest within the SSSIs (either individually or in combination with other developments), and identify appropriate mitigation measures to avoid, minimise or reduce any adverse significant effects. The consideration of likely significant effects should include any functionally linked land outside the designated site. These areas may provide important habitat for mobile species populations that are interest features of the SSSI, for example birds and bats. This can also include areas which have a critical function to a habitat feature within a site, for example by being linked hydrologically or geomorphologically.

15. Natural England note from the ES Scoping Report that eleven non-statutory nature conservation sites are located within 1km of the Proposed Scheme. The ES should consider any impacts upon local wildlife and geological sites, including local nature reserves.

16. Natural England recommend that the ES should consider the contribution the development could make to relevant local environmental initiatives and priorities to enhance the environmental quality of the development and deliver wider environmental gains such as the Nature Recovery Network and the Cambridge Nature Network. Reference should also be made to guidance set out in the Greater Cambridge Biodiversity SPD and the objectives and targets of the Cambridgeshire Green Infrastructure Strategy, as outlined in the consultation response from Natural England.

Green House Gases/Carbon Resilience (Chapter 7/8)

17. Natural England advise that the ES should also identify how the development impacts the natural environment's ability to store and sequester greenhouse gases, in relation to climate change mitigation and the natural environment's contribution to achieving net zero by 2050. Natural England's Carbon Storage and Sequestration by Habitat report (2021) and the British Ecological Society's nature-based solutions report (2021) provide further information.

Community and Human Health (Chapter 9)

18. Consideration should be given for the study area to include the population profile of people who will be affected during the construction and operational phases.

Historic Environment (Chapter 10)

19. The Secretary of State notes that the development could have an impact on both designated and undesignated heritage assets and their settings, and your attention is drawn to the specific detailed comments and advice from Historic England on historic environment matters in its response. In preparation of the ES consideration should be given to advice from Local Authority Conservation Officers and Archaeological advisers.

20. The EIA Scoping report highlights five grade II* listed buildings within the study area (10.5.6) although only lists 4. Historic England advise that the ES should include an assessment of the Grade II* listed chapel (LEN 1376611) at the American cemetery and the other Registered Parks and Gardens of colleges that sit adjacent to the Clare College, and the West Cambridge Conservation Area.

21. Historic England recommend that the applicant seek a wider scope for the assessment then 250m in the first instance, and then focuses down on those assets where there is likely to be a significant effect identified.

Landscape and Visual (Chapter 11)

22. Historic England note the applicant intends to produce an LVIA (see Chapter 11) and recommend the LVIA is supplemented with heritage specific viewpoints (both photographs and photomontages) that illustrate the ES and support the results of the heritage assessment. If these are to be presented in the Landscape and Visual chapter, then the assessment needs to be clearly set out and cross referenced with the heritage chapter.

Water Resources and Flood (Chapter 15)

23. The Environment Agency advise that the Bin Brook is identified as a Water Framework Directive ("WFD") waterbody. The Environment Agency advise that a proposed new bridge structure over Bin Brook could increase shading and potential damage and deterioration of aquatic habitats. The Environment Agency recommends that the Water Framework Direction information is used to assess the impact on its current WFD status alongside biodiversity impacts as part of the Environmental Assessment.

24. The Environment Agency highlight that while the proposed C2C Scheme does not include areas within a groundwater Source Protection Zone, it does include areas designated to have 'high', 'medium – high' and 'medium' groundwater vulnerability associated with underlying Principal and Secondary Aquifers. The proposed C2C Scheme route is therefore vulnerable to pollution, since contaminants from the development may enter and pollute underlying aquifers and in turn impact surface water bodies. Due consideration should be given to the impacts that the C2C Scheme may have upon controlled waters receptors during both construction and operational phases.

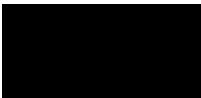
25. The Environment Agency highlight that a number of water dependent protected nature conservation sites have been identified as failing condition due to elevated nutrient levels and nutrient neutrality is consequently required to enable development to proceed without causing further damage to these sites. The ES needs to take account of any strategic solutions for nutrient neutrality or Diffuse Water Pollution Plans, which may be being developed or implemented to mitigate and address the impacts of elevated nutrient levels.

26. The Secretary of State notes that the Environment Agency set out that due consideration should be given to the impacts that the C2C Scheme may have upon controlled waters receptors during both construction and operational phases.

Distribution

27. Copies of this letter are being sent to those organisations which were consulted on the request for a scoping opinion, as listed at the beginning of this letter.

Yours sincerely,

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the signature of the sender.

Natasha Kopala