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23rd October 2008

Attention Peter Earl

Dear Peter

BEXHILL TO HASTINGS LINK ROAD: OUTSTANDING NATURAL ENGLAND OBJECTIONS – PROTECTED SPECIES AND MARLINE VALLEY WOODS SITE OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST (SSSI)

Following the meeting with Natural England on 21st October 2008, Natural England and the Planning Authority have requested that Mott MacDonald provide some additional and supporting information with regards to the dormouse mitigation for the Scheme, the location and setting of replacement bat roost locations to compensate for the loss of the bat roost at Adam's Farm Barn, and the location of proposed compensation land to compensate for the indirect impacts as a result of the Scheme on Marline Valley Woods SSSI.

Dormouse mitigation

Natural England confirmed in the meeting of 21st October that they would be willing to remove their objection to the Scheme on the grounds of the adequacy of the dormouse mitigation to support the small dormouse populations that may be isolated by the Scheme, on the condition that the dormouse specialist Dr. Paul Chanin provides a written endorsement of the proposed mitigation, as presented within our letter to Peter Earl dated 16th October 2008. To this end, please find enclosed a letter dated 23rd October 2008 from Dr. Paul Chanin.

Replacement bat roost location – Adam's Farm Barn

Natural England confirmed in the meeting of 21st October, that they are satisfied with the proposed replacement roost locations proposed for the loss of the bat roost at Adam's Farm barn, and the loss of a potential bat roost at Glover's Farm. As a result, Natural England confirmed that they are able to withdraw their objection on the grounds of missing information with regards to the location of replacement bat roost locations for the Scheme.

ESCC as the Determining Authority have requested that the precise location of the proposed replacement roost (two options) to compensate for the loss of a roost at Adam's Farm barn is clarified. Please refer to the enclosed 1:500 scale Figure (Aa) for clarification of the proposed design and locations of the replacement roosts. The complete existing roost structure at Adam's Farm Barn would be relocated if possible. Location B1 would be within 170m of the existing roost. Roost B2 would be within 145m from the existing roost. The orientation of these replacement roosts are indicative, but have been provisionally determined due to the location of the bat foraging routes in the locality, and in the context of the existing layout of Adam's Farm.

Compensation woodland – Marline Valley Woods SSSI

Natural England confirmed in the meeting of 21st October that they will require compensation habitat in the form of replacement woodland adjacent and contiguous with the Marline Valley Woods SSSI in order to remove their



objection on the grounds of the indirect impacts on the SSSI as a result of the Scheme. Natural England confirmed that these indirect impacts are a due to:

- Shading from the bridge over the London to Hastings Railway line at the southern tip of Marline Valley Woods (less than 0.1% of Marline Valley Woods SSSI would be exposed to shading impacts of the bridge. Please refer to Section 12.5.120 of the Addendum to the Environmental Statement, 2008);
- Loss of connectivity to the south of the SSSI; and,
- Air Quality impacts.

It was confirmed at the meeting of 21st October that a suitable area for compensation habitat would be in line with the 2:1 compensation habitat that has been agreed for the Scheme. The area to be compensated for is the area where it has been assessed that there would be a known degradation impact to vegetation communities of Marline Valley Woods SSSI as a result of Air Quality impacts. This is based on a calculation of a 1% change to the critical load for Nitrogen Deposition caused by the Scheme, and an area of 3.3Ha is identified. Please refer to Figure 2a of the Technical Note: Bexhill to Hastings Link Road Assessment of Air Quality Effects on Designated Sites enclosed. The proposed compensation area identified on Figure Bb is therefore 6.7Ha.

Mott MacDonald has undertaken an initial study of the land adjacent to the northern edge of Marline Valley Woods SSSI in order to investigate the feasibility of woodland habitat creation. This initial study included:

- A Phase 1 Habitat Assessment to identify and map all broad habitat type, in compliance with the Handbook for Phase 1 Habitat Survey: a Technique for Environmental Audit (JNCC, 1993); and,
- A Cultural Heritage Study involving a desk study that included identification of the following:
 - Information on Listed Buildings from English Heritage (GIS shapefiles and attached data);
 - Information on archaeological monuments and activities from the National Monuments Record (NMR);
 - Information on Scheduled Monuments, Registered Parks and Gardens and Ancient Woodlands from the MAGIC internet resource (<http://www.magic.gov.uk/>);
 - Previous studies undertaken by Oxford Archaeology for the Scheme (summarised in Chapter 14 of the Environmental Statement 2007);
 - Aerial photographic images available on the internet (eg <http://maps.google.co.uk/>); and,
 - Historical maps available on the internet (eg <http://www.old-maps.co.uk/> and <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/map>).

A number of suitable woodland compensation areas were investigated. The suitability of these locations was discussed with Natural England at the meeting of 21st October. Figure Bb enclosed within this letter identifies an area that was provisionally agreed between Natural England, ESCC as the Planning Authority and Mott MacDonald on behalf of ESCC as Scheme promoter. The location was identified following a rejection of alternative sites on the basis of the required ecological conditions for habitat regeneration and creating woodland that is contiguous with the existing SSSI. In addition, the site would have to provide long term potential for supporting the important bryophyte communities for which the SSSI is notified.

Design principles for Habitat Creation

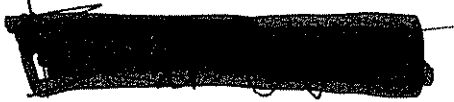
The following design principals and protocols will be followed for woodland habitat creation:

- Natural re-generation of the woodland edge between Alder Wood and Brickyard Shaw is the favoured option, with central areas managed as open glade;
- All new woodland planting would be representative of species found within Marline Valley Woods SSSI. The core planting would therefore be of a pendunculate oak-hornbeam (birch-hazel variant) woodland type;
- Footpath access would be maintained; and,
- Planting should pay careful attention to safety clearances, in particular for all utility services. Adequate maintenance access should be provided for overhead powerlines. Adherence will be made to national standards for safe distances between overhead powerlines and trees.

Supplementary Ecological Report

A full discussion of the suitability of all the proposed sites is to be included within a Supplementary Ecological Report for the compensation land, to be issued to ESCC as the Planning Authority. The Supplementary Ecological Report will include full details of the initial Phase 1 Habitat Survey and cultural heritage appraisal as well as initial baseline ecological assessment of the alternative sites. The ecological assessment considered a number of key factors of site selection including the existing ecological value of land, proximity to Marline Valley Woods SSSI and other ancient woodland areas, site gradient, slope aspect, soil type, geology and general hydrological features.

If you have any further queries at this stage, please do not hesitate to contact Carl Valentine from ESCC as project manager for the promoter of the Scheme.



pp. Giles Hewson
Environment Team Leader



Enclosures:

- Letter from Dr. Paul Chanin, dated 23.10.08;
- Figure Aa Replacement Bat roost locations to compensate for the loss of a bat roost at Adam's Farm Barn;
- Technical Note: Bexhill to Hastings Link Road Assessment of Air Quality Effects on Designated Sites; and,
- Figure Bb Marline Valley Woods SSSI proposed Compensation Woodland.