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Our ref:  
Date: 10<sup>th</sup> August 2022

Dear Mr Rees

**APPLICATION: SCP/2022/0003  
TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT)  
REGULATIONS 2011 - SCOPING OPINION REQUEST FOR SAND & GRAVEL  
EXTRACTION AT LAND OFF BOURBLES FARM, PREESELL**

I refer to your request for an EIA scoping opinion received on 13<sup>th</sup> June 2022.

This scoping opinion is based upon the proposals as set out in your scoping report and most particularly, the description of development set out in section 5 of that document

As you will be aware there are certain requirements within the 2017 EIA Regulations that set out the information that an ES must contain. These are contained within Regulation 18 and Schedule 4 of the Regulations and any ES that you submit must address the requirements set out in those provisions.

In particular your ES should contain the following:

- a) a description of the proposed development comprising information on the site, design, size and other relevant features of the development
- b) a description of the likely significant effects of the proposed development on the environment
- c) a description of any features of the proposed development or measures envisaged in order to avoid, prevent or reduce and if possible, off set likely significant effects on the environment.
- d) a description of the reasonable alternatives studied by the developer which are relevant to the proposed development and its specific characteristics and an indication of the main reasons for the option chosen taking into account the effects of the development on the environment.
- e) A non-technical summary of the information referred to in paragraphs a) to d)
- f) Any additional information specified in Schedule 4 relevant to the site specific characteristics of the particular development or type of development and to the environmental features likely to be significantly affected.

The ES must include the information reasonably required for reaching a reasoned conclusion on the significant effects of the development on the environment taking into account current knowledge and methods of assessment. It should be prepared taking into account the results of any relevant UK environmental assessments which are reasonably available to the person preparing the environmental statement with a view to avoiding duplication of assessment.

The ES shall be prepared by competent experts and must contain a statement outlining the relevant expertise or qualifications of such experts for each topic area.

### Scope of individual topic areas

#### Landscape and Visual

The general scope of the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment as set out in appendix 2 of the scoping report is agreed. The assessment should be undertaken in accordance with the methodology in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition of the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Assessment.

The Landscape and Visual Assessment should contain sufficient detail setting out how existing landscape features would be affected by the development. In particular this should relate to any tree and hedgerow removal and there should be a schedule identifying any trees or hedgerows to be removed and including sufficient information to allow an assessment of their quality and contribution towards landscape character.

In relation to the questions raised in appendix 2 :-

- Comments on the representative viewpoints in table 1. The suggested viewpoints do seem to be sufficiently comprehensive on the whole. My only comments regarding possible additional viewpoints are that there should be a viewpoint looking east from viewpoint point 4 (in particular to show visual impacts to the rear of the properties on Bourbles Lane) and an additional viewpoint looking north / north east from Nicksons Lane. Viewpoint 5 should also be taken at a position where it would be possible to assess the impacts of any access works to create the new highway junction.
- The visualisation type appears acceptable
- Any other further landscape or visual receptors to be considered – My only comment is that the proposals set out in the scoping report are based upon the current proposals. If there is any change in the design of the proposals (such as the location of the access point), the landscape assessment methodology will need to be amended to reflect that change and to ensure that any amended design is properly assessed.

Agricultural Land / Soils : It is noted that your scoping report identifies that the majority of the application site is not best and versatile agricultural land. However, the County Council's mapping system shows the majority of the site being Grade 2 land with a small area to the west being Grade 3a and therefore the whole site would be best and most

versatile land. The ES should contain sufficient information to allow the agricultural land quality of the existing site to be established and therefore any potential losses or gains arising from the working and restoration of the site to be quantified. The consultation response from Natural England also comments on agricultural land issues and the types of investigations that may be necessary to assess impacts.

## Ecology

Attention is drawn to the responses from Natural England and from the County Council's Ecologist which can be viewed on our webpage.

The assessment should include the following:

- A phase 1 habitat survey or UKHab of the application site and a suitable buffer distance around the perimeter to include any evidence and an assessment of the potential of habitats to support specific species groups included protected species and other species of nature conservation significance.
- Details of phase 2 vegetation / habitat surveys of any semi natural habitats, priority habitats and other features with potential to support ecologically significant species. Mapped plant communities and full species lists showing relative abundance and any quadrat data and locations should be included in the assessment. Faunal interest should also be mapped. The assessment should be undertaken to a sufficient levels of detail in order to inform biodiversity net gain calculations.
- Part of the site is within the Pilling Moss Biological Heritage Site. This is designated for its importance for certain overwintering bird species which are associated with the nearby Morecambe Bay SPA. Part of the site is therefore functionally linked to the SPA. The ES should therefore contain sufficient information to allow an assessment of impacts on the European site. The surveys should be undertaken at the correct time of year to allow an assessment of impact on over wintering bird species.
- Protected species : The ES needs to contain habitat assessments and survey data for all protected species that could potentially be affected by the proposals. This should include direct and indirect impacts for example loss of bat foraging habitats. The scoping report suggests that surveys for Great Crested Newts will be undertaken of the ponds and other water bodies that would be affected. The surveys should also include Common Toad
- The scoping report suggests that over wintering bird surveys will be undertaken. However, breeding bird surveys should also be undertaken including within the open field areas. The site is also likely to be of value for Brown Hare and Water Voles which should be included within the surveys.
- All surveys should be carried out an appropriate time of year in accordance with recognised methods and by experienced personnel. The survey methods should be described along with any limitations that affected the ability to undertake the surveys correctly.
- The ES should demonstrate that impacts on ecological interests have first been avoided by good design and only if avoidance is not possible should mitigation measures be proposed.

- Areas of habitat loss or damage should be quantified
- The results of the surveys should inform the design of any mitigation measures that will be required
- Although the requirement at present is only to provide a net gain with no legal requirement in terms of the level of gain that is required, you will be aware of the proposals within the Environment Act 2022 to set a minimum 10% gain. The legal requirement to provide 10% may be in force by the time any planning application for this proposal is determined. It is recommended that the DEFRA BMG Net Gain Metric 3.0 is used to quantify the level of habitat losses and gains. Any mitigation / habitat net gain proposals should be supported by appropriate management / aftercare provisions to ensure that the value of the measures will be safeguarded in the long term.

#### Archaeology:

It is agreed that this topic can be scoped out of the ES on the basis that there is limited known archaeological interest and limited potential for unknown interest on this site. It is considered that the archaeological issues can be dealt with through the planning application through a desk top study. This should include consideration of the impacts on the route of the former Garstang to Knott End railway line which used to cross the site.

#### Water Environment

**Flooding issues :** The EA comment that the scoping report does not identify that the site is in flood risk area 3 (area at highest risk of flooding). The application must be accompanied by a flood risk assessment that demonstrates that the development will not be at unacceptable risk of flooding or increase flood risk elsewhere. This should include an assessment of the impacts of any soil storage mounds and the raising of levels necessary to ensure that the access road and processing plant site is higher than the flood level.

There are several ditches and dykes that cross the site. The ES should explain how these would be crossed or how their integrity would be preserved during the working period.

**Ground water :** The EA note the proposals to undertake a hydrogeological assessment. You should note that the groundwater level under the site is very shallow and would be connected to surface water features. The proposals and any dewatering operations therefore could have the potential to have significant effects on groundwater and any surface features it supports. The proposals should clearly detail the depths of dewatering that will be required and the likely impacts on groundwater in and around the site.

The proposals to import inert waste for restoration purposes also need careful consideration in view of the shallow water table. The EA note the permitting issues that relate to this activity which should be addressed through the hydrogeological risk

assessment. It is also possible that a mining waste permit will also be required in relation to the silt lagoons.

## Traffic Issues

The proposals in your scoping report are generally considered acceptable subject to the following comments being addressed:

- The ES / planning application should include full engineering drawings showing the design and construction of the new access and associated visibility splays.
- The ES should contain information in relation to existing traffic levels and conditions on the highways affected by the development including total traffic, proportion of HGVs and usage by vulnerable road users. Accident records should also be investigated.
- The ES should contain information on the anticipated HGV movements during the mineral extraction and restoration stages.
- The ES should contain an assessment of the safety and capacity issues associated with the use of the access roads and junctions to the site in particular on the B5270 and A588. The assessment should also include consideration of impacts on vulnerable road users on those highways including pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders.

## Noise

The ES should contain a chapter setting out the noise impacts of the development. The assessment should follow the principles set out in the Planning Practice Guidance (paragraphs 019 – 022).

The noise assessment should include a survey of background noise levels at various noise sensitive properties around the site perimeter together with an assessment of noise impacts at various stages of the development. The following properties / general locations are considered to be those which should be assessed as part of any study of noise impacts:

- Woodlands on Bourbles / Little Tongues Lane
- Red Lea Kennels
- Bourbles Farm House, Bourbles Lane
- Mytax / New England Cottage on Bourbles Lane
- Hillfield House, Lancaster Road
- The Beeches, Lancaster Road
- Ourome, Gaulters Lane
- Old Nickson's Cottage, Nicksons Lane

Your noise consultant may consider that a slightly shorter list of properties would still provide a representative sample of properties around the site. This may be acceptable although the noise assessment should provide a reasoned justification as to why an assessment based on fewer properties has been undertaken.

The assessment should be based upon noise levels that would be generated by the mobile and fixed processing plant that would typically be used at the site.

Noise impacts should be separately identified for the mineral extraction and restoration (tipping stages) where these can be separated out.

The ES should provide details of the noise mitigation measures that would be undertaken including bunding and any restrictions or changes to operational practices to manage noise impacts.

## Dust

Your ES should contain an assessment of dust / particulate impacts. The assessment should be based upon the methodology prescribed in paragraphs 023 – 032 of the Planning Practice Guidance. The assessment should focus on the same properties that are listed in relation to the noise topic.

## Slope stability / geotechnics :

The proposed excavation would be very near the site boundary in several locations in particular on the northern boundary. In these locations the boundary is formed by an access road that serves properties or is close to the properties themselves. The ES should include geotechnical information to illustrate that the side slopes of the excavation would be stable and would not jeopardise the integrity of any property or infrastructure outside of the site boundary.

There is also a water and gas main running across the site and you should demonstrate that adequate standoffs and stability batters are provided for these pipelines also.

## Climate Change:

I agree that this matter does not need to include as a separate chapter within your ES.

## Other issues

Although these are not issues to be included within your ES, the following text sets out other issues that you will need to consider in your planning application.

- Quality / quantity of mineral reserves – The planning application should include sufficient information to demonstrate the volume of mineral reserves that exist on the site and their quality. The information on quality should demonstrate how the mineral resource can be processed into construction products that meet the relevant BS standards bearing in mind the provision within Policy CS4 of the Lancashire Minerals and Waste Core Strategy that new mineral resources should provide for the release of 'high quality' sand. High quality means materials that meet the BS standards such as for concreting or building aggregates. The information should also explain the volume of silt or other waste within the deposit.

- Highways / access ; I note that the plans supplied with your scoping document are still showing that access to the site will be achieved off Lancaster Road. My view is that this would give rise to traffic safety and local amenity concerns on the stretch of the B5270 close to its junction with the A588 as the road at this point is narrow, on a sharp bend and has a number of properties close to the road. In my view an access onto the A588 would be better as it would avoid HGVs having to traverse the area described above. There do not appear to be any other environmental or transport related impacts that would indicate that an access in this location is not possible.
- Proximity to properties : A key issue will be impacts on local amenity. Although there are not large groupings of properties close to the site, there are a small number of individual properties that are located very close to the site boundary notably Woodlands and the kennels on the northern boundary of the site. You will need to demonstrate that the amenity impacts (noise and dust) on these properties will be acceptable.
- Site design – the Proposed Site Layout and Access Plan shows the position of the soil screening mounds. In my view the mounding needs to be extended further along the southern boundary of the plant site in order to improve visual and acoustic screening to the properties located off Lancaster Road and those on Bourbles Lane. The screening mounding to phase 1 also only extends partially along the boundary with the lane to the north and I would question why this is the case particularly given the potential impacts on the property known as Woodlands.

I hope these comments are useful to you. Please do not hesitate to contact the case officer, Jonathan Haine, if you wish to discuss further the content of any ES or submit a draft ES for initial consideration.

Yours sincerely

*A Mullaney*

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Head of Planning and Environment

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Phone: 01772 534130  
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Your ref:  
Our ref: SCP/2022/003  
Date: 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2022

Dear Mr Rees

**APPLICATION: SCP/2022/0003**  
**PROPOSAL: SCOPING OPINION REQUEST FOR SAND & GRAVEL EXTRACTION**  
**LOCATION: LAND OFF BOURBLES LANE, PREESALL**

I refer to your application for an EIA Scoping opinion for the above proposal and the County Council's scoping response dated 10<sup>th</sup> August 2022.

As you are aware, since the scoping opinion was issued, I have received a number of representations from local residents and Parish Councils concerned about the dust impacts of the proposal. The county council's scoping response advises that your ES should contain an assessment of dust /particulate impacts based upon the methodology in paragraphs 023 -032 of the Planning Practice Guidance. Given the concerns that have been expressed I would advise that your assessment should contain an analysis of the human health impacts of dust including silica rich particulates. The assessment should take into account guidance from the HSE and NHS regarding silica dust impacts including any other research into silica dust related health impacts.

Yours sincerely,

Jonathan Haine  
Team Leader Development Management