



Jay Singh
Wychavon District Council
Civic Centre
Queen Elizabeth Drive
Persore
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By email only to: jay.singh@wychavon.gov.uk

16 May 2023

Dear Jay,

APPLICATION REFERENCE NO: W/23/00682/OUT

DESCRIPTION: Outline application for phased residential development capable of being severed for approximately up to 500 dwellings (C3 Use Class) including means of access (two vehicular access points from the B4080 and a pedestrian/cycle access from Derwent Drive) and associated infrastructure and landscaping including provision of formal and informal open space and drainage attenuation basins, with all matters reserved except for access.

LOCATION: Land East of Bredon Road, Off Tewkesbury Road, Bredons Hardwick

Thank you for consulting the Cotswolds National Landscape Board¹ ('the Board') on this proposed development, which would be located within the setting of the Cotswolds National Landscape².

In reaching its planning decision, the local planning authority ('LPA') has a statutory duty to have regard to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the National Landscape³. The Board recommends that, in fulfilling this 'duty of regard', the LPA should: (i) ensure that planning decisions are consistent with relevant national and local planning policy and guidance; and (ii) take into account the following Board publications⁴:

- Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Management Plan 2023-2025 ([link](#));
- Cotswolds AONB Landscape Character Assessment ([link](#)) particularly, in this instance, with regards to Landscape Character Types (LCT) 19 (Unwooded Vale) and 1 (Escarpment Outliers) which the site may be visible from;
- Cotswolds AONB Landscape Strategy and Guidelines ([link](#)) particularly, in this instance, regards to LCT 19 ([link](#)) including Section 19.8 and LCT 1 ([link](#)) including Section 1.8;
- Cotswolds AONB Local Distinctiveness and Landscape Change ([link](#));
- Cotswolds Conservation Board Position Statements ([link](#)) particularly, in this instance, with regards to Development in the Setting of the AONB ([link](#)) and Tranquillity Position Statement ([link](#)) in particular Section 4.5.

Having reviewed the application and supporting information, for the reasons outlined in Annex 1 below the Board wishes to raise a **holding objection** due to the lack of assessment of the potential increase in traffic through the Cotswolds National Landscape resulting from the proposed development, which could have a significant adverse impact on the tranquillity of the National Landscape, this being one its 'special qualities'.

Cotswolds Conservation Board

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The Cotswolds National Landscape is a designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), managed and looked after by the Cotswolds Conservation Board.

cotswoldsaonb.org.uk

Chairman:
Brendan McCarthy

Vice Chair:
Rebecca Charley

In common with the view which we consistently expressed in regards to the previous refused application (appn. ref. 18/00771/OUT) and subsequent dismissed appeal (appeal ref. APP/H1840/W/22/3301742), we consider that the appellant has not, to date, addressed this matter.

As we stated in our representations to the previous appeal, if the appellant is able to provide sufficient information to demonstrate that there would not be an adverse impact in this regard, then we would be willing to withdraw our holding objection.

If you have any queries regarding this response, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'S. Joyce', written in a cursive style.

Simon Joyce MRTPI

Planning Officer

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ANNEX 1. COTSWOLDS NATIONAL LANDSCAPE BOARD CONSULTATION RESPONSE IN RELATION TO PLANNING APPLICATION W/23/00682/OUT

The Council refused the appellant's previous application, reference 18/00771/OUT, on 12 May 2022 citing three reasons for refusal ('RfRs'). RfR 3 stated that the application failed to demonstrate that the proposed development would not have an adverse impact on the tranquillity of the Cotswold Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) due to additional traffic and activity taking place within and adjoining the AONB. The proposal was therefore considered by the Council to be contrary to Policy CE4 (Tranquillity) of the Cotswolds AONB Management Plan 2018-2023 and the associated Position Statement on Tranquillity, Policy SWDP23 of the South Worcestershire Development Plan (2016) and paragraphs 174, 176 and 177 of the National Planning Policy Framework ('NPPF') 2021.

In dismissing the subsequent appeal (ref. APP/H1840/W/22/3301742) following an inquiry during autumn 2022, the Inspector concluded the whilst the proposal would not unacceptably harm the National Landscape in landscape and visual terms, but felt that he was unable to reach an informed judgement on whether the development would result in an unacceptable impact on tranquillity due to potential increase in traffic movements resulting from the proposal on roads within the National Landscape.

Paragraph 176 of the National Planning Policy Framework states that great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues. Paragraph 176 continues to state that development within the setting of AONBs should be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts. Paragraph 174, with regards to 'valued landscapes' and 'the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside' is also relevant as well as paragraph 039 of the Planning Practice Guidance.

The Cotswolds National Landscape Management Plan 2023-2025 referenced above is a material consideration in planning decisions. Policy CE4 states that proposals that are likely to impact on the tranquillity of the Cotswolds AONB should have regard to this tranquillity, by seeking to (i) avoid and (ii) minimise noise pollution and other aural and visual disturbance. The supporting text of the policy cites increased traffic arising from developments outside of the National Landscape as a relevant issue in respect of noise pollution and tranquillity.

The Board's Tranquillity Position Statement referenced above recommends that proposals that have the potential to impact on the tranquillity of the AONB accord with Policy CE4 of the Cotswolds AONB Management Plan 2023-2025, give great weight to conserving and enhancing the tranquillity of the AONB and assess potential impacts on tranquillity, particularly with regards to noise, vehicle movements and landscape and visual impacts.

Tranquillity is one the 'special qualities' of the Cotswolds National Landscape; it is one of the features of the Cotswolds that makes the area so outstanding that it is in the nation's interest to safeguard it. The National Landscape has relatively high levels of tranquillity, especially when compared with the surrounding urban areas.

When considering the potential impacts of developments both within the National Landscape and outside of the National Landscape but within its setting, Section 4.5 of the Board's Tranquillity Position Statement outlines how The Institute of Environmental Assessment's 'Guidelines for the Environmental Assessment of Road Traffic' recommends using two 'rules of thumb' for identifying the

scale at which increases in traffic movements should be considered in an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA):

- Rule 1: Where traffic flows will increase by more than 30% (or the number of heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) will increase by more than 30%).
- Rule 2: Any other sensitive areas where traffic flows have increased by 10% or more.

AONBs are specifically identified as 'sensitive areas' in the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017. As such, Rule 2 should be applied in the Cotswolds National Landscape. On this basis, it can be argued that an increase in traffic flows of more than 10% from a development proposal or in combination with other proposals is likely to be significant and have an adverse impact on the tranquillity of the Cotswolds National Landscape.

Having reviewed the applicant's Transport Assessment (Iceni, dated April 2018) and Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (EDP, dated February 2023), in our view, and in common with the previous application, the applicant has not adequately considered the potential impact on tranquillity resulting from increased traffic flows arising from the development using routes into and out of the National Landscape and we request further assessment of this matter.

This should include data specifically for the following routes and villages:

- (i) between Bredon and Eckington;
- (ii) between Bredon and Beckford (including Lower Westmancote, Kemerton, Overbury, Conderton and Beckford);
- (iii) through Great Comberton; and
- (iv) through Ashton-under-Hill.

The applicant should also outline the steps that would be taken to try and minimise any increase in vehicle trips into / out of the National Landscape (for example, through the provision of alternatives to private car use, such as public transport) and to mitigate the impacts of any increase in vehicle trips into / out of the National Landscape.

Without prejudice and for avoidance of doubt, should the appellant demonstrate at the forthcoming inquiry that the increase in traffic flows on roads within the National Landscape referenced in our initial consultation response will be below the 10% threshold cited above, the Board would not object to the proposal on other grounds. In our response to the previous application we agreed with the conclusion of the applicant's Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment that the development would result in a moderate / minor adverse level of effect on the National Landscape in terms of its visual impact due to the distance of the proposed development from the National Landscape, the context of the existing residential and commercial built form around Tewkesbury and Mitton and the screening provided by the 'mature landscape fabric' of hedgerows and trees between the National Landscape and the proposed development site. This assessment has not changed in respect of this application.

NOTES:

- 1) Cotswolds National Landscape is the new name for the Cotswolds Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The new name takes forward one of the proposals of the Government-commissioned 'Landscapes Review' to rename AONBs as 'National Landscapes'. This change reflects the national importance of AONBs and the fact that they are safeguarded, in the national interest, for nature, people, business and culture.
- 2) The name used for the organisation associated with the AONB designation is the Cotswolds National Landscape Board. At times this is abbreviated to National Landscape Board or The Board. The legal name of the organisation remains the Cotswolds Conservation Board but this name is no longer used in most circumstances.
- 3) Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.
www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/37/section/85
- 4) The documents referred to in our response can be located on the Cotswolds National Landscape website under the following sections
 - a. Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Management Plan 2023-2025
www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk/management-plan
 - b. Cotswolds AONB Landscape Character Assessment
www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk/lca
 - c. Cotswolds AONB Landscape Strategy and Guidelines
www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk/lsg
 - d. Cotswolds AONB Local Distinctiveness and Landscape Change
www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk/ldlc
 - e. Cotswolds Conservation Board Position Statements
www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk/ps1 www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk/ps2