

Date: 20 October 2015
Our ref: 166944
Your ref: TR010018



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Dear Sir / Madam

Planning Act 2008 (as amended), the Infrastructure Planning (Compulsory Acquisition) Regulations 2010 (as amended) – Regulation 12, and the Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010 (as amended) (EPR) – Rule 8(3)

Application by Highways England for an Order Granting Development Consent for the A14 Cambridge to Huntingdon Improvement Scheme

Changes Proposed by the Applicant

Thank you for notifying Natural England of the above proposed changes to this scheme in your letter dated 29th September 2015.

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.

Deadline 5 - REP5-030

You will be aware that Natural England responded to the proposed non-material changes, detailed in this report, in our response dated 14th September 2015 (ref: 164171). Natural England is satisfied that the proposed changes to the application will not have any significant effect on aspects of the natural environment within our remit, including ecology. Since the proposed changes are unlikely to have any adverse effect on designated sites further consideration, under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010, is not required.

Deadline 7 - REP7-034

DR1.40a

The report identifies that further ecological survey work has indicated that an area east of Longstanton Brook is required for the provision of essential mitigation for water voles, under a Natural England conservation licence. The report considers that the inclusion of this additional area of land and the removal of the flood plain compensation area from the scheme, which is no longer required, is unlikely to give rise to any new likely significant environmental effects from those assessed in the Environmental Statement.



Natural England cannot provide advice on this proposed change, but will be able to provide this advice by Deadline 13 (30th October). We apologise for this and hope that the proposed deadline for the advice is acceptable.

DR1.40b

We note that further ecological survey work has indicated that an area east of Oakington Brook is required for the provision of essential mitigation for water voles under a Natural England conservation licence. The area is proposed to provide a receptor site to release water voles following trapping and translocation. In order to accommodate this change, an adjustment is also proposed to the adjacent flood plain compensation area. Natural England agrees that the proposed change is unlikely to give rise to any additional likely significant environmental effects from those assessed in the Environmental Statement.

DR1.70

The report states that further survey data and comments received from the Environment Agency has indicated that the proposed floodplain compensation area east of Hilton Road and to the south of the proposed A14 would not provide the required flood risk mitigation in this location. As such, alternative options have been explored and a revised floodplain compensation area to the north of the A14 is now proposed in the location of the already proposed ecological mitigation area. Natural England is satisfied with this and agrees with the conclusion of the report that the proposed change is unlikely to have any new significant environmental effect from those assessed in the Environmental Statement.

Natural England has no substantive comments to make on any of the other proposed changes detailed in this report as none of these appear to have any implications for environmental matters within our remit.

Deadline 9 - REP9-006

DR1.87

The report identifies that further pre-construction ecological survey work in February 2015 has indicated that great crested newts are likely absent from ponds within 500m of plots 4/6, 5/1m, 5/12 and 5/13, located adjacent to Woodhatch Farm. This has resulted in there no longer being a need to provide a receptor site for great crested newts as proposed at the time of submission of the application to avoid protected species offences and secure a great crested newt licence. Natural England's view that the scheme would not require a protected species license for great crested newts and the acceptability of not providing a great crested newt receptor site in this location has recently been confirmed to Highways England by receipt of a letter of no impediment (LONI) from Natural England. We therefore support the conclusion of this report that the proposed change is unlikely to have any new significant environmental effect from those assessed in the Environmental Statement.

DR1.88

Following review of a second draft water vole conservation licence application, Natural England has confirmed through a LONI that it is acceptable for the area required for a proposed receptor site for water voles to be reduced. The receptor site was also proposed to receive grass snakes. This purpose is also no longer needed as any snakes captured during site clearance will be released into other suitable habitat at other locations. Natural England agree that the proposed change is not likely to give rise to any new significant environmental effects from those assessed in the Environmental Statement

Natural England has no substantive comments to make on any of the other proposed changes detailed in this report since none of these appear to have significant implications for key issues within our remit.

I hope these comments are helpful. For any queries relating to the specific advice in this letter only please contact Janet Nuttall on 0300 060 1239. For any new consultations, or to provide further information on this consultation please send your correspondences to consultations@naturalengland.org.uk.

Yours faithfully

Kathleen Covill
Senior Adviser

cc. Nicholas Coombes, Case Manager, Planning Inspectorate