

Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council
Hinckley Hub
Rugby Road
Hinckley
Leicestershire
LE10 0FR

Your Ref 24/01117/EAS
Our Ref CRTR-PLAN-2024-43332
Friday 10 January 2025

Dear Sullivan Archer,

Proposal: Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Scoping Opinion

Location: Chase Fields Farm, Watling Street, Nuneaton

Waterway: Ashby Canal

Thank you for your consultation.

We are the charity who look after and bring to life 2000 miles of canals & rivers. Our waterways contribute to the health and wellbeing of local communities and economies, creating attractive and connected places to live, work, volunteer and spend leisure time. These historic, natural and cultural assets form part of the strategic and local green-blue infrastructure network, linking urban and rural communities as well as habitats. By caring for our waterways and promoting their use we believe we can improve the wellbeing of our nation. The Trust is a statutory consultee in the Development Management process.

Based on the information available in the Environmental Impact Assessment Scoping Report, our substantive response (as required by the Town & Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 (as amended)) is the following advice:

The site is located to the west and south-west of the Ashby Canal, which is owned and operated by the Trust. The canal is designated as a conservation area and is also a Local Wildlife Site (LWS). At its nearest point, the site is approximately 70m from the canal and currently the site is quite well screened from view by existing hedgerows along both field boundaries and the route of the former Hinckley & Stoke Golding Branch railway line.

The Illustrative Masterplan at Appendix B of the report suggests that Unit 4 will be the nearest unit to the canal at approximately 100m from the canal; this unit is likely to limit views of the remainder of the site from the canal.

Having reviewed the Environmental Impact Assessment Report, we wish to make the following comments:

Chapter 6- Landscape and Visual Impact

The report acknowledges the proximity of the Ashby Canal to the site and its status as a conservation area (para. 6.3.6) and we consider it appropriate that the canal has been identified as a potential landscape receptor (para. 6.4.3). We note that canal users (both boaters and towpath users) are also identified as likely visual receptors relevant to the site and its setting and the Proposed Viewpoint Location Map at Appendix D includes four viewpoints along the canal encompassing both close- and longer- range views of the site.

We consider it important that potential impacts on the character and setting of the canal conservation area and on views from the canal by all canal users are fully assessed so that any identified adverse impacts can be

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appropriately mitigated. The proposed viewpoints appear to be appropriate and should be able to provide representative views of the site from the canal to inform the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment.

The approach set out in section 6.6 of the report in terms of seeking to retain existing planting wherever possible, particularly along site boundaries, appears appropriate. We consider that the existing mature hedgerows and trees along the eastern site boundary provide a strong basis for a comprehensive landscaping scheme for the development which can successfully reduce the likely visual impact of the development on views from the canal.

Chapter 7- Ecology and Biodiversity

Statutory designations in the vicinity of the site are identified (para. 7.3.4) and the report indicates that non-statutory designations will be also assessed within the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal to be undertaken (para. 7.3.5). The Ashby Canal is designated as a Local Wildlife Site (LWS) and we consider that this should be taken into account when assessing potential ecological impacts arising from the proposed development.

We consider that the potential effects to be assessed at both construction and operational phases (section 7.4) appear appropriate. We ask that the Environmental Statement considers the potential for impacts on the Ashby Canal and its value as a wildlife habitat in relation to all of the effects identified. Measures to minimise any anticipated harmful effects should also be identified as should potential opportunities for supporting or enhancing the biodiversity value of the canal.

Chapter 8- Cultural Heritage and Archaeology

We note that the report indicates that a desk-based assessment has already been undertaken which suggests that there may be some minor impacts on the setting of the Ashby Canal conservation area (para. 8.4.4). The proposed scope and methodology of assessment set out in the report appears appropriate and providing the potential for impacts on the canal conservation area is fully considered and mitigation measures identified where necessary, we do not anticipate any significant adverse impacts on the heritage value and significance of the canal.

Chapter 9- Water Resources (including Flood Risk and Drainage)

We note that a Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy will be undertaken; this should consider whether there are likely to be any potential impacts on the Ashby Canal. Given the distance from the canal, it appears unlikely that discharging surface water from the proposed development to the canal would be a serious option, but if it is considered, we recommend early contact with the Trust's Utilities Team to allow an assessment of the feasibility of accepting such a discharge. It is important to note that the Trust is not a land drainage authority, and such discharges are not granted as of right- where they are granted, they will usually be subject to completion of a commercial agreement. Further advice can be obtained by contacting the Trust's Utilities Team at utilitiesenquiry@canalrivertrust.org.uk.

Chapter 11- Air Quality

We note the intention to produce a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) to address likely construction impacts from dust emissions (para. 11.4.8) and we recommend that the CEMP includes consideration of potential impacts on water quality in the Ashby Canal arising from dust or other windblown material during the construction phase and identifies measures as appropriate to minimise any such risks.

Chapter 14- Topics to be Scoped Out

We note that ground conditions and land contamination are proposed to be scoped out of the ES (para. 14.2.2) due to the low risk associated with the longstanding use of the site as undeveloped arable land. We do recommend however that the separate assessment of these matters proposed to be undertaken outside the EIA process includes consideration of potential risks to water quality in the Ashby Canal and whether measures may be required to minimise any risks that are identified either at the construction or operational phases. Given the distance between the site and the canal, we acknowledge that this may not be a significant likely risk.

We note that lighting is proposed to be scoped out of the ES and that a separate Lighting Strategy is proposed to be produced (para. 14.3.5). Although the canal is some 70m distant from the site and thus unlikely to be significantly affected by on-site external lighting, we nonetheless recommend that the Lighting Strategy considers the canal and assesses whether or not any adverse effects on wildlife supported by the canal corridor might occur. Should any such impacts be identified, appropriate mitigation measures should be identified.

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We hope that these comments will be of assistance, but please do not hesitate to contact me with any queries you may have.

Yours sincerely,

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