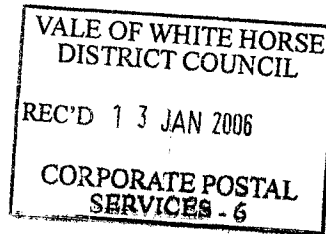


Sent to Agent ✓



Mrs G LeCointe  
Vale of White Horse District Council  
Abbey House  
Abingdon  
Oxfordshire  
OX14 3JN



12 January 2006

Dear Mrs LeCointe,

**TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990  
CONSULTATION UNDER SCHEDULE 1, PARAGRAPH 7(3)**

**RE: PLANNING APPLICATION CHI/16952/1-X – LAND TO THE  
SOUTH OF CHILTON FIELD, DIDCOT**

Thank you for your consultation on the above planning application.

Members of the Regional Planning Committee have considered the application proposals against the current regional spatial strategy (RPG9 and alterations) and the Government's Proposed Changes to the Regional Minerals and Waste Strategies, and agreed the following response.

The South East England Regional Assembly makes the following representations:

- On the basis of the information provided, it is considered that the proposal would materially conflict with Policies Q1, Q2, E1 and T1 in RPG9 as it proposes a large scale residential development at a location within the AONB with relatively poor access to local facilities such that it is likely to lead to high volumes of car based journeys by future residents.

The Assembly also has the following observations:

- the information submitted in support of the application is considered to be either insufficiently precise or comprehensive to enable reasoned conclusions to be reached on the degree to which the application would accord with RPG9 policies

cont./...

South East England Regional Assembly • Berkeley House, Cross Lanes, C  
T: 01483 555200 • F: 01483 555250 • E: secretariat@southeast-ra.gov.uk • W: v  
Chairman: Councillor Keith Mitchell • Chief Executive: Paul

Q3, E1, H2, H4, H5, T12 and INF4. The Assembly looks to the District Council to satisfy itself, if it is minded to grant permission, that:

- the application site is a sustainable location for residential development of the scale proposed and that its development accords with the sequential approach to development identified in PPG3 and RPG9 Policy H5;
- the level of parking proposed through the submission of reserved matters applications is appropriate taking into account local circumstances to ensure that it will not promote use of the private car;
- future residents will have adequate opportunities to access services and facilities by means other than the private car and that an appropriate package of transport improvements, including public transport provision, is secured through the development by conditions and/or legal agreements;
- there is a special justification for such a major development within the AONB, as required by PPS7 and RPG9 Policy E1;
- the potential for the inclusion of land for nature conservation has been considered as required by Policy E2;
- the development will provide a mix of housing including appropriate levels of affordable housing in response to local needs, and that its provision is secured through conditions and/or legal agreements;
- the development will be built at a density according with guidance in PPG3 and RPG9 Policy Q3, and that a high standard of design will be secured; and
- that the development will include energy efficiency measures in accordance with RPG9 Policy INF4.

The Assembly would be pleased to be consulted on any additional information that may be submitted to the District Council in respect of the above matters, and to be given the opportunity to comment further in light of that information.

I attach a copy of the report presented to members of the Regional Planning Committee for your information.

If you wish to discuss any aspect of our response, please contact Cath Rose on 01483 555235. I would be grateful if I could be informed of the decision in due course.

Yours sincerely,



**Paul Bevan**  
**Chief Executive**



South East England Regional Assembly • Berkeley House, Cross Lanes, Guildford  
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Chairman: Councillor Keith Mitchell • Chief Executive: Paul Bevan

VAT.Reg.No. 794 0934 95

**APPENDIX 8**

## CHILTON FIELD REVISED ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT

### COUNTRYSIDE AGENCY CONSULTATION RESPONSE TO VALE OF WHITE HORSE DISTRICT COUNCIL

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#### INTRODUCTION

1. This note sets out the Countryside Agency's response in relation to the planning application for residential development at Chilton Field, Oxfordshire and its **revised** Environmental Statement (ES) dated June 2006, which has been prepared on behalf of the United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority by Kemp & Kemp Property Consultants. This note should be read in conjunction with our previous note on the Planning Application and the first ES.
2. The Agency has a number of concerns in relation to the development located in the highly valued AONB landscape and in close proximity to the nationally important Ridgeway National Trail and has recommended in its previous comments that the council request further information to accompany the application and ES prior to determining the application. The Agency has itself reserved its final formal comments whether it is or not objecting to the development until the possession of this supplementary information.
3. After careful review of the revised Environmental Statement, we notice that the ES addresses some points of our previous comments concerning the landscape and visual impact assessment but that overall the Environmental Statement, as it stands, still not meet the legal requirements set out in the Town & Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (England & Wales) Regulations 1999. We will not repeat all our previous comments on the ES, thus we invite you to consider in our previous note as still relevant the paragraph entitled "Other Comments on the Environmental Statement", especially the comments under the paragraphs "Scope of the EIA", "Technical Summary", "Site Description", "Scheme Description", "Alternative sites and layouts". **Concerning the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, we elaborate our comments below.**

#### Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Methodology and Contents

4. We are happy that a second Landscape and Visual Assessment based on a clear methodology was carried out. However, some key issues raised in our previous note are still not been taken on board.
5. Concerning the LVIA Baseline, we welcome:
  - the inclusion in the baseline of references to policies protecting the AONB, to existing landscape character assessments and to the importance of the Ridgeway National Trail
  - the Landscape Appraisal of the Application Site and its surroundings

6. Concerning the Landscape Impact Assessment, we welcome the recognition in paragraph 2.35 of the fact that one of the most important landscape characteristics of the existing site is the lack of light source.

**However:**

- We still consider that there is **not enough information about the integration of the scheme layout and design in the designated landscape**, which limits the extent to which a full landscape visual assessment can be made (c.f. paragraph 9)
- the impacts on the landscape character of the wider vicinity, on a character area by character area basis, has not been assessed

*future app.*

7. Concerning the Visual Impact Assessment, we welcome:

- The production of Zones of Visual Influence
- the mix of close and distant views chosen with the AONB Planning Officer and the District Council
- The photomontage for a viewpoint, showing what would be visible before and after planting have matured

**However, there are still key issues:**

- The fact that any screening effect of vegetation would be reduced in winter is not taken into account
  - only one photomontage (for viewpoint C) is far from ideal to realise the visual impacts of the development.
  - There is no assessment of the visual impact of the light spill of the future development
8. **The masterplan which is the subject of the EIA is still not clearly defined enough for landscape and visual impacts to be adequately assessed.** . There is a need for further detail on what measures will be taken to ensure the building design will be of the highest standard, and what materials will be used in the Environmental Statement (c.f. paragraph 10). It is important that Vale of White Horse District Council requires additional information including clear site layouts and ensures that any development that does take place on the site follows guidance set out in the AONB Management Plan and any supplementary design guidance adopted by the Council or County Council.

## Landscape and Visual Impacts and Mitigation Measures

9. The development taking place within the highly valued AONB landscape and in close proximity to the nationally important National Trail, we agree that the landscape impact **must be considered at least as medium adverse, but in any case as significant** (passing from a largely undeveloped area to an area of a residential development of 275 dwellings and associated facilities in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty). We thus don't agree with the sentence of paragraph 6.2. of the LVIA, which judges the development noticeable, but not significant.
10. We accept the fact that at maturation of the proposed mitigation planting, the proposed development would be largely screened (in spite of the lack of more than one photomontage), but this screening will considerably lessen during winter months. This should also be assessed.
11. Without knowing more about the proposed layout, design, and landscape strategy of the future development (especially how they will integrate in the landscape character), we consider the conclusion of the LVIA as not valid.
12. We don't agree with the fact that there is already lighting from other developments (which as the ES notes was permitted for reasons of national interest e.g. the Synchrotron) is a sort of mitigation for new light sources. We don't think either that light spill could be successfully screened.
13. The revised ES also still contains generally a **lack of detail on mitigation** e.g. layouts and design as said previously, but also lighting and landscape plan (there will be extensive woodland planting, but what about the informal and formal recreation spaces. It is important that the appearance of the recreation space blends in with the surrounding rural landscape...).

## CONCLUSION

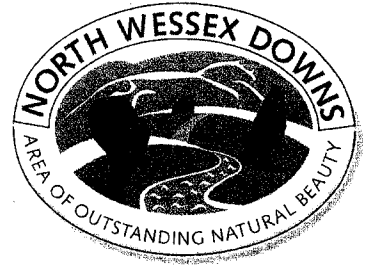
14. We still consider that further consideration is required in relation to the location of the development:
  - PPS7 states that consideration of major planning applications should include an assessment of the cost of, and scope for, developing elsewhere outside the designated area, or meeting the need for it in some other way. The fact that the applicant has control of land only in AONB and that the site is quoted in the Local Plan doesn't exempt the applicant from this requirement. *-don't accept this interpretation*
  - Consideration should still be given as to whether a wider range of potential environmental impacts should be assessed e.g. on the ecology, hydrology and soils of the site and surrounding area, and impacts on local roads and local residents and recreational users of the area.

- The Agency is still concerned by the fact that the proposed development at Chilton Field is, in part, on a greenfield site and not well linked to existing settlements
15. We still would be very concerned if the Council was to come to a decision based on the current information and assessment, which are both lacking. We welcome the new Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment but still consider that **further consideration must be given to a number of issues before this development can be considered to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the area, particularly on:**
- The layout of residential development and public buildings (school, community building, etc.);
  - The design of open spaces and planting in the development and their relationship with the surrounding countryside;
  - The scale, form and massing of buildings, and detailed design including colour and use of local materials.
16. **We consequently still reserve our final formal comments whether the Countryside Agency is or not objecting to the development until the Environmental Statement take into account the requirements stated in our previous comments and reiterated in these one.**

Pidgeon?

Dear -

Thanks for letter  
will make <sup>sure</sup> sure  
adequate  
a separate <sup>considered</sup> considered  
~~as part of the plan~~  
the content of  
the approval.



North Wessex Downs AONB  
Denford Manor  
Lower Denford  
Hungerford  
Berkshire  
RG17 0UN

14<sup>th</sup> September 2005

01488 685440 **T**

01488 680453 **F**

info@northwessexdowns.org.uk **E**

Mr Tim Sadler  
Director of Environmental Services  
Vale of White Horse District Council  
Environmental Services Directorate  
PO Box 127  
Abbey House  
Abingdon  
OX14 3JN

Dear Mr Sadler

**Re: Planning application CHI/16952/1 – X, Proposed Residential Development at Chilton Field**

This letter sets out the formal representations from the North Wessex Downs (NWD) AONB to the above planning application. Our response is based on the primary purpose of AONB designation, which is to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the landscape, as expressed in the objectives and policies of the approved NWD AONB Management Plan.

You are of course aware that the Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000 significantly raised the profile of AONBs by placing new responsibilities on the local authorities who are responsible for their management, including a statutory duty to produce and regularly review AONB Management Plans for their areas, and a legal duty on all 'relevant authorities' (including local planning authorities) to "have regard to" the purpose of conserving and enhancing natural beauty in all their decisions affecting AONBs. The North Wessex Downs (NWD) AONB Council of Partners was formed in 2001 to oversee the future of the AONB. The Vale of White Horse District Council along with the other ten constituent planning authorities have all adopted the AONB Management Plan, published in January 2004, to assist in formulating their policies for the management of the AONB and carrying out their functions in relation to it.



would effectively join up areas of existing development in visual terms between the existing Harwell/Chilton Campus and buildings in the Chilton School area.

We note that although the draft Local Plan allocates the site for 275 houses, this planning application does not specify a definite number but alludes to a development of approximately 300 houses. We are very concerned that a 15 hectare site could potentially accommodate 600 dwellings if developed to the average density required by the Government in Planning Policy Guidance Note 3: Housing, which would be extremely inappropriate in this rural location within the AONB. As the Inspector conducting the Local Plan Inquiry has yet to complete his report on objections to the Local Plan, which includes objections to this proposed new allocation, we would suggest that it is premature for the Council to grant permission for housing on this site. Furthermore, we understand that the original planning consent for the replacement of 200 prefabricated houses by 275 dwellings has now lapsed, which reinforces the argument that the Council should wait for the Inspector's report before determining this application.

If the Council decides not to wait until the Inspector's report is published before granting planning permission, we would contend that at the very least an EIA is needed in order to consider whether this site is the most appropriate location for significant housing development.

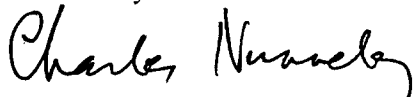
If the Council is minded to grant outline planning permission for this site we would encourage the Council to take into account the following themes and objectives within the AONB Management Plan in the preparation of conditions or s.106 agreements relating to the development. It would be consistent with PPS7 to ensure that any planning permission granted for major developments in an AONB should be carried out to high environmental standards through the application of appropriate conditions where necessary.

- Theme 1: Conserving and enhancing landscape character and diversity. A detailed landscape assessment of the site should be carried out to assess both its character and its relationship with the wider landscape. This assessment should take account of the North Wessex Downs AONB Integrated Landscape Character Assessment. There should be a detailed analysis of strategic views into and out of the site both to and from key viewpoints within the site and the AONB including views from the Ridgeway National Trail. An assessment should clearly set out how strategic views will be retained, how the relationship with the AONB has been considered and how the impact of development will be mitigated. In this respect the Management Plan stresses the importance of appropriate and sympathetic design and siting of all new developments; reflecting local landscape character, architecture and the use of local materials.



Although this letter is a formal objection to the proposed development we would wish the views expressed within it to be taken as constructive comment in the spirit of seeking to work with the Council in partnership to ensure that all development which takes place within the NWD AONB, particularly major development such as this proposal, is sustainable.

Yours sincerely



Sir Charles Nunneley  
Chair of Council of Partners to North Wessex Downs AONB

Copy to:

Mark Chessell, Countryside Agency

Graham Bryant, Countryside Agency

Andrew Davis, Chair of Executive to North Wessex Downs AONB

Cllr Jim Moley, Member of North Wessex Downs AONB Council of Partners

Geraldine LeCointe, South Area Planning Officer, Vale of White Horse District Council;

Katie Barrett, Planning Policy Manager, Vale of White Horse District Council

*emailed to agent 24/8/06*

## Geraldine LeCointe

---

**From:** Huw Williams [hwilliams@northwessexdowns.org.uk]  
**Sent:** 24 August 2006 14:20  
**To:** Geraldine LeCointe  
**Subject:** Chilton Field ES

## APPENDIX 10

Dear Geraldine

Many thanks for sending me a copy of the revised Environmental Statement for application: CHI/16952/1-X, relating to Chilton Field.

- The methodology seem ok to me and the ES is much improved on the previous one.
- I do not agree with the Countryside Agency's conclusion that the ES should consider alternative sites. The Local Plan Inspector has confirmed the allocation, so there is no justification for requesting this. The principle of development on this site is accepted, so the emphasis should be on mitigating the effects of this major development within the AONB, and in particular, views from the Ridgeway.
- I do feel that the ES should consider alternative approaches to development on the site as there is considerable scope for designs/layouts which mitigate the impact of development. The cumulative impact of development on the site, combined with other development in the area, is a significant factor which I do not think has been adequately considered. Unless the site is laid out very sensitively, the development, when viewed from the Ridgeway, would effectively join up areas of existing development in visual terms between the existing Harwell/Chilton Campus and buildings in the Chilton School area.
- I agree with the Countryside Agency's view that the landscape impact must be considered at least as medium adverse and significant. From certain views, particularly from the Ridgeway (which the ES acknowledges are the most sensitive), I think that the site is seen as part of the landscape. I agree it has an urban rural fringe character when you are on the site, but not when viewed in the wider landscape. The photomontages in CF/3 and 4 show the wooded backdrop to the site and hedgerow planting in the foreground. You do not see the roads on the site or the backdrop of buildings at Harwell from this direction. I think that the site is seen as rural, providing a gap between the buildings on the campus and the buildings at Chilton.
- I have no evidence to dispute the claims that the visual impact could be mitigated to a significant extent by planting in due course; but there is no consideration of the impact of light pollution. The ES suggests that the existence of lighting for nearby development on the Harwell/Chilton Campus effectively mitigates the effect of lighting on the site, which is an unacceptable argument. Alternative layouts/designs could address the impact of development, including light pollution, e.g. placing the playing fields on the western part of the site and concentrating development on the eastern part would avoid the impression of a line of built development between RAL/Harwell and the Chilton school area.
- The layout and design should take account of views in winter which will be more open, and the possible loss of planting in the long run, as well as the visual impact and effects of light pollution. The existence of a belt of planting should not negate the need for a very high standard of design to ensure that the AONB is conserved or enhanced.
- It would be helpful if the conditions on any grant of outline planning permission covered the need to consider a design/layout which enables the development to conserve or enhance the AONB, including mitigating the impact on landscape character, the visual impact and the impact on light pollution. It is

24/08/2006

vital that this major development is successfully accommodated within the AONB, given the importance of views from the Ridgeway.

I hope this is helpful.

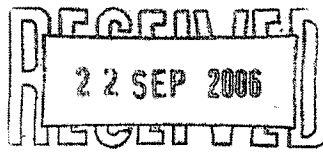
Best wishes

Huw

Huw Williams  
Planning Advisor to North Wessex Downs AONB

Denford Manor  
Lower Denford  
Hungerford  
RG17 0UN  
Tel: 01488 685440

Direct line: 01488 680455



15th September 2006

Kemp and Kemp  
Elms Court  
Botley  
Oxford  
OX2 9LP

Our Ref: 403.0353.00009

Dear Nicky

**RE: CHILTON FIELD: RESPONSE TO COMMENTS RAISED BY THE COUNTRYSIDE AGENCY AND HUW WILLIAMS**

I have set out below our response to the landscape and visual issues raised by Huw Williams of the AONB Management Board and the Countryside Agency. As discussed, I have assumed that all matters relating to the planning matters, the planning application or the general form of the development will be dealt with by Kemp and Kemp.

**Response from Countryside Agency**

6. We believe that there is sufficient detail within the description of the proposed development, and the proposed mitigation measures, upon which an assessment of potential landscape and visual impact can be based, particularly since this site is already allocated for residential development within the local plan. However, it is anticipated that further design and assessment work would need to be carried out at the detailed planning application stage (see also point 11, below).

7. "Key issues":

It is generally true that the screening effect of the vegetation would reduce in the winter, but the assessment, and the photomontages, were all based on a March site assessment when there were no leaves on the trees. The depth of the proposed planting on the southern boundary of Chilton Field (see CF/13) is between 40m and 100m, and that means that there would be a minimum of 20 plants (trees/shrubs) between the site boundary and the first house; even the density of branches of this number of plants has a significant mitigative effect, certainly helping to assimilate the housing into its context if not screening it altogether. The density of branches would be promoted by the proposal to pollard/coppice trees and shrubs once they achieve a height of ten to twelve metres (see paragraph 4.3). Finally, the visual screening of the development would also be achieved with the assistance of the existing bund along the southern boundary of the site.

The Landscape Institute's guidance recommends that "representative" viewpoints are selected, and the photomontages provided represent views from the Ridgeway, which is undoubtedly the most sensitive receptor. Having modeled the effects of the proposed development from other viewpoints along the Ridgeway, we did not feel that these were materially different from the views from viewpoint C; indeed, we felt that viewpoint C offered the clearest views of the development, and therefore offered a "worst case scenario".

It is true that there was no separate assessment of light spill; this was not possible as there was no detailed layout of lighting proposals (see paragraph 3.2). I would recommend that a light impact assessment be carried out at the detailed planning application stage (see also response to fifth bullet point of Huw Williams email, below).

9. Section 6.2 deals only with landscape impacts, and given that the site currently has an urban fringe character, is allocated for residential development in the local plan, and that part of the site would be used for the establishment of 3.25 ha of new woodland, (which would have a noticeable and beneficial impact), it is reasonable to conclude that the landscape impact would be noticeable but not significant impact on the natural beauty of the AONB.

10. As has been noted, the assessment was carried out when there were no leaves on the trees.

11. Notwithstanding the points made regarding paragraph 6, above, I do not agree that the assessment is "not valid" because of the lack of detail in relation to proposed layout and design. Even with a detailed development masterplan, it is unlikely that the assessed levels of residual landscape and visual impact would alter significantly from those set out in our report (as long as the development follows the guidelines set out in section 3.1 of our report)

13. I disagree that the report contains insufficient detail on mitigation. There is certainly enough information upon which to base the findings of a landscape and visual impact assessment. The only area which has not been designed (as instructed) is the recreational space, but the appearance of this is unlikely to have a significant effect on either landscape or visual impact.

#### **Email from Huw Williams to Geraldine LeCointe, 24<sup>th</sup> August 2006**

The points below correspond to the bullet points set out in Mr Williams' email:

**Third Bullet Point:** As the photomontages illustrate, the internal form of the development would have little effect on the visibility of the proposed development from visual receptors to the south, as long as the proposed mitigation measures along the western and southern boundaries of the site are implemented.

**Third Bullet Point:** I would agree that the cumulative impact of the proposed development, the school and the Harwell Campus is a relevant consideration. However, I think that drawing CF/4 clearly illustrates that the proposed mitigation package visually severs the campus from the school by screening the proposed houses behind dense woodland and bunding; there is not, therefore, a sense of coalescence between existing and proposed development.

**Fourth Bullet Point:** See my response to point 9 of the Countryside Agency's letter, above. From both the Ridgeway, (as shown by drawing CF/4), and lower viewpoints closer to the site, the proposed mitigation measures would ensure that the land between the campus and Chilton would ultimately be separated by a rural gap filled by woodland.

**Fifth Bullet Point:** It is valid to say that the existing light levels on and adjacent to the site reduce the sensitivity of the site to additional lighting levels; thus, existing lighting does

help to "mitigate" the effect of additional lighting. Within the AONB management plan, policy DP8, (as quoted in paragraph 2.3 of the LVIA), states that the impact of lighting schemes should be considered "especially in identified pools of darkness". The fact that this site is not within a pool of darkness, and does have existing levels of artificial illumination, is therefore a highly relevant consideration when assessing the potential magnitude of light impact. I would, however, agree, that a detailed scheme of lighting should be required at a later stage in the planning process.

**Sixth Bullet Point:** The site assessment for the LVIA was carried out in March, when there was no foliage on the shrubs and trees. The proposed planting would be carried out at relatively small centres (1.5 to 2.5m), at a thickness along the southern boundary of the site of between 40m and 100m (see also point 7, above); this density and breadth of planting will ensure a considerable degree of visual screening even in winter. I would, however, agree that the design for the detailed layout of the buildings should be to a high standard to ensure that the landscape and visual qualities of the AONB are respected.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you require any further information or clarification.

Kind regards

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely  
**SLR Consulting Limited**



**Jeremy Smith**  
Technical Director

## CHILTON FIELD - HEAD OF TERMS

### 1. Provision of a community room

"The applicant shall not occupy or permit the occupation of more than 100 dwellings until a community room with an area of 100m<sup>2</sup> and providing one main room with adjacent toilets and kitchen facilities and with an equipped external area for very young children have been provided to a reasonable satisfaction."

### 2. Provision of shop shell

"The applicant shall not occupy or permit the occupation of more than 200 dwellings until the shop shell has been erected."

### 3. Affordable Housing

"25% of the residential units to be for affordable housing."

### 4. Provision of public open space / sports facilities to include a football pitch / cricket pitch, a two team/one pitch changing pavilion, and associated car parking.

"Unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Council, the applicant shall not occupy or permit occupation of:

- i) more than 150 dwellings until half of the total open space has been provided, the sports playing field has been levelled, laid out, constructed and marked, and the pavilion has been built as to a specification agreed with the Council and the car parking for the pavilion provided,
- ii) the final dwelling until the whole of the public open space has been provided.

### 5. Provision of children's play equipment

"The applicant shall upon commencement of development pay the Council the sum £35,000 index linked to 2000 for the purpose of providing play equipment on the application site, or as specified."

Kemp & Kemp Property Consultants  
September 2011