

Environmental Impact Screening Assessment Register

Reference: A/203/21/ESO

Category: Environmental Impact Screening Opinion

Deposited: 1st September 2021

Cross Ref:

Screening opinion for flood alleviation scheme.

Land South of Water Lane Angmering

Applicant:

Lead Local Flood Authority
West Sussex County Council
Planning Services
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PO19 1RG

Agent:

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The following issues have been considered in coming to the decision:

The proposal does not comprise Schedule 1 development, as defined in the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (England and Wales) Regulations 2017 ('the EIA Regulations').

The proposed development would fall within Part 10(i) of Schedule 2 to the EIA Regulations relating to 'an Infrastructure Project (dams and other installations designed to hold water or store it on a long-term basis)'; and this has been confirmed by the developer in the Request for Screening Opinion, dated 20th August 2021.

With regard to the stated Schedule 2 criteria and thresholds, it is noted that Phase 1 of the Angmering Flood Alleviation Scheme (FAS) is 7.20 hectares which exceeds the applicable threshold of 1 hectare. Phase 1 of the Angmering FAS comprises a weir, which will be constructed immediately upstream of the approved culverted embankment (A/179/20/RES), and the storm-water attenuation would extend upstream to Ecclesden Farm track. The proposal is therefore a Schedule 2 development and requires screening under the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017.

In addition, the Schedule 2 indicative thresholds set out in the same section of the PPG state in respect of 10(i) Infrastructure Projects that:

"The indicative criteria and threshold are any major new dam (e.g. where the construction site exceeds 20 hectares".

Furthermore, the following are identified as the key issues to consider -

"Physical scale and potential wider impacts to the hydrology and ecology".

The Screening Response now continues with regard to the Schedule 3 Headings.

1] Location of the Development

The site of the proposed weir is gently sloping from north to south with a steeper slope to a dip as it joins Water Lane next to the Black Ditch. The site comprises part of the Black Ditch and land approved for the culverted embankment on Land South of Water Lane; and the application includes land in the National Park that would be used for storm-water storage which comprises the Black Ditch south and east of the A280, together with farmland used for grazing. The site includes a mix of water tolerant trees and hedgerows. There are no designated heritage assets within the site.

The site is bounded by Avenals Farmhouse (listed farmhouse) and Barn to the west; by open fields to the south, which will be developed for housing as part of the Land South of Water Lane development (A/99/17/OUT, A/109/20/RES and A/179/20/RES); and by Water Lane to the north. To the north of Water Lane is land that has outline planning permission (A/40/18/OUT) for 525 dwellings and for employment uses. The site extends eastwards beyond the A280 to Ecclesden Farm track taking in land that would be used for storm-water storage.

The area is rural in character with the South Downs National Park to the north beyond the A27, and the proposal includes land in the National Park to the east of the A280. Angmering village centre is within 900 metres of the site, accessed from Water Lane and Angmering Conservation Area lies to the south west of the site.

The proposed development would not have unusually complex, particularly significant or long lasting of hazardous environmental effects.

It is unlikely to cause significant cumulative impacts with other development.

It will not significantly impact on the use of natural resources.

The proposed development is unlikely to produce waste of environmental significance.

The proposal is unlikely to cause significant pollution of nuisance over and above what might be typically expected of the construction or functioning of a weir, with the land to the east of the weir providing storage capacity to accommodate storm water. The construction phase of the weir would result in some impacts (such as noise and dust) on the local population, these effects would be short-lived and not be significant.

2] Characteristics of the Development

The proposed development of Phase 1 of the Angmering Flood Alleviation Scheme (FAS) consists of the construction of a weir measuring 11m long by 2m high, with a footprint of 32m², which would be located immediately upstream (i.e. east) of the approved culverted embankment (A/179/20/RES) on which the access road to the Land South of Water Lane will cross the Black Ditch. The weir would have two openings in it, each measuring 1.3m wide and high which will carry the normal flow from the Black Ditch. Normal flows would pass through one of the two 1.3m wide openings in the weir wall, but when storm flows increase beyond a rate of 1.8m³/sec, water would be held back behind the weir. The construction of the weir would create a stormwater attenuation basin upstream. The backwater effect would extend as far upstream as Ecclesden Farm track.

The proposed weir would have a limited impact on the surrounding ecology and would mitigate the impact of hydrology on the surrounding area which would not be significant in the context of the EIA Regulations.

Phase 2 of the Angmering FAS which is not part of the current screening request would attenuate water upstream of Ecclesden Farm track to allow an overall attenuation in the catchment to reduce flooding in Angmering village. The intention of Phase 2 is to create upstream attenuation of storm water flows, reducing the probability of the Water Lane culverts and downstream drainage surcharging; attenuated water can drain at a slower rate once the peak of the storm has passed.

3] Characteristics of the Potential Impacts

It is not considered that the characteristics of the likely impacts of Phase 1 of the Angmering FAS are such that they are particularly significant, long lasting, that they affect a significant area of the district or that they are complex.

The site is identified by the Environment Agency as falling within Flood Zone 2 (with an area of Flood Zone 3). The development represents an opportunity to enhance existing surface water drainage systems and reduce the discharge rates to local watercourses downstream in Angmering. The main impact of the Phase 1 of the Angmering FAS would be upon the hydrology of the Black Ditch. The scale of change is greatest immediately upstream of the culverted embankment where the extreme event effectively results in an increase in flood depth over the baseline of 0.4m. On completion of Phase 2 of the FAS, the increases in peak water levels will be confined between the upstream Water Lane crossing of the Black Ditch and the proposed weir and Ecclesden Farm track.

The red line includes land in the National Park (the Black Ditch south and east of the A280) and farmland would be used for storm-water storage. It is considered that landscape impacts would not be significant in the context of the EIA Regulations. It is considered that the impacts of the proposed development upon the National Park would be limited and would be temporary in nature comprising storm-water storage in the farmland within the National Park.

It is not considered likely that the development would result in significant harm to ecological interests and it is considered that appropriate mitigation could be employed to respond to any localised harm to the site integrity that may occur. Natural England concluded that it does not look like the proposed area is closely connected / impacting upon any designated sites or priority habitats / species of principle importance under the Natural Environmental and Rural Communities Act, 2006.

The site of the proposed weir is located some distance to the north east of the Angmering Conservation Area and east of Avenals Farm (listed farmhouse). Any harm resulting from the proposed weir should be weighed against the public benefit in accordance with paragraph 202 of the NPPF (2021). The proposals have sought to minimise and mitigate the impact of the development on the significance of the Conservation Area through the siting of the weir upstream, i.e. immediately east of the approved culverted embankment along with existing landscape screening will help to ensure that the weir will not impact upon the setting of the heritage assets.

Finally, although the construction phase of the weir would result in some impacts (such as noise and dust) on the local population, these effects are likely to be short lived and not significant.

Consequently, it is not considered that the characteristics of the likely impacts are such that they are particularly significant, long lasting, that they affect a significant area of the district or that they are complex.

Cumulative Effects

It is noted that the PPG at paragraph 024 (Reference ID: 4-024-20140306) states with regard to cumulative effects that: "There are occasions where other existing or approved development may be relevant in determining whether significant effects are likely as a consequence of a proposed development".

A planning application (A/184/21/PL) was submitted to Arun District Council during the week commencing 30th August 2021, for Phase 1 of the Angmering Flood Alleviation Scheme on the Land South of Water Lane, Angmering. The latter site has planning permission for 175 dwellings and a culverted embankment crossing the Black Ditch, together with the site on Land North of Water Lane which has outline planning permission for 525 dwellings and 3.0 hectares of employment land, comprise part of the strategic allocation known as Angmering North in the Arun Local Plan. A third tract of land to the north west of this site, on Dappers Lane, is owned by another developer and comprises the third site in the strategic allocation; and this third site has planning permission for 86 dwellings.

The cumulative impacts of these developments would not lead to significant environmental impacts for the reasons set out above. This determination is considered reasonable given that the location of Phase 1 of the Angmering Flood Alleviation, comprising the construction of a weir is to the west of the A280, adjacent to Angmering village and outside the South Downs National Park.

Conclusion

Having taken into consideration the above factors and having particular regard to the nature and scale of the proposal, it is concluded that the proposed weir and the upstream effect of the scheme are such that it would not have a significant impact upon the environment. Any impacts would be of limited scale and could be mitigated in accordance with standard methods. As such, the proposed development does not constitute EIA development and as such an Environmental Statement is not required in this instance.

Case Officer: Michael Eastham

Decision: Environmental Impact Statement not required

Delegated 5th November 2021