Mr Neil Crowther
Arun District Council
Arun Civic Centre (1) Maltravers Road
Littlehampton
West Sussex
BN17 5LF

Our ref: HA/2010/109621/01-L01
Your ref: A/53/10/EIS

Date: 27 April 2010

Dear Mr Crowther

SCOPING OPINION FOR MIXED USE DEVELOPMENT TO INCLUDE RESIDENTIAL HOUSING (INCLUDING AFFORDABLE), EMPLOYMENT USES, COMMUNITY USES AND PUBLIC OPEN SPACE
LAND BETWEEN WEAVERS HILL, A280 AND HIGH STREET ANGMERING

Thank you for your consultation on a request for a Screening Opinion under the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (England and Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 1999, for the above proposed development.

Flood Risk
As the site is over 1 hectare, a flood risk assessment would be required in accordance with Planning Policy Statement 25: Development and Flood Risk (PPS25).

The flood zones on site should be further defined as part of the EIA, including the effects of climate change. We are currently carrying out modelling of the Lower Arun, including the Black Ditch with the outputs of this available in the summer. The applicant should note that no buildings or SuDS features should be located in the flood zones, with an allowance for climate change.

The watercourse on site referred to in paragraph 3.27 is the Black Ditch, which is a main river under the jurisdiction of the Environment Agency. As such there is an 8 metre bylaw distance, whereby any works whatsoever would require the prior consent of the Environment Agency.

We are aware of historic flooding on Water Lane which is believed to have been caused by drainage problems. Arun District Council should also be consulted as there may be other historic flooding issues they are aware of. Further information on this, and any available modelling can be obtained from us on request.

We would recommend that permeability testing is carried out on the site. Under Approved Document Part H the first option for surface water disposal should be the use of SUDS, which encourage infiltration such as soakaways or infiltration trenches.

Where this is not feasible, then disposal to watercourse should be considered. It should be noted that where groundwater levels are high, then there may be implications for the design of the SuDS system.

Controlled Waters
Most of the site overlies the Upper Chalk, defined as a principal aquifer. Part of the site (in the north east) overlies the Lambeth Group of clays, sand and silt, defined as a secondary aquifer. A small parcel in the far north east corner of the site overlies the London Clay (unproductive strata). Superficial deposits of sands, silts and clays exist across the site. The applicant is advised to consult our website for further information on the aquifer designations at this site.

We agree with paragraph 3.29 of the report which states that discharges to ground are unlikely to be effective in the northern parts of the site.

We concur with paragraph 3.34 and support the requirements for adequate investigation of groundwater levels on the site to ensure the suitability of the site for discharges to ground, drainage fields, soakaways and SUDS. There should be adequate separation between this infrastructure and the water table at all times of the year. Adequate pollution prevention measures should be in place to prevent the underlying principal aquifers.

A thorough understanding of the hydrogeological regime at the site is required to ensure the development does not alter ground and surface water flows to the Black Ditch tributary of the River Arun.

For our policies regarding discharges to ground, the applicant should refer to our Groundwater Protection: Policy & Practice (GP3) document, available from our website.

We also recommend the developer consult the Developers Guide for advice in designing the drainage arrangements for the site, including the use of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS), where appropriate.

There are no *known* land contamination issues at this site. However, the applicant should be aware that in line with PPS23, planning applications should be accompanied by a desk study outlining the historical use of the site. PPS23 states that a thorough understanding of the nature and extent of the risks of pollution is demonstrated and that suitable measures to deal with it are proposed prior to the determination of the application.

Foul Drainage
The EIA should also look at the available treatment capacity at the receiving wastewater treatment works and also ensure that there is available capacity in the sewerage network for foul flows from the proposed development.

Biodiversity
We would expect the following points to be covered in the environment statement:

The site has a stretch of main river running through the site and we would expect this to be protected and enhanced. A buffer of at least 5m should be incorporated either side of the watercourse and measures should be taken to enhance it where possible. We would be looking for creation of other wet features such as ponds and scrapes to compliment any proposed SuD's scheme, these should be managed purely for

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biodiversity.

There are records of water vole's on the Black ditch towards the Arun river, therefore a survey for water vole's should be carried out. This will need to be done at a suitable time of year by a suitably qualified ecologist (preferably IEEM affiliated) to ensure that water vole's have not colonised this section of the watercourse before development takes place. Any destruction of habitat or disturbance to the water vole could bring about prosecution under the wildlife and countryside act 1981. If water vole's are found then appropriate mitigation will need to be applied.

The development should provide a green infrastructure strategy and meet the highest standard of sustainable homes code possible. Provision of green corridors throughout the site will provide escape routes and migration pathways for wildlife, as well as providing a feature of the development. Green roofs and walls should be considered where practical.

In addition the following should be included in the environment statement:

- Likely impacts (construction and operational) on water and wetland habitats on site and within the surrounding area, including potential impacts on the existing hydrology.

- Likely impacts on adjacent projected sites. For further advice on appropriate assessments contact Natural England.

- Detailed, up-to-date ecological surveys (habitats and species) of the development site, undertaken at an appropriate time of year by a suitably qualified ecologist. The surveys should identify all wet habitats on and around the site, including less obvious wet grassland, marshy and boggy areas, as well as pond/ditches. We would expect to see justification and at least like for like compensation for any wetland habitat/feature loss (and terrestrial habitat for wetland species e.g. Great crested newt).
  We would also like to remind the applicant that IEEM guidelines stipulate that commercial ecologists should be providing their biodiversity data to the appropriate local record centre. For Sussex, the contact details are as follows: info@sxbrc.org.uk

- The extent to which it is possible to avoid or mitigate against adverse effects, and any limitations of mitigation, including methods statements demonstrating how impacts will be minimised, and details of proposed post-development management and monitoring.

- Proposed enhancements of existing habitats and habitat creation, particularly in line with local and UK BAPs.

- Future site management of retained and created habitats, for the benefit of wildlife.

- It is recommended that existing nature conservation features, within the development site, such as mature trees, hedgerows, watercourses and other features be incorporated into site design and protected from change.

The provision of enhancements needs to be a key aspect of the environment statement (ES). The ES should highlight potential ecological enhancements above

and beyond standard protection and mitigation measures for all impacts identified. In a development of this scale ecological enhancements should be an intrinsic part of the plans. This is in keeping with PPS1 'Delivering sustainable development', PPS9 ‘Biodiversity and Geological Conservation’ and the South East Plan. Policy NRM5 of the South East Plan seeks to avoid a net loss of biodiversity and to actively pursue opportunities to achieve a net gain of biodiversity across the region.

PPS9 states how planning decisions should maintain, enhance, restore, and add to biodiversity interests, and recognises that development proposals provide opportunities for including beneficial biodiversity features as part of good design.

If the applicant would like anymore information please contact the fisheries, recreation and biodiversity team on 01903 70 3870. We would also encourage a site meeting to discuss the plans further.

I trust that the above comments are satisfactory but if you require any further information please contact me.

Yours sincerely

Miss Catherine McLeod
Planning Liaison Officer

Direct dial 01903 703858
Direct e-mail planning.southdowns@environment-agency.gov.uk

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