

Project Reference EN010006/Preapp Land adjacent to Oldbury Power Station

Scoping Report

Comments of the Cotswolds Conservation Board

1. The Cotswolds Conservation Board ('the Board') was established by Parliament in 2004.

The Board has two statutory purposes¹:

- a) to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the AONB; and
- b) To increase the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the AONB.

In fulfilling these roles, the Board has a duty to seek to foster the economic and social well-being of people living in the AONB.

2. The Board adopted the Cotswolds AONB Management Plan 2008-13 in April 2008. This is a statutory plan prepared under the provisions of section 89 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. This plan "formulates their [the Board's] policy for the management of their area of outstanding natural beauty and for the carrying out of their functions in relation to it."
3. The Management Plan identifies "The Cotswold Escarpment" as a "special quality" of the Cotswolds AONB. Key issue LK2 of the Plan identifies that "it is important to protect the appearance of the escarpment and other skylines from inappropriate developments and inappropriate landscape management, including telecommunication masts and wind turbines, and to reduce the the impact of existing structures."
4. The Management Plan contains the following policies of relevance to this project:

Landscape Policy LP1: *That the unique character, tranquillity, and special qualities of the Cotswolds landscape are conserved and enhanced.*

Development and Transport Policy DTP1: *That all Local Development Framework documents and planning decision-making processes will use the following criteria to determine the acceptability of a proposed development in the Cotswolds AONB. Development will:*

- *be compatible with the distinctive character of the location as described by the relevant landscape character assessment, strategy and guidelines*
- *incorporate designs and landscaping consistent with the above, respecting the local settlement pattern and building style*
- *be designed to respect local building styles and materials*
- *incorporate appropriate sustainability elements and designs*
- *maintain or improve the existing level of tranquillity*

¹ Section 87, Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.

- *not have an adverse impact on the local community amenities and services and access to these*
- *protect, or where possible enhance, biodiversity*
- *be in accordance with a more sustainable pattern of development, reducing dependence on car travel.*

5. The Board would also suggest that Policy ENV3 of the draft South West Regional Spatial Strategy (SWRSS) is relevant

ENV3

Protected Landscapes

In Dartmoor and Exmoor National Parks and the 14 Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty in the region, the conservation and enhancement of their natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage will be given priority over other considerations in the determination of development proposals. Development will only be provided for where it would:

- Conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the National Park or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty; or
- Promote the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the National Park; or
- Foster the social or economic well-being of the communities within the National Park or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, provided that such development is compatible with the pursuit of National Park or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty purposes.

Consideration will also be given to proposals which promote the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Particular care will be taken to ensure that no development is permitted outside the National Park or Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty which would damage their natural beauty, character and special qualities or otherwise prejudice the achievement of National Park or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty purposes.

6. In this context the Board would suggest the EIA should, in addition to the assessments identified in paragraph s 4.49 -4.52 of the scoping report, include an assessment of the impact of the project on views of the Cotswolds AONB from locations to the west of the site.
7. In the section "Public Access and Recreation" (p.53), although the Cotswold Way National Trail is referred to in paragraph 4.155, no indication is provided of an intention to assess the impact of the project on the perceptions of users of the Trail. The Board would suggest that this issue should be addressed in the EIA.

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14th December 2009