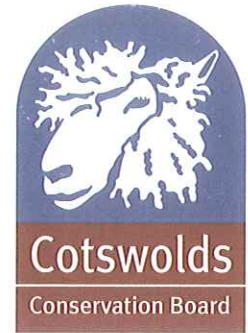


Mr John Longmuir
Planning Service
Stroud District Council
Council Offices
Ebley Mill
Stroud
GLOS GL5 4UB



Ref: S.09/1763/MISC

21st October 2009

Dear Mr Longmuir

REQUEST FOR SCOPING OPINION FOR THE RESTORATION OF THE CANAL FROM STONEHOUSE TO BRIMSCOMBE

The Cotswolds Conservation Board has been requested by Natural England to submit comments regarding the above in respect to impacts upon the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and its setting, which is a material consideration.

The Board has the following comments regarding the scoping report.

1. The Board is concerned that the Cotswolds AONB is not shown on the map in Appendix C of the report, which purports to show statutory designations.
2. With reference to paragraph 3.2.3 of the report "Scoping" subsection

A "Environmental effects that must be assessed in the Level 1 EIA, to ensure that potential cumulative impacts along the canal corridor are captured.", the Board considers that an assessment of impacts on "Landscape and visual amenity" is to be included in the Level 1 EIA. This will enable cumulative effects of the proposed restoration on the AONB and its setting to be considered as well as the impact at particular sites. As noted in paragraph 4.7 of the report "a canalwide management approach and vision is important to maintain the general character of the canal in the wider corridor."
3. With respect to paragraph 5.2.16 it is here in particular at Capel Mill that significant harm could be caused to the AONB by engineering works. It is therefore important that Landscape and Visual Effects are also scoped in the Level 2 EIA at this location.

4. In Section 6 "Mitigation measures" in paragraph 6.7 "Landscape and visual amenity" it is stated "Adverse effects are generally local in nature, effecting nearby residents and building occupiers during the construction phase. Stakeholder consultation and communication regarding project activities should help to reduce these effects, as it is possible that works could be planned during less disruptive periods." The Board considers that local effects can still be significant in nature and not capable of mitigation. The point regarding "less disruptive periods" is not understood in the context of landscape impact mitigation.

For reasons given above, the Board considers that Landscape and Visual Amenity should be included with other issues set out in Paragraph 7.1 for inclusion in the Level 1 EIA.

In view of the request of Natural England noted above that the Board respond on AONB matters with respect to the canal project, can you please ensure that the Board receives timely notice of any consultations issued in respect to this project.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in red ink, appearing to read 'M Watt', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Malcolm Watt
Planning Officer
On behalf of the Cotswolds Conservation Board
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c.c. Andrew Burns, Natural England