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Our Ref: 17/03930/SCR

Dear Mr Chambers,

**TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT) REGULATIONS
2017 – COMMUNITY RIGHT TO BUILD- CHERHILL VILLAGE HALL**

REQUEST FOR SCREENING OPINION

Thank you for your letter of 15 June 2017 requesting a screening opinion to confirm whether an Environmental Impact Assessment is required in respect of proposed development at Cherhill.

Background

A screening opinion is sought in respect of the creation of a new village hall with associated access, parking, landscaping and associated works.

Site location and description

The affected land is situated immediately East of the existing village, a short distance from the A4. The site is located in an open countryside and within an AONB.

Description of the development

The proposed development comprises the creation of a new village hall with the usual expected facilities, together with a landscaping scheme. The site arrangement briefly comprises a new access and driveway leading to a car park proceeding to a single building containing both public and functional elements of the facility.

Schedule 2 development

The development does not constitute Schedule 1 development.

The test for the need for an EIA is therefore, whether the proposal would be likely to give rise to significant effects on the environment by virtue of factors such as size, nature or location as outlined in Schedule 3 of the EIA Regulations.

Schedule 3 Selection Criteria for EIA Screening

This letter is structured according to the criteria set out in schedule 3 of the above mentioned Regulations, as follows:

- Characteristics of the development
- Location of the development
- Characteristics of the potential impact

Characteristics of development

a) Size of the development – the proposed development is for a modest facility capable of serving the wider community. Taking note of the intentionally serene nature of the facility the development would not result in an exceptionally high intensity of activity relative to its location.

b) The cumulation with other development – there is no significant cumulative effect arising from the development. The development seeks to address a shortfall in quality local facilities and to improve social cohesion. There is no obvious cumulative impact with comparable facilities or nearby land uses.

c) and d) Use of natural resources and production of waste – The proposal does not require the use of primary resources and will result in the production of minimal waste. Accordingly, this is not considered to be of any significance.

e) and f) Pollution, nuisance and risk of accidents, having regard to substances or technologies used – The proposed development itself is not anticipated to be a significant source of pollution and there is no discernible risk of environmental accidents in relation to the works and ongoing use of the site.

Location of development

This concerns the environmental sensitivity of geographical areas likely to be affected by the development. The relevant criteria proposed are as follows:

a) the existing land use – The substantive land use is greenfield/agricultural, which itself is likely to have relatively low ecological potential.

b) and c) Relative abundance, quality and regenerative capacity of the natural resources in the area and absorption capacity into the natural environment – The site is likely to be of reasonably low ecological value. The preliminary ecological appraisal submitted and previously discussed with officers of the Council concluded that impacts on species are capable of appropriate management, subject to suitable precautionary measures. On this assumption, and mindful of the separate legislative vehicles for the protection of species, it is agreed that any affected species are likely to recover rapidly.

Characteristics of potential impact

The potential significant effects of development must be considered in relation to criteria set out under paragraphs 1 and 2 of Schedule 3.

(a) to (c) extent, magnitude and complexity of impacts – Any impacts arising from this development are not considered to be complex and are localised upon the immediate surrounding area. The principle of development may be established through a full planning application.

(d) and (e) concern the probability of impacts, their duration, frequency and reversibility – The main impacts arising from the development as outlined above would be regular, frequent, predictable and localised.

Conclusions

Paragraph 33 of Circular 02/99 "Environmental Impact Assessment" states EIA will be needed for Schedule 2 developments in 3 main categories:

- "a) For major developments which are of more than local importance;
- a) for developments which are proposed for particularly environmentally sensitive or vulnerable locations; and
- b) For development with unusually complex and potentially hazardous environmental effects."

In terms of a) the development is not considered to be of more than local importance to the surrounding area.

The site is not in a particularly sensitive area having regard to b) and, in respect of c), is not an unusually complex development with any significant potentially hazardous effects.

Taking the above into account, the Council concludes that assessed against the criteria set out in the EIA Regulations an **Environmental Impact Assessment is not required** for the proposed Community Right to Build Project.

Yours sincerely,

Mark Staincliffe
Senior Planning Officer