

Date: 2 June
2010
Our ref:
Your ref: S/09/1527/full



Adam Madge
Development Services
Wiltshire Council
61 Wyndham Road
Salisbury
Wiltshire
SP1 3AH

Room 118
Block 3 Burghill
Road
Westbury on Trym
Bristol
BS10 6NJ

0300 0601679

Dear Mr Madge

ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT AND PLANNING APPLICATION
FOR PROPOSED VISITOR CENTRE AND ASSOCIATED
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS AT STONEHENGE : FURTHER
INFORMATION AND AMENDED PLANS

Thank you for sending Natural England further information on the proposed Lighting Strategy and Ecological Management Strategy for Visitor Access to the Landscape in relation to the above application. The information was received in this office on the 17 May 2010. Natural England would like to make the following comments:

Lighting

The lighting strategy produced by Denton Corker Marshall includes a range of measures and designs to minimise the impacts of the visitor centre building, car park, site and highways lighting on the night sky and surrounding landscape. We welcome the proposed reduction in the number of lights at Airman's Corner, use of minimal site lighting, dimmable and timed switches and use of low level lighting within the visitor centre design to minimise light spill.

The proposed lighting strategy also includes sufficient measures to minimise impacts on wildlife and protected species. In particular the proposed timing of operation and minimal lighting should ensure there will be no adverse impact on the Stone Curlew, an Annex 1 Bird's Directive species and feature of the Salisbury Plain SPA.

In order to ensure the ongoing protection of the Salisbury Plain SPA, the implementation of the lighting strategy document should be conditioned. The condition should require that the lighting is implemented and tested prior to the centre opening to the public.

Ecological Management Strategy: Visitor Access to the Landscape.

Natural England welcomes the strategic approach to visitor access. The general positive access management techniques described in the Ecological Management Strategy should minimise impact on the habitats and species identified.

The Ecological Management Strategy suggests that further detailed proposals will be worked up as part of the overarching visitor management strategy. An annual monitoring and reporting programme will also be put in place to inform and refine the specific management strategies as required. This will be essential and should be a condition of planning permission.

Natural England endorses Wiltshire Council ecologist's Louisa Killgallen's recommendation to condition the production of an ecological monitoring and reporting scheme to ensure that the management strategies are effectively implemented. We would recommend the collection of additional baseline data on the distribution of breeding birds within the open access area and more detailed analysis of visitor use and potential impacts (current numbers, type of visit, seasonal use and anticipated changes based on EH market research) prior to the opening of the visitor centre to inform the specific management actions and strategies. Detailed analysis of the current and anticipated spatial use of the open access land and wider WHS landscape, combined with maps showing current breeding bird data, (and other key ecological features) should enable the best strategies to be implemented to minimize/ avoid any potential impact. The proposed ongoing monitoring and reporting should then be used to ensure that these actions are effective. The monitoring and reporting should consider any changes in use of the wider WHS landscape and assess whether there is a potential impact including with regard to Stone curlews.

I hope the above comments are helpful. Please contact me if you have any queries.

Yours sincerely

Stephanie Payne
Conservation and Land Management Adviser