

**TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING
(ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT) REGULATIONS 1999**

**SCOPING OPINION
ISSUED BY
SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**IN RELATION TO A FULL PLANNING APPLICATION SUBMITTED BY
CAMBRIDGE ROWING TRUST FOR A NEW ROWING LAKE BETWEEN
MILTON AND WATERBEACH**

INTRODUCTION

1. Cambridge Rowing Trust (The Applicant) submitted a full planning application, dated 2nd June 1993 for a Rowing Lake and Country Park on approximately 100 hectares of land between Milton and Waterbeach. The application has not been determined and the applicant has agreed, to carry out a new Environment Impact Assessment under the Town and Country Planning (Environment Impact Assessment) (England and Wales) Regulations 1999 and to provide an Environmental Statement (ES).
2. Section 10, Part IV of the Regulations (S1 293/1999) provides for the applicant to ask the relevant Local Planning Authority, in this case the Council, for its formal opinion as to the information to be provided in the applicant's ES. This is known as a 'Scoping Opinion'. Its purpose is to allow the applicant to be clear about what the local planning authority considers the main effects are likely to be and, therefore, the topics on which, the ES should focus. The applicant sought a 'Scoping Opinion' by letter dated 13th May 2003.
3. In preparing this Scoping Opinion, the Council has taken into account views received from the statutory consultees. The Council also decided to consult more widely, as advocated in Government guidance, and has considered the points raised by these bodies.

GENERAL

4. The Council reminds the applicant of the information required to be included in the ES by virtue of Schedule 4 of the Regulations (S1 293/1999). A copy has been sent to the applicant, by letter 20th January 2003. The specific requirements of Schedule 4 of the Regulations are not repeated here, save where relevant to comments received from consultees.
5. The Council has had regard to the suggested scope of work for the ES incorporated in the applicant's letter dated 13th May 2003. The Scoping Opinion should be read in conjunction with that letter.
6. Potential links and inter-relationships between all effects need to be made.

LANDSCAPE

7. Detailed landscaping mitigation proposals should be included in the ES and these should be informed by the Cambridgeshire Landscape Guidelines and by the detailed ecological surveys, to ensure that existing features of interest are retained and used as the basis for the Country Park.

8. The landscape proposals should include details of extent and type of planting, illustrating existing and proposed ground levels of the site. In the light of the degree of excavation proposed, the ES should contain calculations of the volume of material excavated and guidance of how that material will be distributed on the site, including details of heights, bank profiles, gradients and sections.

HYDROLOGY

9. The site lies within the floodplain of the River Cam and it is therefore necessary to consider the risk of flooding, to the site and third parties. A flood risk assessment should be carried out. In that regard the applicant is referred to guidance on the requirements for undertaking a flood risk assessment incorporated in Appendix F of Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) 25, 'Development and Flood Risk'. The attached comments of the Environment Agency (letter dated 17th June 2003) are also relevant.
10. The ES should explain how the siting, design, construction and water level of the development will maintain the integrity of the existing drainage regime. This should include provision for the continued maintenance of the drains, one of which is a South Cambridgeshire District Council (SCDC) award drain.
11. The impact of the aqueduct at the junction of the proposed canal and the SCDC award drain upon the drainage regime should be explained in view of existing levels on the site.
12. The ES should identify the consequences of the development for, and the mitigation measures to protect water resources in the area, having regard to the need to safeguard existing protected rights. The relationship of water levels within the lake and other water bodies to the gravel aquifer should be explained.
13. The inter-relationship between hydrological issues and biodiversity should be examined both during construction and operational phases, particularly impact upon habitats and protected species, upon flows, levels and quantity of water within the River Cam and other water channels, upon water management within the site during a range of flows, disposal of waste water and upon the Cam Washes Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), which lies within approximately 5km of the proposed site.

GROUND POLLUTION

14. Surface water hydrology, surface water quality and the ground water resources should be assessed both during the construction and operational phases of the development to avoid contamination by spillages.
15. Consideration should be given to the Environment agency's comments in its letter dated 17th June 2003.
16. Having regard to the scale of proposed soil removal and proximity to nearby water, it will be necessary to investigate whether any contaminated land is likely to be disturbed. If it is mitigation measures need to be identified to protect water quality during both the construction and operational phases.

ECOLOGY

17. An assessment including phase I habitat surveys should be carried out at the appropriate time of the year of the impact of the development upon legally protected species and, where necessary, mitigation proposals should help to achieve targets within the Cambridge Biodiversity Action Plan.
18. Due to the proximity of The River Cam, there are opportunities for biodiversity enhancement for aquatic, semi-aquatic and associated habitats.
19. Construction details and bank sections for all new water bodies should be considered having regard to existing and potential new habitat creation.
20. The applicant's attention is drawn to the detailed comments of English Nature (letter 4th June 2003), The Wildlife Trusts (letter 10th June 2003), Environment Agency (letter 17th June 2003) and South Cambridgeshire District Council Ecology Officer responding to the applicant's letter of 13th May 2003.

ARCHAEOLOGY AND HERITAGE

21. The archaeological background evaluation results and mitigation strategy should be included within the ES. The applicant is referred to the advice of the County Archaeological Office (letter 3rd June 2003).
22. The ES should demonstrate that the construction of the lake and associated works would not have an adverse impact on buried organic remains in wet deposits at the base of the infilled Car Dyke, a scheduled ancient monument.
23. An assessment should be carried out of the visual, landscape and operational impact of the proposal upon the Baits Bite Lock, Milton Conservation Area having regard to the need to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of that area.

TRANSPORT

24. The ES should include a Transport Assessment (TA) which should include:
 - Description of development
 - Description of existing networks
 - Public Transport accessibility
 - Access for pedestrians and cyclists
 - Access for people with a transport disadvantage
 - Trip and traffic generation
 - Site access, surrounding road network and site locality
 - Mitigation measures
 - Conclusions and recommendations
25. A copy of Cambridgeshire County Council's TA guidelines is attached to this Scoping Opinion.
26. Evidence will be needed to justify the number of car parking spaces proposed within the scheme having regard to the need to maximise trips by modes other than the private car.
27. The scale, nature and duration of traffic flows upon the local highway network during the construction phase should be examined and any necessary mitigation measures identified.

28. The ES should ensure that the safe and efficient operations of the rail network is maintained both during the construction and operation phases.

PUBLIC ACCESS

29. The impact of the scheme, both during construction and operational phases, upon existing public rights of way and permissive footpaths should be examined and mitigation measures identified to protect and enhance those routes.
30. The potential to improve and identify new linkages to existing routes, to Cambridge City Centre and Milton Country Park should be explored, including identifying routes which can be dedicated as Public Rights of Way.
31. Proposals for provision, maintenance and management of public access in the new Country Park should be identified.

HEALTH IMPACT

32. Health impacts upon neighbouring communities, especially Milton and Waterbeach, should be considered as part of the ES's appraisal of noise, dust and vibration generated during the construction period. Mitigation measures should be proposed to ameliorate any impact identified.
33. Similarly the impact upon air quality during the construction period with mitigation measures should be examined.

POLICY

34. The ES should consider the proposal against National and Regional planning policy guidance, statutory development plans, local transport plans and emerging plans including the Deposit Draft Structure Plan 2002 and the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan No. 2: Proposed Modifications October 2002.
35. Government Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) of particular relevance comprises:
- PPG1 General Policy and Principles (1997)
 - PPG2 Green Belts (1995)
 - PPG7 The Countryside: Environmental Quality and Economic and Social Development (1997)
 - PPG9 Nature Conservation (1994)
 - PPG13 Transport (2001)
 - PPG15 Planning and the Historic Environment (1994)
 - PPG16 Archaeology and Planning (1990)
 - PPG17 Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation (2002)
 - PPG25 Development and Flood Risk (2001)

CONCLUSION

36. In accordance with Department of the Environment, Transport and the Region's Circular 2/99, paragraph 96, the fact that this Scoping Opinion has been issued by the Council, does not prevent it from requesting further information at a later stage under Regulation 19, 'Further Information and Evidence Respecting Environmental Statements.'

D B Hussell
Planning Director

June 2003