



BY EMAIL: Jackie.giles@naturalengland.org.uk

Jackie Giles
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20th September 2012.

Dear Jackie,

Environmental Impact Assessment (Agriculture) (England) (no. 2) Regulations 2006 - Proposed works at SO94391607, Bredon Hill.

Thank you for consulting the Cotswolds Conservation Board on the above proposal. Having visited the site and taken into account the information supplied by Natural England with the application, the Cotswolds Landscape Character Assessment and Landscape Strategy and Guidelines and the new Severn and Avon Vales National Character Area profile the Board recommends an Environmental Impact Assessment of the proposal is undertaken. The justification for the recommendation is:

The site lies on fairly steep and uneven ground on the upper slopes of Bredon Hill. The field comprises permanent pasture and springs rise on and run along the north western boundary. The field is surrounded by permanent pasture and woodland and the nearest area of arable land is some 500m further down the slope.

Three sides of the field, the north west, east and south east abut designated SAC or SSSI part of which is the nearby NNR. The south west boundary abuts a heritage site (traces of ridge and furrow are visible and possibly former parkland).

The field subject to the application, whilst itself having no designation or known interest, is an important link between areas of SAC and SSSI and between the SAC and SSSI and adjacent permanent pasture.

The Cotswolds AONB Landscape Character Assessment identifies rough grassland and pastures as a key Characteristic of the Escarpment Outliers (LCT 1.), which includes Bredon Hill. The Landscape Strategy and Guidelines for LCT 1 identifies the need to conserve areas of permanent pasture and to object to proposals to convert pasture to arable.

Conserving, enhancing, understanding and enjoying the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

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Bredon Hill, although an outlier of the Cotswolds, lies within the Severn and Avon Vales NCA. The recently published NCA profile includes the SEO to '...restore and expand semi-natural habitats throughout the agricultural landscape, linking them together to create a coherent and resilient habitat network enabling ecosystems to adapt to climate change. For example byrestore and create unimproved grasslandto provide an interconnected grassland habitat network.'

Summary

The proposal to cultivate the site does not comply with the Cotswolds AONB Landscape Character Assessment and Landscape Strategy and guidelines or with the NCA 's Statements of Environmental Opportunity. Proper management of the site would increase its contribution to establishing a coherent habitat network filling a gap in the matrix of SAC, SSSI and adjacent permanent pasture. Cultivation may also compromise water quality.

If you wish for further clarification on any of the points above, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,



Mark Connelly

Land Management Officer

Cotswolds Landscape Character Assessment:

http://www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk/landscape_character_assessment/index.htm

Cotswolds AONB Landscape Strategy and Guidelines, LCT 1 Escarpment Outliers:

http://www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk/userfiles/file/Landscape/1_LCT1ESCARPMENTOUTLIERSJune08.pdf

NCA profile: 106 Severn and Avon Vales:

<http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/1831421?category=587130>