

11.8.2016

RE: 2016/1202/EIAS Screening Opinion - Land to the West of Hawkesbury Road, Hillesley, Gloucestershire.

In considering whether an EIA is required the Council is requested to consider the following:

The proposed site is outside the existing settlement boundary within an exposed part of the landscape within the nationally protected Cotswolds AONB.

Whether the Council consider an EIA is required or not, as a minimum a detailed Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment should be provided by a Landscape Architect within any future planning application as this proposal will clearly have a negative impact on the character and special qualities of the AONB by extending the settlement out into the countryside of the AONB. There may also be other considerations including impact on heritage assets.

In addition the relevant Paragraphs of the NPPF to be considered are Paragraphs 14 (and in particular Footnote 9) that refer to the restrictions that apply in AONBs and that the presumption in favour of sustainable development does not automatically apply. In addition Paragraph 115 of the NPPF that affords "great weight" to the conserving landscape and scenic beauty" in AONBs. The Board also has examples, where given the local context of the landscape and this modest village, Paragraph 116 of the NPPF has also been considered to be relevant.

In addition to assist the Council a recent appeal decision has been attached in respect of a similar development at Brimscombe (although just outside the AONB). In this case the Inspector concluded:

"44. I have concluded that the proposal would have a significantly harmful effect on the character and appearance of the area and the natural landscape beauty of the AONB and in particular the special qualities of the Cotswold escarpment, which are inseparably linked with the appeal site. The Framework paragraph 115 requires me to give great weight to conserving the landscape and scenic beauty of the AONB."