

## 19. The Site Selection Process

One of the most controversial parts of this application has been the choice of the Countess East site. Many objectors feel that many of their problems with the application are the direct result of choosing this site. We must ensure an objective scrutiny of the site chosen against alternatives in the development plan. Just because there is a site that superficially looks better placed it does not follow that it is acceptable in environmental and policy terms. However if a better-suited site emerges from the environmental impact assessment work, then it is material to consideration of this application. The Environmental Statement should identify the best site, which should then be pursued, rather than used to try and justify the most expedient choice. For Countess Road to be acceptable it must be justified by coming out on top of a systematic environmental assessment of it and all other potential sites.

The applicants carried out a wide consideration of alternative sites (as summarised in paragraph 3.0 of the Environmental statement, Volume I: Text). This work comprised of the exploration of all available land to all points of the compass around the World Heritage Site. It must be emphasised that the World Heritage Site Management Plan makes it an objective to avoid new development within the boundary of the World Heritage Site.

The criteria used to evaluate the potential sites were as follows:

- Land ownership constraints
- Proximity to the A303 to minimise traffic impacts on the local highways network
- Archaeology/historical landscape and ecological sensitivity
- Accessibility to Stonehenge monument
- Impact on local communities.

Although these criteria have been applied in an adequate manner and the information presented in the Environmental Statement is acceptable, frankly it could have been done better through the application of an objective rating system of each alternative site. Nevertheless the ES is considered acceptable having regard to the Regulations (Part II of Schedule 4 to the Regulations and the relevant information set out in Part I of that Schedule) and what the developer can reasonably be required to compile.

The site selection process as carried out by the applicants is paraphrased below.

### **Sites to the East of the World Heritage Site.**

With the exception of Countess East they would be east of the river Avon, which would need to be bridged. Land south of the A303 is constrained by Amesbury park Grade II\* historic park and conservation area. The Woodford Valley is constrained by nature conservation, floodplain, listed buildings, conservation areas and the Avon Valley Environmentally Sensitive area. Solstice Business Park was discounted due to distance from the WHS and incompatibility with planned land uses.

### **Sites to the North of the WHS**

To the north lies the Salisbury Plain Training Area owned by the MOD. Access from Countess Roundabout would cause increased traffic on local roads; much of the land is a Special Area of Conservation and candidate Special Area of Conservation. Accessibility would be difficult through the Larkhill military camp and offer a poor visitor experience.

### **Sites to the West of the WHS**

Land at Airman's Corner has excellent accessibility to the monument and is close to the A303 junction at Longbarrow Crossroads. However sites in this area are constrained by extensive archaeology and are considered to be very prominent within the landscape.

### **Sites to the South of the WHS**

These are remote from the A303 making access difficult and would create impacts on the local very limited road network. It is remote from the monument.

### **Justification for Preferred Site**

The reasons given by the applicants for choosing Countess Road East as their preferred site in the context of their Environmental Statement, is as follows:

- The site lies outside of the WHS boundary in accordance with the Stonehenge WHS Management Plan
- The site lies outside of the Special Landscape Area defined in the Salisbury Local Plan
- It is the most suitable site in the context of the various land uses and relevant policies
- The site has good accessibility to a major junction of the A303.
- The site is owned by English Heritage and therefore is deliverable
- The site benefits from a Planning Brief endorsed by Salisbury District Council and Wiltshire County Council that provides support in principle for a new visitor centre.

### **Analysis of the site appraisal and conclusions**

We should not simply accept what English Heritage has stated. There needs to be a verification process of their assertions. Frankly the appraisal of alternative sites is not the strongest part of the Environmental Statement, although it is considered to be adequate in relation to the requirements laid out by the Regulations.

In order to properly validate this work it has been necessary for officers to use information from other sources, especially that from consultees and to take a systematic approach to verifying the conclusions of the Environmental Statement

It becomes clear that the site at Countess Road East is the best site for a new visitor centre. It is outside of the World Heritage Site, relatively free of valuable archaeological remains, it is not a special landscape area and has no other policy designations. It has the excellent communications and furthermore the proximity to Amesbury makes it on sustainable and economic grounds a very good site. It is of course not perfect, it is distant from Stonehenge, it is close to existing residential properties and is bordered by the River Avon Special Area of Conservation. However if further in this report it can be demonstrated that potential conflicts can be satisfactorily mitigated then this site emerges clearly as the best one for the new visitor centre.

Without fail other sites fall because of either being remote from the World Heritage Site and communications or being on land that is prohibitively constrained by environmental constraints such as archaeology, ecology and special landscape quality.

### **Conclusions**

It is considered that the Countess Road site emerges clearly as the best site for a new visitor centre outside of the World Heritage Site.

## **20. Selection of the Land Train Route**

As with the selection of the site for the visitor centre, the proposed route for the land train is a contentious one. This is especially so as it passes in fairly close proximity to the residential properties in Strangways and Fargo Road. And as with the visitor centre a similar systematic approach should have informed the route selection process based on an assessment and comparison of the environmental impacts of each. The Environmental Statement should identify the best route, which should then be pursued, rather than used to try and justify the most expedient choice.

The applicants carried out a wide consideration of alternative sites (as summarised in paragraph 3.3 and Appendix 3.2 of the Environmental Statement, Volume 1: Text). This work comprised of the exploration of a number of potential routes from Countess East to Stonehenge across the World Heritage Site and their evaluation against a set of criteria. These criteria were as follows:

The criteria used to evaluate the potential sites were as follows:

- Accessibility
- Visitor experience
- Archaeological and historic environment impact
- Nature conservation impact
- Community impact
- Deliverability
- Affordability
- Objectives of the WHS Management Plan.

These criteria have been applied the Environmental Statement in an adequate way which is considered to meet the requirements of the Environmental Regulations. The information is acceptable for the purposes of process, having regard to the Regulations (Part II of Schedule 4 to the Regulations and the relevant information set out in Part I of that Schedule) and what the developer can reasonably be required to compile. Furthermore the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA) have independently scrutinised the Environmental Statement and found it to be sound.

The site selection appraisal of each route as explained in the Environmental Statement is summarised as follows.

#### **Northern Route**

**Main Benefits:** The route outside of the central area of the WHS; it would provide easy access and best walk from drop off point to the stones along Byway 12; use of existing byways would reduce the need new tracks in the landscape; it provides further intermediate drop off options.

**Constraints:** Archaeological Issues, impact of the land train on the setting of the Cursus, proximity to neighbours

#### **Eastern Route.**

Comprising a drop-off at Stonehenge Cottages adjacent to the existing route of the A303.

**Main benefits:** route outside of central area of the WHS; good to monument along former line of A303;

**Constraints:** adverse archaeological impact; effect of presence and noise from nearby tunnel portal, steep gradients for pedestrians and disabled.

#### **Central Route**

**Main benefits:** route located outside of central area of WHS; would not impact on the Avenue; drop off point on previously developed land (Seven Barrows Cottages); excellent viewing point at King Barrows Ridge (enhanced visitor experience); pedestrian access is across open grassland along route of the ancient Avenue.

**Constraints:** would not provide for dispersed access, erosion of this downland soils; disabled access is not possible;

## Justification for Preferred Option

The applicants preferred option is a dispersed access route (see description of development on page 6). There justification for this choice is based on the following:

- Land train route would be located outside of the central area of the WHS
- The multiple drop- off points (4 including the Cursus and Woodhenge interim stops) would encourage a dispersed pattern of visitor access to avoid excessive point loading that could erode thin chalk grassland
- Provides a variety of access to a wider area of the WHS
- Provides equality of access experience for all visitors including independent access for the disabled
- Allows a flexible system that can respond to fluctuations in demand
- Strikes a balance between providing easy access and conservation of the environment
- The adverse impacts on the Cursus are, due to construction methods, reversible.

## Analysis of the route appraisal and conclusions

We should not simply accept what English Heritage has stated. There needs to be a verification process of their assertions. The Environmental Statement does present enough information in a manner that satisfies the Regulations and allows us to make an evaluation of the alternatives. Application of a systematic scoring system to allow a ready comparison of potential sites would have been even better. However it is fit for purpose.

In order to properly validate this work it has been necessary for officers to apply a systematic approach to potential route consideration, using both the Environmental Statement and information from other sources such as that provided by consultees. This was to test whether the conclusion supports the applicants' assertions.

It is the case that were the applicants seeking a single point of access that the central route would be the best option with regard to impacts of the environment. While there would be some adverse impacts on the thin grassland, this could through careful stewardship be largely mitigated. The train route to the Kings Barrow drop off point is direct and discreet in the landscape and utilises previously developed land as the drop off. However there are some serious problems of relying solely on this route. This route does require a fairly challenging walk to the Stones and the mobility impaired and wheelchair users would not find this practical. This would necessitate running a park and ride shuttle bus through the road system and down a retained A344 which is contrary to objectives of the development plan and World Heritage Site Management Plan. The latter document also emphasises the objective of seeking dispersed access through out the World Heritage Site rather than a single point of access

The northern route does have benefits of allowing relatively easy access for all but the most severely disabled to approach the Stones. It is outside of the core area and discreet in the landscape and will not be viewed from the monument and its core area. However there are concerns over the nature of the adverse impact on the archaeological ditch feature known as the Cursus, the amenity of neighbouring residents and on wildlife habitats in the existing tree belts adjacent to the route. The detailed environmental assessment of these impacts is included in part 26 of this report which follows at page 54, however in summary. Much greater detailed analysis of these potential impacts is included section 3 of this report, which addresses the question of the validity of the previous reasons for refusal.

Therefore the decision we must make is whether the objectives of securing a dispersed access, open to all, in a manner proposed by the Management Plan, outweighs any potential negative impacts of the chosen transit solution.

## Conclusion

The idea of having a range of access options encouraged by two land train routes is a good one and supports a key objective of the World Heritage Site Management Plan. Visitors will be encouraged to explore much more of the area than just Stonehenge itself. If the best option were solely relied upon (the Central Route) this would mean that disabled visitors could not share in the experience of approaching the monument with their family and friends and would need to be taken via a shuttle bus. This would mean the retention of the A344 as a much more recognisable road than current plans propose.

To overcome this problem the applicants propose two routes, a hybrid solution, which incorporates the northern route. While the Environmental Statement does draw attention to the fact that the northern route will have adverse impact upon the Cursus, both the statutory consultees and the mitigatory measures proposed in the application indicate that such impacts can be successfully minimised.

Archaeological appraisal and feedback from statutory consultees agrees that while the land train would impact adversely on the setting of the Cursus, it would have no direct impact on the archaeology due to the track design to lay over the surface with no ground disturbance in a fully reversible manner. When considered in conjunction with the substantial benefits of securing dispersed access and removal of inappropriate development from the setting of Stonehenge, then it is considered that the reversibility with no direct impact is a convincing argument. Furthermore the much greater detailed analysis of these potential impacts is included section 3 of this report, which addresses the question of the validity of the previous reasons for refusal.

Therefore while there would be some adverse impacts, they will be reversible and leave no permanent damage and that when the access proposals are taken as a whole they will bring substantial benefits to the World Heritage Site.

## 21. Landscape Impact Analysis

As with any major planning application, there is a need to assess the visual and physical impact that the proposals will have on the landscape within which it stands. This project is slightly different in that the principle reason for its submission is to secure removal of features of adverse landscape impact from the setting of Stonehenge. Therefore we need to weigh up the impact of the scheme against the benefits to determine whether landscape impacts are acceptable.

Part 15 of this report highlights how the visitor centre site is designed to a very high quality in a manner that as far as possible minimises impacts on the landscape. The clever design of the building allows it to merge into the landscape and this is reinforced by land resculpting and substantial new planting to largely conceal the car park from external views.

The routes of the land train have been well chosen to minimise their impact on the landscape. They largely follow the routes of existing byways and use existing tree belts and ridgelines to conceal them from site when viewed from Stonehenge monument and its core area. The drop off points and shelters have been designed with the same care as the proposed visitor centre building and are lightweight and largely transparent in nature forming very subtle, inconspicuous structures in the landscape. The Environmental Statement acknowledges that there would be moderate adverse impact on the residents of the Fargo Road and minor impact on those using existing rights of way.

The adverse impacts should be evaluated against the major landscape benefits of allowing the existing visitor centre and A344 to be removed from the vicinity of Stonehenge.

## Conclusion

The substantial landscape benefits of removing inappropriate developments from the setting of Stonehenge, together with the thoughtful design of visitor centre, car park and land train route, mean that overall this planning application will bring significant net benefits to the landscape.

## 22. Access Strategy

Previous sections have focused on the choice of land train route, however there is also the need to look at access in the wider meaning to assess whether the proposals represent an acceptable way forward.

Both the development plan, WHS Management Plan and Planning Brief underpin the objective of improving general access to and enjoyment of the World Heritage Site. An application which is in the major part a response to the objectives of the Management Plan is expected to demonstrate how wider access, in particularly for walkers, cyclist and horse riders is to be delivered.

The scheme represents a significant and tangible improvement to access within the World Heritage Site and in particular the following components that will be delivered through implementation of this application would be welcome:

- Traffic Regulation Orders would restrict traffic movements along Byway 12
- Traffic Regulation Order to restrict traffic movements along the downgraded A344
- Dispersed land train drop off points promoting exploration of wider areas of the WHS
- Removal of existing car park and Visitor Centre
- Provision of electric wheelchairs at Durrington Farm and King Barrow Ridge to assist less mobile visitors to enjoy a much greater experience of the WHS
- Provision for Anglers to use the car park and have continued access to the River Avon at Countess East
- Enhanced surfacing of Byways will encourage cycling and cycle hire will be available at the new visitor centre
- The proposed Sustrans long distance cycle route from Ridgeway and Avebury to Salisbury would pass through the visitor centre.

On the negative side there will be some minor adverse affect because of the proximity of the land train route to other users, including a crossing point.

### Conclusions

It is considered that the comprehensive access strategy that will be facilitated through the implementation of this planning application represents a major benefit to the area through the encouragement of greater access understanding and enjoyment of this unique environment.

## 23. Noise and Disturbance

One of the most contentious parts of this application is that to many local residents it appears that choices have been made on the part of the applicant, which almost willfully appears to bring the development close to existing residential properties. By both proposing the Countess East site and also incorporating the northern route for the land train, it has been argued that this brings the development in contact with the maximum number of residents. This is a prime argument that the community has put forward for stating in large numbers that the site is simply in the wrong place and that a site to the west of the Fargo Plantation towards Airman's Cross would solve these potential conflicts at a stroke.

However this is not so clear-cut. The rational for the selection of both the visitor centre site and the land train route stands up to scrutiny (see parts 17 and 18 above) and alternative sites invariably have environmental constraints which render them in land use planning terms worse. That being so it is an obligation on this Authority to assess the likely impacts upon the neighbours and to decide whether, with suitable mitigation impacts can be minimised to acceptable levels, or on the other side of the coin whether impacts will be so detrimental to peoples enjoyment of their homes that refusal of the application is the only option.

Noise and disturbance both in the short term during construction works and in the longer term through the operation of the centre and the land train, are fundamental issues here.

The applicants have carried out noise analysis within their Environmental Statement, which indicates that noise levels will be kept within acceptable limits. However your officers have considered this issue so important that we have engaged consultants (Casella Stanger) who have carried out rigorous independent tests and scrutiny of the likely noise disturbance the proposals may cause. This has been seen as crucial in order to robustly test the information within the Environmental Statement.

The independent work has verified the findings of the Environmental Statement and has concluded that providing conditions are applied to limit the maximum noise of the land train and visitor centre operation together with a limit on the hours of operation, and then no material detriment will accrue to the residents of nearby properties. Should members be minded to approve this application then the conditions recommended to limit noise and operating times are considered essential to safeguard the amenity of neighbours

## **24. Sustainability**

Striving to realise sustainable patterns and forms of new development underpins all of the national and local planning policies. It is a fundamental consideration. This means sustainability in its widest sense including location, relationship to existing settlements, travel requirements, energy and resource efficiency, prevention of pollution, flooding and waste management.

The planning application is supported by a comprehensive appraisal of the sustainability of the scheme, in addition to the Environmental Statement. A travel plan is also incorporated within a Traffic Assessment that has also been submitted.

### **Travel plans**

The Travel Plan adequately addresses how the development will encourage alternative modes of transport other than the private car. Alternative modes of transport such as cycling, walking, and public transport are all positively encouraged for both staff and visitors. The critique of the access strategy above (see page 41) also forms part of the encouragement.

The provision of 500+ car parking spaces clearly shows that visits will for the foreseeable future be dominated by the private car, but given the location of Stonehenge it is unlikely that any alternative sites could be less so. Furthermore the proximity of the site to Amesbury does provide for the encouragement of linked trips and local employment, which will benefit the local economy and existing patterns of land use, in a more sustainable fashion than the current relationships.

### **Energy and Resource Efficiency**

The design of the new centre and the scheme does incorporate principles of sustainable development including predominantly re-used and recycled materials, natural insulation and passive solar gain, water saving technology, high efficiency boilers, and low emission LPG land train. The sustainability appraisal is convincing and it is clear that the design of this proposal has had the aims of delivering environmentally sustainable outcomes planned in from the outset.

### **Pollution**

Policy G2 of the Local Plan requires consideration of public health and pollution from light, noise; exhaust fumes, contaminated run-off, waste and litter.

The applicants have submitted a construction management plan that is aimed at controlling pollution during the building phase. This document is good, but should members be minded to approve this

application then it is suggested that its implementation be secured through condition. Due to the distance of the car park from neighbours and the landscape barriers, which are proposed, it is not considered that exhaust fumes will cause a problem.

The noise of the land train in particular is a sensitive issue and this is covered on page 49 of this report on the evaluation of the Environmental Statement, however in summary it is considered that potential noise issues can be satisfactorily mitigated through the use of conditions.

### **Flooding**

The Environment Agency has confirmed that they do not wish to object to these proposals. Sustainable drainage systems and retention ponds are planned to promote natural infiltration of rainwater back into the hydrological system.

### **Waste management**

In accordance with County Council Supplementary Planning Guidance this scheme will attract a high number of visitors and provision should be made for the recycling and waste separation collection. Ideally bins for recyclable materials should be installed. The applicants state that full waste disposal details will be incorporated into an Operational Management Plan for the scheme and should members be minded to approve this scheme then a condition will be recommended to ensure a waste audit is carried out and appropriate measures implemented.

### **Conclusions**

With regard to sustainable development the application satisfactorily addresses this topic in a manner that accords with planning policy. It is clear that these objectives have been a serious and integral consideration from the outset of the design process. Nevertheless, it will be necessary to ensure that the measures proposed are fully implemented and should the scheme proceed then suitable planning conditions will be required to ensure compliance.

## **25. Tourism**

The tourist and visitor experience has caused much debate, however care needs to be exercised to confine our deliberations to material planning considerations. It is not for us to unduly intercede on the business case upon which the new proposals are based. However the economic wellbeing of the District is a legitimate concern.

On consultation the tourist industry is divided on the merits of this case. Many are wedded to the status quo and this is a clear reflection of trying maintain existing business practices, most prominently the coach tours which stop in at Stonehenge for a short visit on their way from London to Bath or vice versa. This faction feels strongly that the new arrangements and dwell time of 4 hours will disrupt existing patterns of business and ultimately lead to visitors missing out their visit altogether.

However there is a strong lobby in favour of the proposals, headed by South West Tourism (the Regional Tourist Board for the South West of England.) This support is based on the fact that the existing facilities fall well short of what international tourists expect in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century and that the new facilities will provide an improved experience and add to the appeal of Stonehenge.

We must not make planning decisions to protect any vested interest; we must do so taking into account planning policy and all other material considerations. Planning policy seeks the building of a new visitor centre outside of the World Heritage Site and restoration of a more respectful setting for Stonehenge. It certainly seeks to improve on the existing situation and although this may impact on certain sectors of the tourist industry there is much evidence that it will adapt and that visitor numbers will stay at current



levels of about 800,000 per year, the difference being that visitors will have had a more enriching and enlightening experience.

Extensive customer surveys have been carried out to inform this application and the consistently popular line was that people would enjoy seeing Stonehenge as part of a walk, would like to see more interpretative material and were disappointed with the quality of the existing facilities.

### **Conclusion**

The patterns of tourism will change, but it should be for the benefit of the visitor and the World Heritage Site. The substantial market research conducted by the applicants confirms that visitors would like to see a more meaningful visit and it indicates that visitor numbers will remain consistent with existing ones. The tourist bus operators have a choice of whether to revise their schedules or to miss out Stonehenge altogether, however the future of such an important site can not be dictated by any one party and instead we must make a decision in the public interest and in accordance with our policy.

This application in this respect complies with the Development Plan.

## **26. Socio-economic Considerations**

The social and economic wellbeing of our communities and rural areas is an important one and one that is material to our consideration of this proposal. We are seeking new patterns of development, which complement existing settlements and help sustain their vitality and viability. We seek to protect the District from development that competes with existing towns and villages to their detriment.

### **Location and Synergy with Amesbury**

In line with PPS7, the selected site is the most proximal to Amesbury town centre, which would enable opportunities for local services and businesses to generate income from visitors exploring the area. Additional economic growth would be accrued from additional expenditure on goods and services by English Heritage and other organizations involved in the operation of the visitor centre, the creation of 47.5 full time jobs in the operation of the new visitor centre, up to 275 full time jobs in all including non-direct and induced employment, the equivalent of 38 full time jobs during the construction process, and the increase in average dwell times of the attraction will encourage visitors to make a day of their visit and hence increase the likelihood of a combined visit to Amesbury or Salisbury. It is considered that there are definite and tangible economic benefits that this scheme will deliver; meaning in this respect the application complies with national and regional guidance.

### **Potential Competition**

There is the potential for those operating a development such as Stonehenge Visitor Centre to try and increase profits by extending and diversifying the range of goods sold in its retail outlet. Many of us will be aware of garden centres which now sell a vast range of goods many apparently unrelated to gardens. The same pressure may be on the restaurant to open later to try and improve income generation. Finally the state-of-the-art nature of the building and its direct relationship with Stonehenge may make it attractive for corporate meetings, functions and weddings.

All of the above have the potential to compete with existing businesses in existing town centres and should be resisted. If members are minded to approve this application conditions will be suggested for the purpose of controlling such ancillary uses so they do not grow and compete with existing Town Centres, which we are seeking to enhance.

## Conclusions

The application will bring clear economic and social benefits to the area and should on these grounds be welcomed providing ancillary functions are controlled so they do not compete with existing service centers.

## 27. Summary and Conclusions

This section takes a detailed look at the key planning issues related to this planning application.

This is a contentious planning application and has raised a significant amount of opposition from the local community and further a field. In such circumstances it is important to take a forensic approach to analysing the issues being raised to see if the empirical evidence and views of specialist consultees support refusal or whether, to the contrary, approval is the correct course of action.

Without fail in this case, as the key planning issues are evaluated, there emerges strong grounds for approving this application. While the local community have made fair and robust objections, as is their prerogative, on analysis it becomes clear that their arguments cannot be substantiated as planning grounds for refusal. Against all key planning issues and in accordance with section 54A of the Town and Country Planning Act, this application should be approved.

However this should not be the end of our deliberations as there are still key issues, which need to be assessed in order to reach a final conclusion. In particular we must scrutinise the Environmental Statement and the Transportation Assessment submitted to support the application, to see if they are credible documents and whether they demonstrate that the respective impacts are within acceptable limits.

## 28. Evaluation of the Environmental Impact Assessment

The Environmental Impact Statement is submitted under Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 1999.

The purpose of the Environmental Statement (ES) is to assess the significant impacts of the development at each stage of the development programme i.e. demolition, construction and operation. It must identify the baseline situation, the nature of the impact both direct and indirect, whether it is temporary (demolition and construction) or permanent (operation) and then measures to mitigate the impacts in each case.

It is an important point to note that in order to establish a baseline for their Environmental Statement, the applicants have based any cumulative and interrelated impacts on the assumption that the published A303 tunnel has been implemented. It is very important to keep this in mind, especially given that at the time of considering this application, the A303 options are subject of a ministerial review. It is very conceivable that should an alternative scheme for the A303 come forward, the environmental impacts of the visitor centre scheme may be altered. For example without a tunnel the background noise levels when measured at the houses in Fargo Road would be higher, potentially altering the noise calculations that the land train impacts have been based on. There are many other such examples. Hence it is important that should any planning permission be granted and the published A303 scheme does not come to fruition, then the environmental impacts need to be re-evaluated. As stated elsewhere in this report a Grampian style condition would be an effective method of control.

The Regulations make it clear that local planning authorities should satisfy themselves in every case that submitted statements contain the information specified in Part II of Schedule 4 to the Regulations and the relevant information set out in Part I of that Schedule that the developer can reasonably be required to compile. That is, is the information supplied adequate for the purposes of assessing the likely impacts of the development and is what is can we have reasonably expected them to provide more.

The Environmental Impact Assessment require an ES to provide an outline of alternative sites and the reasons for selecting the proposed development site, which in this case is set out on page 4 of this report. It is also appropriate to note that the significant impacts considered in the Environmental Statement, examined below, were agreed in principle with the Local Planning Authority prior to the submission of the planning application during the scoping exercise.

Auditing and evaluating the information in the Environmental Statement is a key piece of work and for this reason we set up a Technical Consultative Group comprising of key consultees, so that each topic and the conclusions could be robustly scrutinised and discussed with a panel of experts. The membership of the Technical Consultative Group was as follows:

**Stonehenge Joint Consultative Technical Group:**

David Milton	<i>Salisbury District Council, Development Services</i>
Isabella Stokes	<i>Salisbury District Council, Development Services</i>
James Iles	<i>Salisbury District Council, Development Services</i>
Gary Tomsett	<i>Salisbury District Council, Environmental Services</i>
Gianina Newell	<i>Salisbury District Council, Legal &amp; Property Services</i>
Jane Ferguson	<i>Salisbury District Council, Legal &amp; Property Services</i>
Geoffrey Hobbs	<i>Salisbury Joint Transportation Team</i>
Colin Grimwood	<i>Casella Group, Noise consultants on behalf of Salisbury District Council.</i>
Ian Postlethwaite	<i>Wiltshire County Council, Highways</i>
Mike Crook	<i>Wiltshire County Council, Highways</i>
Phil Tilley	<i>Wiltshire County Council, Highways</i>
Tim Jones	<i>Wiltshire County Council, Highways</i>
Janice Green	<i>Wiltshire County Council, Public Rights of Way</i>
Barbara Burke	<i>Wiltshire County Council, Public Rights of Way</i>
Roy Canham	<i>Wiltshire County Council, Archaeology</i>
Amanda Chadburn,	<i>English Heritage, Curatorial</i>
Andrew Purvey	<i>Wessex Water</i>
Dagmar Junghanns,	<i>English Nature</i>
Julie Swain	<i>English Nature</i>
Jonathan Startin	<i>BBCJV representing the Highways Agency</i>
Judith Williams	<i>Defence Estates</i>
Jane Hallett	<i>Defence Estates</i>
Matt Edworthy	<i>National Trust</i>
Tracey Brightman	<i>Environment Agency</i>

## **29. EIA Analysis of Archaeology & Historic Environment**

Archaeology and historic environment in the context of an Environmental Impact Assessment relates to the physical aspects of the environment which are of historic importance and reflect human activities, ideas and attitudes, shaping the character of the area over time. In this case, it is the impact of the proposals on the archaeological remains in the area as well as the setting of nearby Listed Buildings (Toll Cottage, Countess Farm, Amesbury Abbey and Amesbury Conservation Area).

## Baseline

Unsurprisingly the applicant's baseline survey showed hundreds of archaeological sites and monuments within the application and adjoining area. The principle features are as follows:

- A small number of pits dating to the Neolithic or early Bronze Age scattered across the site.
- A short length of ditch in the southern field and assemblage of Neolith or Bronze Age worked flint.
- A Romano-British masonry building in the southern field.
- An Anglo-Saxon settlement in the southern field, comprising of five sunken featured buildings.
- Possible enclosures or a field system east of the Larkhill Sewage Treatment Works.
- A linear anomaly that may represent part of the northern ditch of the Cursus.
- Steel Houses, possibly relating to 20<sup>th</sup> century military activity.
- Possible ridge and furrow east of the Steel Houses.
- Anomalies associated with the line of the former military light railway.
- The Neolithic Cursus Long Barrow.
- The Neolithic Cursus itself.
- A Bronze Age linear barrow cemetery with two scheduled bowl barrows, north of the Cursus.
- A Bronze Age bowl barrow south-east of Stonehenge Bottom.
- Barrows at the Old King Barrows barrow cemetery.
- A Bronze Age barrow cemetery five upstanding barrows, north-west of Durrington Farm Drop-off.
- An extensive Bronze Age barrow cemetery north of the Steel Houses including six upstanding barrows.
- Bronze Age bowl barrows on King Barrow Ridge.
- A Bronze Age bowl barrow north-west of Seven Barrows Cottages.
- Stonehenge, the Heel Stone, the North Barrow and the South Barrow.
- The Avenue.
- Earthworks of a road of probable late 18<sup>th</sup> century date.
- Four Mesolithic pits thought to relate to the earliest phase of ritual and ceremonial Stonehenge activity.
- A group of stakeholders and associated flint tools of probably Neolithic date.
- Part of a Late Neolithic palisade ditch.
- A crouched burial of Late Bronze Age or Romano-British date.
- Romano-British pottery shards.
- Eight Bronze Age round barrows within the Stonehenge triangle
- The Cursus Barrows
- Barrows between the A344 and Fargo Plantation.
- Two Bronze Age barrows in the Southern part of Fargo Plantation, including the Monarch of the Plain.
- Three Bronze Age Barrows west of the Cursus and South of the Lesser Cursus.
- An undated boundary earthwork north-west of Stonehenge.
- Two Bronze Age Barrows west of the Old King Barrows.
- Three Bronze Age barrows north of the Winterbourne Stoke Group
- The Hewetson Memorial.

## Adverse Impacts

The assessment concludes that there will be no direct impact on any archaeological sites of national importance. There would be some adverse impact on a number of archaeological features of regional or local importance, within the new visitor centre site at Countess East. The transit route would have no direct impact on archaeology as it is non penetrative and reversible. However it would have an adverse impact on the setting of a number of sites of national importance most significantly the Cursus.

### **Positive benefits**

The assessment shows that the scheme would have a beneficial effect on the setting of a number of sites of national importance including Stonehenge itself.

### **Mitigation**

The design of the visitor centre site has been produced to minimise direct impacts and to allow the preservation of archaeological remains in situ. This has been achieved through site planning and zero-ground disturbance construction methods for the car and coach park. Similarly the assessment states that the transit route has been designed to utilise zero-ground disturbance and minimise direct impacts.

### **Local Planning Authority Assessment**

The scheme will cause some adverse impact on archaeological features, most notably upon the Cursus; it would have no direct impact due to the land train track design to lay over the surface with no ground disturbance in a fully reversible manner. Furthermore mitigation measures through the planning process have taken tangible steps to where possible minimise the disturbance. When the adverse impacts are balanced against the significant improvements to nationally important relics, such as Stonehenge itself, then it is considered that the assessment makes a credible and compelling case for concluding that with respect to archaeology and heritage this application will lead to an overall net benefit for the World Heritage Site without doing any lasting direct damage to archaeological features.

While a number of consultees have raised concerns over the archaeological impacts of the land train, particularly on the Cursus, it is important to note that the statutory consultees, English Heritage (curatorial arm) and Wiltshire County Council have raised no objections on these grounds.

## **30. EIA Analysis of Landscape Character and Visual Amenity**

Landscape and visual amenity in the context of an Environmental Impact Assessment relates to changes to the physical fabric, current landscape character and quality of the countryside, plus changes to the visual amenity of people (residents, recreational users and road users).

The baseline conditions against which impacts were assessed were as follows:

- Desk top OS map analysis
- Review of existing landscape assessments
- Filed survey work to validate and refine assessments
- Identification of landscape character areas and analysis of their current quality
- Analysis of the current visibility of the site and identification of the type, number and sensitivity of visual receptors.

### **Adverse Impacts**

The assessment highlights moderate adverse impacts from the land train and moderate adverse impact on residents. There would be permanent minor adverse changes to the visual amenity to existing rights of way users in the vicinity of the land train route.

### **Positive benefits**

The assessment claims overall substantial benefits to landscape character and visual amenity. These are based on the removal of the A344 and the existing visitor facilities from the setting of Stonehenge.

## Mitigation

The assessment specifies that design of the visitor centre and car park has been conceived to minimise impacts, as would the carefully chosen route of the land train. Landscape planting would mitigate any moderate impacts over time.

## Local Planning Authority Assessment

Officers concur with the findings of the assessment. The scheme has been very carefully designed to minimise impacts on the landscape and any negative effects that do arise are more than compensated for by achieving the removal of the A344 and existing facilities from the landscape setting of Stonehenge and its immediate surroundings.

# 3 I. EIA Analysis of Nature Conservation and Biodiversity

Nature conservation and biodiversity in the context of an Environmental Impact Assessment relate to changes an assessment of existing resource, evaluation of its importance and evaluation of impacts upon it. Assessments are required for both construction and operational effects of the proposals.

The baseline conditions against which impacts were assessed were as follows:

- Phase II Botanical as National Vegetation Community (NVC) Survey
- River Habitat Survey (RHS) of River Avon
- River Corridor Survey (RCS) and specific *Ranunculus* survey of River Avon
- Badger
- Water Vole
- Deer
- Hare
- Bat
- Breeding Bird Survey
- Riverine Bird surveys
- Survey if Stone Curlew
- Reptiles
- Macro-invertebrates including Desmoulin's Snail.

## Adverse Impacts

There are moderate to major adverse impacts at Countess East due to the loss of hedgerows. Calcareous grassland which supports a nationally important assemblage of terrestrial macro-invertebrates would be lost west of Strangways due to the land train route as would a nationally scarce plant next to the Larkhill Sewage Treatment Works. There is a small potential for adverse impact on the bats at King Barrows Ridge, which are of regional importance.

## Positive benefits

The long-term management of the 'fen' area adjacent to the River Avon would have a moderate benefit for Desmoulin's Snail, which is of international importance.

## Mitigation

Translocation of calcareous grassland is proposed. There will be visitor control and monitoring of bats on Kings Barrow to minimise disturbance.

## **Local Planning Authority Assessment**

It is important that the assessment shows that there will be no adverse impacts on the Special Area of Conservation and SSSI, which is the River Avon. This is supported by English Nature who are satisfied that with controls (via condition) and adherence to the proposed Ecological Management and Monitoring Plan there will even be some enhancement of this area. Furthermore the precautionary approach of the ES is endorsed.

The adverse impacts are few and may be mitigated to some extent by the measures suggested which should be required by condition. However there is also a requirement on this council to carry out an Appropriate Assessment under the habitat regulations, of the likely impact of this application on the SAC, both alone and in combination with other proposals. This is a key consideration in determining whether this application can proceed or should be refused on the grounds that it would cause unacceptable ecological harm. The Appropriate Assessment can be found at Appendix 4 of this report and this must be taken into account before any conclusions are drawn on this issue.

## **32. EIA Analysis of Noise and Vibration**

Noise and vibration in the context of an Environmental Impact Assessment relates to an assessment of those impacts during the construction process and during the operation of the scheme and their impact on the neighbouring environment. In this case potential impacts were identified as follows:

- Changes in noise at residential. Commercial, industrial and community facilities
- Changes in noise for visitor to the WHS and local rights of way users
- Changes in noise on wildlife
- Noise and vibration during construction and operation of the visitor centre and trains.

### **Baseline**

The baseline conditions against which impacts were assessed were derived from taking existing noise readings at various points throughout the application site, measuring coach noise at the existing facilities, and taking the supposed noise of the land train into account.

### **Adverse Impacts**

The ES does not identify any adverse noise impacts.

### **Positive benefits**

Beneficial noise reductions associated with completing the closure of the A344 to traffic between Airman's Corner and the existing car park.

### **Mitigation**

The following noise mitigation measures have informed the application:

- Bunding to the coach parking area
- Choice of land train that is intrinsically quiet
- Controlled opening hours of the visitor centre
- All construction works to comply with BS 5228: 1997 'Noise and Vibration Control on Construction and Open Sites
- Construction times limited.

### **Local Planning Authority Assessment**

The case put forward was not considered convincing. Our in-house specialist was concerned over the baseline material, and therefore in order to try and verify the information we commissioned consultants to carry out our own field survey of background noise levels from which to assess impacts from. From this work the assessment of the applicants has largely been verified as credible, although there are several areas of concern.

Firstly because a land train does not exist, all work is speculative and the impact on neighbours cannot be predicted with any certainty. However what we can do is to identify up to what noise the land train could make before is caused problems. If minded to approve this application, then conditions will be proposed and the final design of the land train will have to operate within those levels.

There is also a need to specify opening, construction and servicing times to avoid disturbance of neighbours and again a condition and section 106 legal agreements would be prudent should permission be granted.

## **33. EIA Analysis of Geology and Soils**

Geology and soils in the context of an Environmental Impact Assessment relates to an assessment of those impacts upon all things under the ground, from the surface, topsoil to underlying bedrock and everything related.

### **Baseline**

Baseline conditions used in the ES are as follows:

- Soils Investigations in July 2002
- Published geological data
- Full geotechnical Investigation of the new visitor centre site
- Consultation with the Environment Agency
- Consultation with the Highways Agency
- Consultation with Salisbury District Council

### **Adverse Impacts**

The construction of the Visitor Centre plus Countess Tunnel would have a minor potential for contamination of underlying geology. The construction of the residual underground facilities at Stonehenge at the site of the existing visitor facilities would have a minor to negligible impact. The impact on soils underlying the land train track would have a minor adverse effect.

### **Positive benefits**

None identified.

### **Mitigation**

The following mitigation measures are proposed in the assessment:

- Construction of the tunnel under Countess Road to avoid water table
- Excavated chalk of visitor centre site to be covered quickly to avoid frost/moisture degradation
- Any unforeseen pockets of contamination would be capped or disposed of to a licensed facility



- Destruction of soils strictly controlled storage and fencing
- Soakaways, swales and retention ponds would replace recharge potential to aquifer.

#### **Local Planning Authority Assessment**

There are very few adverse impacts on soil and geology from this project and this is a view confirmed by the Environment Agency. The impacts of the scheme in this respect are acceptable.

## **34. EIA Analysis of Water Quality, Drainage and Hydrology**

Water quality, drainage and hydrology in the context of an Environmental Impact Assessment relates to an assessment of the following potential impacts:

- Changes in the quantity and quality of surface water and groundwater resources upon public and private supply abstractions dependant on those resources
- Changes to the River Avon SAC/SSSI and associated ecologically rich wetlands
- Alterations in flooding and drainage patterns.

#### **Baseline**

Baseline conditions used in the ES were taken from existing sources.

#### **Adverse Impacts**

Minor risk of pollution incident resulting in temporary loss of salmon fishery. Minor risk of construction causing detriment to the SAC/SSSI. Minor risk to drainage, Minor risk to groundwater level caused by increased abstraction. Minor risk to abstraction from wells or boreholes during construction.

#### **Positive benefits**

Potential minor beneficial effect on fish habitats, potential minor beneficial effects on water and river habitats in the River Avon SAC/SSSI. Potential minor beneficial effect on drainage.

#### **Mitigation**

The ES proposes very detailed and comprehensive mitigation measures to avoid those minor risks identified above. These are contained in the Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan, which was submitted to the council in the Supplementary Information. This is a long document but to summarise it covers the following broad areas:

- Roles and responsibilities of staff
- Planning of construction works
- Control of the construction process
- Environmental control measures.

#### **Local Planning Authority Assessment**

This is a major development on a chalk aquifer and adjacent to an internationally recognised ecologically protected river system. It is therefore critical that all steps are taken to avoid development that can pollute or in another way interfere with the existing situation. The environmental Statement does highlight potential risks and these are during the construction phase. They are mainly based on the likelihood of one off accidents causing damage to the water system. This was of concern to both the Environment Agency and us. The supplementary information has alleviated those concerns by including a

detailed and high quality Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan, which will put in place those best working practices to minimise any risk of an accident damaging the water system. Should members be minded to approve this application it will be prudent to use controls to ensure compliance with this document. However if this can be secured then the assessment of the water quality, drainage and hydrology is acceptable.

## **35. EIA Analysis of Air Quality and Emissions**

Air quality and emissions in the context of an Environmental Impact Assessment relate to an assessment of the likely effects of the development on local air quality conditions at sensitive receptor locations in the area.

### **Baseline**

A baseline air quality survey was carried out as part of the A303 Stonehenge Improvement Scheme, over twelve one-month periods between July 2001 and July 2002. The survey comprised of roadside, intermediate and background NO<sub>2</sub> measurements.

### **Adverse Impacts**

Nil

### **Positive benefits**

Nil

### **Mitigation**

An Environmental Management Scheme would be developed to ensure the risk of nuisance from dust during construction is kept to a minimum.

### **Local Planning Authority Assessment**

The survey work and findings are convincing to our Environmental Specialist. There are no significant impacts on air quality as a result of the scheme and therefore the assessment raises no issues on these grounds.

## **36. EIA Analysis of Agriculture**

Agriculture in the context of an Environmental Impact Assessment relates to an assessment of the likely effects of the development on local agricultural land and soil resource.

### **Baseline**

During 2002 an agricultural land classification survey was undertaken. DEFRA was also consulted.

### **Adverse Impacts**

The development of the visitor centre would lead to the loss of 23.9ha of the best and most versatile agricultural land and this is evaluated in the assessment as a major adverse impact, which is highly significant. The land train track would also lead to a minor adverse impact on farms.

### **Positive benefits**

Nil

### **Mitigation**

Limiting the extent of the development to the minimum size.

### **Local Planning Authority Assessment**

While the assessment makes it clear that the viability of no existing agricultural businesses will be threatened by this development, it is the case that it will lead to the loss of the best and most versatile agricultural land at the Countess East site. Whether this alone merits a sustainable reason for refusing this planning application will be discussed in the summing up and conclusions section of this report.

## **37. EIA Analysis of Socio-economic**

Socio-economic factors in the context of an Environmental Impact Assessment relate to an assessment of the potential effects on the amenity of local community and wider area as a result of impacts on employment, visitor spending, changing patterns of visitor behaviour and provision of infrastructure.

### **Baseline**

The assessment draws data from the following sources:

- Stonehenge Tourism and Economic Development Strategy (2001)
- Salisbury Local Plan
- The Office of National Statistics
- Various Stonehenge visitor surveys
- South West Economic Assessment (South Wiltshire Economic Partnership 2002)
- Benchmarking with Cambridge Local Area Tourism Model and Millennium Commission projects
- Annual Census of Production.

### **Adverse Impacts**

The Assessment indicates that because of the wider range of higher quality visitor amenities than at present, this will capture a greater proportion of visitor spend leading to a fall in off site spending, which is a minor adverse affect.

### **Positive benefits**

During construction the scheme would support 76 FTE jobs. This represents a minor beneficial affect on the local economy. Operation of the Centre would support 79 FTE jobs, which represents a moderate beneficial impact. Relocation of the centre and information and links to Amesbury would promote exploration of the neighbouring area, which will have a minor beneficial effect on the local economy.

### **Mitigation**

Nil

### **Local Planning Authority Assessment**

One of the lost opportunities of the existing visitor arrangements is that for a large proportion of visitors this is their only experience of south Wiltshire, other than from car or bus window. It has always been considered a lost opportunity. A new visitor centre proximal to Amesbury and the increased dwell time

of the visit to 4 hours, offers an excellent opportunity of encouraging people to further explore the district and to perhaps have a meal and stay overnight. One of the requirements during long pre-application discussions has been for the Visitor Centre to incorporate a prominent Tourist Information Office, which will be able to inform people of further attractions, restaurants and accommodation within the area. The assessment is negative regarding spin off spending, actually identifying that it might fall, however with the right marketing and the projected new partnership arrangements between local attractions, it is considered that the new facility could really benefit the local economy.

The project will produce 76FTE jobs during the construction and 79FTE jobs during operation. These not only will give local job opportunities they will also lead to income spend in local shops and services thereby contributing to the viability and vitality of existing settlements.

## **38. EIA Analysis of Recreation**

Recreation in the context of an Environmental Impact Assessment relates to an assessment of the potential effects on the amenity of anyone who currently enjoys the application site and its environs through use of the countryside especially via public rights of way, such as for walking, horse riding, cycling, picnicking, hunting, and fishing.

### **Baseline**

A number of rights of way studies have been undertaken over a 13 year period (Halcrow 1991, Halcrow 1993, Halcrow 1994, APS 2000, CBA 2002).

### **Adverse Impacts**

Construction of the land train track would have a temporary minor adverse impact on the amenity of users of bridleways 37 and 9A. Resurfacing existing byways would cause some temporary disturbance to users, as would the construction of the visitor centre to the anglers. These are minor adverse impacts.

### **Positive benefits**

The downgraded A344 and removal of existing facilities would have a major beneficial impact on the amenity of recreational users of the World Heritage Site. Access to wider areas of the World Heritage Site for mobility impaired through the introduction of the land train system is valued as a major beneficial impact of the scheme. There would be minor beneficial impacts on cycling due to enhancements via improved surfacing, option of cycle hire at the new centre and the Sustrans long distance cycle route passing through the new Visitor Centre site.

### **Mitigation**

The design and management of the scheme aims to minimise disruption to public access routes during construction by utilising the following:

- Provision for continued use of the Riverbank for anglers
- Temporary diversion of Bridleways 9A and 37 during construction of the tunnel under Countess Road
- Crossing points for Bridleways 30 and 39 where the land train track approaches the Cursus
- Diversion of Bridleway 30
- New path to connect Cursus drop-off with diverted Bridleway 39
- A crossing point would be provided for Bridleway 9A where Land Train approaches Seven Barrows Cottages.

### **Local Planning Authority Assessment**

The Assessment is compelling and the surveys upon which the baseline is based are comprehensive. The conclusions in this part of the document are convincing.

This scheme will bring major benefits by helping to open up wider areas of the World Heritage Site to recreational use. Wider exploration, understanding and exploration of the site will be promoted and encouraged, through the maintenance of the public rights of way network and four dispersed drop off points from the planned Land Train. Wider access for the mobility impaired will be greatly enhanced. It is considered that the minor adverse impacts identified in the Environmental Statement are mainly temporary during the construction phase and that these are far outweighed by the major benefits that this scheme will bring.

## **39. EIA Analysis of Cumulative Impacts**

Cumulative impacts in the context of an Environmental Impact Assessment relates to an assessment of the potential effects on the environment of the proposed development when considered in combination with current extant but unimplemented consents and applications for major developments within a proposed 3km of the application site.

### **Baseline**

The Highways Agency's A303 Stonehenge Improvement Scheme was used as baseline material. Developments in the vicinity taken into account included:

- Project Allenby - redevelopment of military establishments at Larkhill and Bulford
- 650 house mixed use development at Boscombe Down, Amesbury
- Solstice Business Park, Amesbury
- A303 Stonehenge Improvement.

### **Adverse Impacts**

No adverse impacts were identified.

### **Positive benefits**

No benefits were identified.

### **Mitigation**

Nil.

### **Local Planning Authority Assessment**

As required by the Conservation (Natural Habitats) Regulation 1994, Salisbury District Council as the competent authority, must undertake an Appropriate Assessment both of the application alone and in combination with other major developments, with regard to the impacts of the proposals on the River Avon SAC/SSSI. This Appropriate Assessment is detailed in section 44, page 62 of this report. This is the critical piece of work in relation to cumulative impacts on ecology and water quality.

The assessment states that there will be no adverse or beneficial impacts due to cumulative impacts in relation to traffic, water, construction works, noise and air quality. Specialist feedback from the members of the Technical Consultative Group support these conclusions and subject to the Appropriate Assessment work at section 44, page 62, Cumulative impacts of this scheme in conjunction with others are neutral.

## **40. Summary and Conclusions on Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures**

### **Summary**

Auditing the Environmental Assessment is a key consideration. The information provided must be robustly challenged and scrutinised to see if it is credible or not. The Assessment has been subject to audit by the Technical Consultative Group, comprising specialist input from key consultees. This was a working party set up by your officers to oversee the process. The document has also been referred to the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA), who evaluate the quality of the methodology and presentation of results. IEMA have concluded the ES is sound. From the scrutiny it is concluded that while the Environmental Statement is stronger in some parts than others, that overall it is invariably an acceptable and credible presentation of a meaningful Environmental Impact Assessment of the application.

Turning from the credibility of the document to its findings, in general the document makes a convincing case that the impacts of the development will be within acceptable standards and that long term major adverse impacts in any area, with one exception, will not be produced by the development, should it progress. Indeed in broad terms the major beneficial impacts that the application will bring in terms of landscape character, recreation and access outnumber the sole major negative impact. However this major negative impact and a number of other issues must be considered if a balanced view is to be reached.

The sole major adverse impact identified is that of loss of the most versatile and valuable agricultural land and the Countess East Site. Members will recall from earlier in the report that there is also a policy safeguarding this type of land in the Development Plan (see pages 19 on) Members must decide whether this major impact, backed up by policy, represents a sustainable reason for refusing this proposals.

As there is a very strong presumption against new development within the World Heritage Site, this narrows options for the alternative visitor centre. The environmental assessment of alternative sites is compelling and taking a view of all land use constraints the Countess Road site does emerge in planning terms as the most acceptable site. The adverse impact must also be evaluated against the net major benefits that the scheme will bring. Therefore your officers recommend that this major adverse impact does not justify on its own reason to refuse this application.

Finally an Appropriate Assessment under the Habitat Regulations is needed to identify the impacts of the scheme on the River Avon, Special Area of Conservation and this is included in part 46 page 73 of this report. It would be wrong to draw any definitive conclusions on the overall environmental impacts of the scheme until this has been taken into account.

### **Conclusions**

The Environmental Statement has been demonstrated to be a credible document and its findings have been verified through a close audit process. It shows that the environmental impact of the scheme will be in general acceptable and that most major impacts will be beneficial. It is not considered that the major adverse impact of the loss of agricultural land represents a sustainable reason for refusing the application

when all factors are taken into account. Therefore Members are advised that the Environmental Statement indicates the acceptability of the scheme, but this is subject to the findings of the Appropriate Assessment contained in section 48 page 84.

## **41. Transportation Assessment**

It is necessary to analyse the highways impacts of this proposals and to assess whether plans to facilitate the application put forward with the application are adequate. The use proposed will be a major traffic generator, attracting in the region of 800,000 visitors per year as well as 79 full time employees. This means it has the potential to have a dramatic impact on the local road network, and as has been seen on page 16 of this report, many local residents feel that the plans would exacerbate an already congested road environment to an unacceptable degree.

In order to evaluate the impacts it is necessary to analyse the Transportation Assessment submitted with the application and to take into account the views of statutory consultees at the County and Highways Agency. Furthermore in the case of this application it is necessary to evaluate both scenarios; should the A303 improvements progress or not, as the construction of the proposed flyover at Countess Roundabout will have a huge bearing on our considerations.

Consideration of the highways impacts range from the macro, such as the London to South West and South Wales Multi-Modal Study (SWARMMS) to detailed points of development control such as evaluating numbers and types of bicycle stands. To ensure a systematic approach is applied the transportation section of this development will be covered in the following way

- a) Transport Policy Framework
- b) Relationship with the A303 Scheme
- c) Existing and Projected Transport Conditions and Traffic Impact assessment
- d) Sustainability and Travel Plans
- e) Parking provision
- f) Summary and Conclusions.

## **42. Analysis of the Transportation Assessment - Transport Policy**

Members are referred to section 11 page 28 of this report where there is a detailed analysis of the policy framework, which should be applied to this planning application. However it is pertinent to mention here the main sources of national and strategic policy for transport planning which is material to these considerations.

- A New Deal for Transport: Better for Everyone - Government White Paper
- PPG 13: Transport
- Wiltshire Transport Plan.

These policies have the underpinning philosophy of trying to widen choice for people so that they are not solely reliant on the private car but have integrated and properly catered for alternative such as trains, buses, cycling and walking.

## **43. Analysis of the Transportation Assessment - Relationship with the A303 Scheme & Closure of the A344**

### **Importance of Improvements to the Countess Junction.**

As has been emphasised throughout this report the A303 scheme is being properly pursued under the relevant Highways Act and is separate from this application. The points related to the merits of the tunnel and flyover cannot be considered here. However the application has been submitted based on the scenario that the road scheme gets the go ahead and there is a flyover serving Countess Roundabout which helps facilitate the new visitor centre.

Furthermore in order to establish a baseline for their Environmental Statement, the applicants have based any cumulative and interrelated impacts on the assumption that the published A303 tunnel has been implemented. It is very important to keep this in mind, especially given that at the time of considering this application, the A303 options are subject of a ministerial review. It is very conceivable that should an alternative scheme for the A303 come forward, the environmental impacts of the visitor centre scheme may be altered. For example without a tunnel the background noise levels when measured at the houses in Fargo Road would be higher, potentially altering the noise calculations that the land train impacts have been based on. There are many other such examples. Hence it is important that should any planning permission be granted and the published A303 scheme does not come to fruition, then the council must require a re-evaluation of the environmental impacts. As discussed below, a Grampian style condition would be effective here.

Detailed visitor modeling and trip generation analysis has been carried out in the accompanying Transportation Assessment and has been validated by the relevant highways authorities. This clearly shows that with grade separation at the Countess Roundabout, the junction would have more than sufficient capacity to accommodate the predicted new Visitor Centre traffic movements.

For the purposes of the assessments it has been assumed that there will be 4,500 visitors a day, which is the 97<sup>th</sup> percentile of the busiest day.

Whilst the flyover would allow the visitor centre to operate without undue problem, the opposite is true without it. The existing junction is already very busy and the loading of an additional 4,500 visitors a day would cause widespread congestion to the detriment of all. The bottom line is that without a flyover the application should be refused on highways grounds. Therefore in purely highways terms the flyover is fundamental. In highways terms the proposed A303 tunnel is not fundamental to this application in that it is not required to facilitate the new visitor centre, however it does form part of the baseline assumption of the Environmental Statement and needs to be linked accordingly.

### **Safeguarding the Fundamental Junction Improvements**

The fundamental nature of the Countess improvements leave us with a problem in as much as the flyover is not part of this application and we cannot ensure the outcome of the roads inquiry. Therefore should we grant planning permission for the visitor centre and subsequently the road scheme falls, we could be left with a development that is inadequately served by infrastructure and will be to the detriment of the local community.

Therefore we must ensure that if there is no flyover there is no road and we can secure this through the use of Grampian style conditions. If minded to approve then a prerequisite control is that mechanisms are put in place that mean:

- Construction of the visitor centre does not commence until construction of the flyover has reached a pre-agreed trigger point.
- That the visitor centre cannot open for business until the flyover has been completed and is in operation.



Without these safeguards the application should not proceed.

It has been explained earlier in the report that should members be minded to approve this application, we need to ensure that it cannot be implemented in isolation from the published A303 scheme as that forms a key part of the baseline for the Environmental Statement.

A further integral part of this application is the closure and partial restoration works of the A344, which is central to returning Stonehenge to a more respectful setting. Again if members are minded to approve this application, a condition will be recommended to secure these important works.

## **44. Existing and Projected Transport Conditions and Traffic Impact Assessment.**

The Transportation Assessment has been based on the comprehensive collection of baseline data, much comprising of original survey work and traffic modelling. The statutory consultees have verified the findings of this assessment.

The proposals will replace the existing facilities and projections demonstrate that the new Visitor Centre will generate in the region of 750,000 visitors per year, very similar to existing visitor figures. Therefore the impact is limited to the network immediately surrounding the World Heritage Site and beyond that will be minimal.

The assessments with the application represent a combination of peak flows (June, July and August) on the local road network and peak demand at the new Visitor Centre (4,500 visitors per day). This has been modelled, taking into account coaches, staff and servicing and has been transposed onto the existing surrounding road network. From this, the following conclusions with regard to existing and projected situations can be drawn:

- With the flyover the Countess junction would have more than sufficient capacity
- Longbarrow junctions will have sufficient capacity
- Durrington roundabout would continue to operate satisfactorily
- Access and egress to the Visitor Centre would have adequate capacity
- There are a range of travel modes for staff and visitors.

### **Egress onto Countess Road**

One area of concern which emerges is the design and function of the egress onto Countess Road. The Transportation Assessment and planning application show a junction which allows both a right and left turn. The County confirm that in highways terms this is acceptable due to adequate distances between the egress and other junctions. However this is not acceptable to Salisbury District Council. The insistence in the Planning Brief for a left turn only junction was not simply a response to highway safety concerns but was based on the resolution of the committee when adopting the SPG to discourage rat-running through the northern villages. This is explicit in Appendix 8 of the Planning Brief, which states:

*"Egress shall be onto the A345 Countess Road subject to a physical prohibition of right movements and measures to mitigate traffic and congestion conflict"*

The application fails to address this point and should members be minded to approve this application then a condition will be suggested that requires details of a left-hand turn only junction to be submitted to and approved by this council and then implemented as per the agreement, prior to any works commencing.

### **Conclusions**

The Transportation Assessment adequately demonstrates that the Visitor Centre can be accommodated at the Countess site without undue adverse impact upon the local highways network, providing the

flyover and Countess Roundabout is constructed and a no right turn junction is secured at the egress to the site.

## 45. Sustainability and Travel Plans

A Travel Plan has been submitted to support the planning application. All of the policies pertinent to this application are underpinned by the philosophy of seeking sustainable patterns of new development. Travel Plans, if done well, are one of the key elements in meeting these objectives.

### Aims of the Travel Plan

The aims of the travel plan are as follows:

- To promote the use of sustainable transport options by staff and visitors of Stonehenge
- To ensure that the World Heritage Site is accessible by a range of sustainable transport modes
- To reduce the number of single occupancy car journeys made to and from the visitor centre.
- To reduce the impact of the proposed development on surrounding areas.

### Proposed Measures

The submitted Travel Plan outlines the following range of both physical and management measures which would be implemented to try and meet the aims outlined above. It is proposed that these measures are overseen by an employed travel co-ordinator.

Topic Area	Proposed measures
Recruitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Target local community and Set out aims of travel plan</li> </ul>
Buses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Service 3 and Stonehenge tour bus to be diverted to new VC</li> <li>• Bus services to other attraction (e.g. Salisbury, Old Sarum) to be advertised</li> <li>• Through ticketing opportunities to be advertised and promoted</li> <li>• Close liaison with bus and coach operators</li> </ul>
Car Parking Charges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Charges for parking within the new VC site</li> <li>• Parking charge redeemable against ticket price</li> <li>• No parking charges for minibuses and coaches</li> <li>• Impact on parking around WHS to be monitored</li> </ul>
Car Sharing Scheme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Database of staff and travel matches identified by Co-ordinator</li> <li>• Free emergency ride home facility for all car sharers</li> </ul>
Walking/Cycling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New toucan crossing on Countess Road/A345</li> <li>• Cycle parking facilities at VC and monument</li> <li>• Comprehensive public rights of way network maintained and enhanced across the WHS</li> <li>• Good linkages from VC to Amesbury</li> <li>• Details of safe routes to be incorporated within promotional material</li> <li>• Cycle mileage allowance for staff using cycles for business purposes</li> </ul>

**Table 3 - Proposed Travel Plan Measures**

### Local Planning Authority Comments

The Travel Plan submitted is an outline framework and is a step in the right direction. However it is neither comprehensive nor detailed enough to give us the comfort that the opportunities for securing sustainable solutions will be delivered. If the measures outlined are secured then we should be satisfied with the arrangements, therefore as per previous practice on major schemes, should members be minded

to approve this application it is recommended that a Section 106 Agreement be entered into in order to secure the agreement, delivery, monitoring and review of a Travel Plan to serve this development.

## 46. Parking Provision

The parking provision at the new Visitor Centre is summarised in the following table.

Mode	Capacity
Cars	581*
Disabled parking bays	25
Family parking bays	18
Coaches	30
Coach drop off	5
Motorbikes	36
Cycles	40
Staff parking	15
Minibus parking	6

\*This figure includes disabled.

**Table 4 - Proposed Parking Provision**

The justification for the number of spaces is included in the Transportation Assessment and is based on modelling taking into account the peak number of visitors per day (4873) and the hourly car arrival profiles. This shows that even when demand is at its highest (between 13:00 and 14:00 in mid summer) then there would still be spare capacity. Should visitor numbers grow far beyond predicted levels then the Master Plan for the Countess Road Site has land for an overflow car park indicated to the east of the existing one. To bring this up to permanent useable standard would represent an engineering operation constituting development for which a further planning application will be required.

The overall design concept has been assessed in section 14 of this report, and for the scheme to really deliver the quality that the excellent design merits, the same rigour needs to be taken through and reflected in the design of all elements of the scheme. Therefore it would be expected to see high quality surface treatment, signage and cycle stands and so on, all of which compliment the overall design philosophy and reinforce the sense of quality. A condition will be recommended should this application be approved to ensure that details have to be submitted to and approved prior to implementation.

The County Highways specialists have confirmed that the parking capacity is based on reasonable modelling and will be adequate to meet demand. There is therefore no justification to resist the proposal on these grounds.

## 47. Transportation Assessments, Summary and Conclusions

A comprehensive Transportation Assessment has supported the application, the statutory consultees have confirmed that this information is both adequately modelled and produces reliable conclusions.

Scrutiny of the highways issues based around the key areas has revealed that on every count the application is considered to be acceptable. There is clearly adequate capacity on the local network and within the parking provision to allow the Visitor Centre to operate without harming the local area. However there are a number of issues that it would be wise to safeguard should development progress.

The Transportation Assessment is based on the assumption that the flyover at Countess Roundabout will be implemented. This will undoubtedly make the capacity of the junction adequate to serve the new development: it is clearly not adequate without the flyover. It is therefore considered essential should permission be granted that safeguards are put in place to ensure that the Visitor Centre cannot go ahead without the flyover and not open until it is complete. This requires conditions and a legal agreement to secure the following:

- Construction of the visitor centre does not commence until construction of the flyover has reached a pre-agreed trigger point.
- That the visitor centre cannot open for business until the flyover has been completed and is in operation.

A second requirement will be the inclusion in the legal agreement to ensure the promising work put forward in the submitted travel plans moves from a framework to a worked up detailed plan which is then implemented monitored and reviewed.

A third requirement is that the application fails to address the issue of potential rat-running north from the egress as required by the adopted planning brief point. Should members be minded to approve this application then a condition will be suggested that requires details of a left-hand turn only junction to be submitted to, and approved by, this council and then implemented as per the agreement, prior to any works commencing.

Finally details of the design of all parking related elements should be required, such as surface treatment, kerbs, signage and cycle stands, in order to ensure that the quality of the overall design concept are not diluted by the mundane use of materials.

Provided that members are prepared to agree to the controls specified above, it is considered that on transportation grounds that the scheme will be acceptable.

## **48. The Habitat Regulations and the Appropriate Assessment of Impacts on the River Avon**

### **Background**

Under the Conservation (Natural Habitats & C) Regulations 1994, Salisbury District Council must determine whether the Stonehenge planning application is likely to have a significant impact (either alone or in combination with other developments) upon the conservation interests of the Special Area of Conservation. The Council should take advice from English Nature before forming a judgement.

This is a complex area and this section has been written in a manner to lead members through in a step-by-step process so that as well as seeing the conclusions of the Appropriate Assessment they are also informed of the key stages in the process. This appropriate assessment relates to all components of the application over both the short, medium and long term including the visitor centre building, car parks and overspill car park.

### **Why an Appropriate Assessment is required for the Stonehenge Application?**

Under Regulation 48(1), an Appropriate Assessment needs to be undertaken in respect of any plan or project which:

- a. either alone or in combination with other plans or projects would be likely to have a *significant effect* on a European Site, and
- b. is not directly connected with the management of the site for nature conservation.

## **Timing**

An Appropriate Assessment needs to be undertaken in respect of a plan or project described above before any "competent authority" decides to give any consent, permission or other authorisation for the plan or project. (Regs. 48(1) et al)

## **Determining significant Impacts**

English Nature will advise, on request, as to whether any particular plan or project may be likely to have significant effect on any of these sites. English Nature in a letter dated 28<sup>th</sup> October 2004 confirmed that the Stonehenge Application may have significant effect on the River Avon cSAC and that an Appropriate Assessment is required, alone and in combination with other plans and projects.

## **Relationship to Environmental Statement**

It is a self contained step in a wider decision making process,

The assessment required under the Habitats Regulations does not correspond to an environmental assessment. In such cases such as this where an ES is required then it will be appropriate to use the information assembled for the purposes of the EA also for the assessment required by the Habitats Regulations.

## **Scope and Content of Appropriate Assessment**

The scope and content of an Appropriate Assessment will depend on the location, size and significance of the proposed plan or project (PPG 9 box C10). English Nature will advise on a case-by-case basis.

English Nature in their letter dated 28<sup>th</sup> October 2004 have confirmed that based on previous AA's and in combination work carried out related to the River Avon cSAC the key impacts to be assessed can be summarised as:

- Runoff, spillage or leakage directly or via groundwater polluting the river during construction.
- Runoff during operational use of the development
- Increased demand upon water resources arising from increased visitor and employee populations
- Increased sewerage disposal impact upon
  - a) Capacity of existing treatment works
  - b) Quality/quantity of discharge into the Avon
  - c) Need for additional works to treatment works
- Direct loss of habitat
- Indirect pressures on the river system if floodplain dynamics are altered.

## **The Site's Conservation Objectives**

Related to the previous Appropriate Assessment work it is apparent that the sites conservation objectives are based on the River Avon and it's major tributaries, The Bourne, Till, Wylde, Nadder and Docks Water being recommended as eligible for SAC status in 1998 because it contains a high diversity of habitat types and species which are of European importance given that they are either rare or threatened.

<b>The species of European importance are:</b>
<b>Atlantic Salmon</b> ( <i>salmo salar</i> )
<b>Bullhead</b> ( <i>Cottus gobio</i> ) for which the River Avon catchment is considered to be one of the best areas in the United Kingdom
<b>Brook Lamprey</b> ( <i>Lampetra planeri</i> ) a small, jawless, eel like freshwater fish, for which the River Avon catchment is considered to be one of the best areas in the United Kingdom
<b>Sea Lamprey</b> ( <i>Petromyzon marinus</i> ) The largest lamprey found in the UK. Inhabits coastal waters and spawns in rivers, for which the River Avon catchment is considered to be one of the best areas in the United Kingdom (although not the upper reaches of the River Avon)
<b>Desmoulin's whorl snail</b> ( <i>vertigo moulinsiana</i> ) a small snail usually found in long established environments bordering lowland rivers and lakes. It occurs in scattered sites between the Norfolk Broads and Dorset. Within Europe, only England and Ireland have reasonable populations. The River Avon catchment is considered to be one of the best areas in the United Kingdom
<b>Flowing water vegetation</b> ( <i>Ranunculon fluitantis &amp; Callitricho-Batrachion</i> ). Watercourses dominated by water-crowfoot species reflecting relatively unpolluted water. The River Avon catchment is considered to be one of the best areas in the United Kingdom

**Table 5 - Species of European Importance**

Within the River Avon catchment key issues to impact upon the river's condition include:

- Land drainage
- Diffuse pollution from agriculture
- Development proposals (both construction phase and operation)
- Abstraction levels
- Foul drainage treatment and discharge.

Of these, points 3-5 are particularly relevant to the Stonehenge Planning Application.

### **The In-combination Assessment**

As well as determining what impacts the planning application on its own may have on the integrity of the SAC, there is also a requirement to look at other planned developments and extant consents in the area to assess whether cumulatively they will have an adverse impact on the nature conservation of the river.

In 2002 a report was endorsed by the Planning and Regulatory Committee which considered an in-combination assessment of major development proposals may have upon the health and integrity of the River Avon. This is being used as the baseline data and the information contained therein has been brought up to date with the most recent information that the Local Planning Authority can reasonably be expected to attain. Therefore for example the 'Statement to Inform an Appropriate Assessment' produced on behalf of the Highways Agency in relation to the A303 scheme has since become available and has been taken into account, while some projects outlined in the baseline study can now be discounted as they have no reasonable chance of development, such as the Maltings. The major developments identified are as follows:

<b>Plan or Project</b>	<b>Brief Description</b>
Project Allenby	Redevelopment of Salisbury Plain Garrisons at Tidworth, Bulford and Larkhill
Training Estate, Salisbury Plain	EIA submitted to LPA's addressing post strategic defence review use of the Plain
Solstice Business Park	Business park development
Residential development	Up to 1000 houses, land south of Boscombe Road Amesbury
Stonehenge Visitors Centre	As per this application
A303 Improvements	Undergrounding and flyover
Wylve Valley Relief Road	Route options
Brunel Link and Harnham Relief Road	Major road schemes in Salisbury
The Maltings Redevelopment	Major city centre redevelopment in Salisbury
Ringwood, New Forest	Retail redevelopment
Old Sarum	Up to 650 dwellings
Council Office Centralisation	New centralised offices at Bourne Hill

**Table 6 - Major Projects used as Baseline for In-combination Assessment**

The impacts assessed and the sites conservation objectives are the same as those highlighted above. Each of the schemes has been assessed in detail. Updating the in-combination assessment to July 2006 reveals that there is only two new significant development proposals, 650 house, mixed-use development at Old Sarum, and the Council's Office Centralisation Project that needed to be added into the consideration. However several of the prospective developments have fallen by the wayside and the Wylve Valley Relief Road and Malting redevelopment are certainly not expected any time soon. Others such as Project Allenby are all but complete, while the Brunel Link is in doubt.

### **Impacts of the Application Upon the Integrity of the Site**

Having regard to English Nature's advice, other consultation responses and any other information available, we need to decide whether the plan or project, as proposed, alone or in-combination would adversely affect the integrity of the site, in the light of its conservation objectives. That is, whether the plan or project would adversely affect the coherence of the site's ecological structure and function, across its whole area or the habitats, complex of habitats and/or populations of species for which the site is or will be classified.

The information supplied by the applicants to allow an Appropriate Assessment to be made is contained within the Environmental Statement, which accompanies the planning application. From this information, which has been the subject to scrutiny and assessment by the key consultees and the Technical Consultative Group, the following risks can be identified

There are the following acknowledged impacts:

- Changes to water quality from run-off during construction affecting flora and fauna
- Changes in hydrology caused by construction events, including drying out of the floodplain fen and subsequent changes in vegetation
- Noise impacts from piling and machinery
- Risk of pollution and failure of mitigation measures during construction, which is assessed as a moderate adverse impact
- There is a small adverse impact that may occur due to a rise in Biochemical Oxygen Demand (BOD) in the River through additional foul sewage treatment at Amesbury Sewage works.

### **Avoiding Adverse Impacts - Mitigation**

In order to avoid the potential impacts outlined above, which are principally related to construction phases, the applicants are suggesting a number of mitigation measures. This is based around an Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan, which has been submitted with the application, which will

contain an Ecological Construction Management and Monitoring Plan (ECMMP). A project ecologist would oversee the works including the following safeguarding measures:

- Defined works areas would be clearly marked and no construction works, storage of materials or workers would be allowed outside these areas, particularly in areas of important grassland habitats or near areas of importance for terrestrial invertebrates.
- No entry would be allowed by employees/construction/site workers to the River Avon bank-side during the construction period to limit disturbance impacts on the river SAC and associated habitats and fauna.
- Works external to buildings would be restricted to daylight hours to avoid the use of external lighting (which would be required with night-time works) in order to prevent unnecessary disturbance to nocturnal and crepuscular species such as certain invertebrates, bats and birds.
- No herbicide would be used within or adjacent to important grassland areas identified
- To reduce the risk of fire damaging habitats within the site, smoking would not be allowed on site during construction.
- Specific protected species mitigation guidance would be provided including:
  - a) \*DEFRA Licence guidance with regard to bats;
  - b) Seasonal constraints such as vegetation clearance only allowed outside the breeding bird season
  - c) Specific construction methodology near to badger setts to be agreed with Project Ecologist and English Nature (EN) and if necessary carried out under an EN licence;
  - d) \* Methodology of relocation of reptiles to be agreed with EN;
  - e) Any steep sided excavations to be provided with plank/ramps to allow animals, which could fall in such as deer and badger an opportunity to get out
- Water Strategy includes a "sensitivity test" based on higher projected estimate of visitors
- Water Strategy outlines potential impacts and mitigations on water resources and water quality including foul run-off and groundwater.
- The management plan makes it clear that there will be no access to the water courses for general public hence preventing the risk of human activity causing habitat destruction or damage
- Information indicates that burying of electric cables will not occur in the vicinity of the River Avon

It is considered that the mitigation measures proposed will prove effective if they are properly implemented and this may be secured via an appropriate condition up on a planning permission granted.

It is considered that the mitigation measures proposed will prove effective if they are properly implemented and this may be secured via an appropriate condition up on a planning permission granted.

### **Conclusion on Effects In The Light of Conditions**

It is not considered that the scheme, either alone or in combination, would have an adverse impact on the SAC. Some minor risks have been identified, but these are largely during the construction phase and it is considered that the mitigation set out within the Construction Environmental Management Plan would minimise the likelihood of occurrence.

Therefore as competent authority it is considered that the Appropriate Assessment shows that this development may proceed.

A full copy of the Appropriate Assessment may be found at Appendix 5 to this report



## 49. Timing and Relationship with the A303 Improvement Scheme

This issue has been raised throughout the consultation and indeed by your officers over a very long period of pre-application engagement with the applicants. It has already been touched on in the highways section, but given the fundamental nature of this relationship it is prudent to give it some detailed and extended consideration.

The fundamental nature of the Countess improvements leave us with a problem in as much as the flyover is not part of this application and we cannot ensure the outcome of the roads inquiry. Therefore should we grant planning permission for the visitor centre and subsequently the road scheme falls, we could be left with a development that is inadequately served by infrastructure and will be to the detriment of the local community.

The applicants have stated that should the A303 not proceed then the scheme for the Visitor Centre will not progress: i.e., the two parts of the overall Stonehenge Project are inextricably linked. However this does not provide the safeguards we would need in planning terms. It cannot be emphasised enough that without the improvements to Countess Road then this application should be refused. It is completely dependant upon these works.

Turning to the wider picture, it was clear that a number of members were uneasy with a partial or piecemeal implementation of the components of the A303 scheme. For example, concern was expressed that by just conditioning the delivery of a flyover, without insisting on the dualling of the A303, that this could lead to a 'traffic jam in the air'. Further assessment of the use of conditions confirms that if members are concerned about a piecemeal approach causing problems, then a Grampian condition tying the application to the delivery of all the key elements of the A303 scheme would have been quite legitimate.

The whole of the Environmental Statement accompanying and informing the planning application was based on the published A303 scheme being delivered. In paragraph 1.3.8 of the Environmental Statement the applicants state:

*"For the purposes of assessing the operational effects of the scheme, the A303 Stonehenge improvement scheme (as described in the published Draft Orders) is assumed to be completed and therefore comprises part of the baseline conditions."*

Therefore should a road scheme be brought forward that differed from the published orders (which may be the case from the ministerial review) then by their own admission the baseline conditions informing the Environmental Statement of the application would have to be revisited and amended to assess whether the stated environmental impacts of the scheme have changed. This would have to be presented and re-assessed through the planning system. For example without a tunnel the background noise levels when measured at the houses in Fargo Road would be higher, potentially altering the noise calculations that the land train impacts have been based on. There are many other such examples. This strengthens the case for stating that a Grampian condition is appropriate in this case to tie the scheme to the published orders because through their methodology this is exactly what the applicants have done anyway. Therefore rather than being desirable, it can in fact be seen as essential that the council retains a mechanism to review the environmental impacts of the scheme should the assumed baseline conditions change.

### Conclusions

Further analysis and legal consideration has reaffirmed that a Grampian style condition can be quite legitimately used to tie the delivery of the visitor centre to the key elements of the A303 scheme. No demonstrable harm can be seen to derive from such an approach, and indeed on reflection it does offer

the council a valuable mechanism of reviewing the potential change in environmental impacts should a different road scheme come forward.

## **50. Summing Up, Conclusions and Recommendation.**

This is a complex and contentious planning application. Not only does it have implications on one of the most important archaeological monuments in the world, it has also been the subject of a very loud voice of objection from many local residents who feel the scheme is ill-conceived and will impact upon their quality of life. This is a volatile mix. The only legitimate way to reach a proper reasoned conclusion, as with any planning application is to set aside emotion and preconceptions and to take a long, dispassionate look at the planning issues of the case.

There is no doubt that this application will bring significant benefits to Stonehenge, leading to the removal of the appalling existing facilities and the A344. In policy terms this is encouraged. Furthermore the location of the alternative site at Countess Road East is again supported by the development plan and supplementary planning guidance. This is a key consideration, but not the sole one. It must be evaluated whether the scheme can be satisfactorily accommodated without have an unacceptable impact upon neighbours, the environment and local transport network.

Of the statutory consultees who are central to this application, none have raised objections subject to certain conditions being imposed to ensure mitigation measures proposed by the applicant are satisfactorily implemented and maintained. English Nature, the County Council, Environment Agency, and Environmental Health all maintain that this application is acceptable.

The views of neighbours have been made robustly as is their prerogative, and many valid planning issues have been raised. However on analysis of these issues it has invariably been revealed that either the impacts will be less than imagined, can be mitigated through planning controls, or are unfounded. The most common grounds raised were based on impact on residential amenity, impact on the roads network, impact on the tourist industry, the distance to the Monument and the transit system. The full range of issues is summarised in Appendix 3. When analysed and also placed in the context of the views of statutory consultees, it is clear that these arguments cannot be substantiated as planning grounds for refusal.

That is not to say that this application is free from contentious points and the three most difficult assessments that have to be made are based on the impact of the transit system upon the Cursus, the loss of the best quality agricultural land and ensuring that this application is tied to the A303 highway improvements.

There has been exhaustive further analysis of the land train route and its potential impacts. The starting point to acknowledge is that members have already accepted the principle of development on the Countess East site by the adoption of a Planning Brief as Supplementary Planning Guidance. Once this was accepted it was always implicit that there would be the need for a transit system to take visitors to and from Stonehenge. Indeed the adopted brief makes this explicit.

Given this acceptance in principle, detailed analysis has centred on the likely impacts as highlighted in the Environmental Statement, detailed site analysis and consideration of alternatives. The findings of this assessment are that the proposed land train route is the best option available and will not have an unacceptably adverse impact upon the neighbours, archaeology or the setting of the World Heritage Site.

The issue of ensuring that the requisite A303 improvements are delivered to support the scheme has been re-assessed and the validity with regard the use of Grampian style conditions revisited.

Further analysis and legal consideration has further confirmed that a Grampian style condition can be used to tie the delivery of the visitor centre to the key elements of the A303 scheme even with the current review being undertaken. No demonstrable harm can be seen to derive from such an approach, and indeed on reflection it does offer the council a valuable mechanism of reviewing the potential change in

environmental impacts should a different road scheme to the published scheme be decided by the Secretary of State.

The impact of the proposals on the landscape setting and archaeology of the Cursus, which is a scheduled ancient monument, is finely balanced. It has also divided the archaeological community, from which we have received both objection and support for the scheme. The scheme will cause some adverse impact, especially the visual intrusion on its setting. Impact on archaeological features would be prevented due to the land train track design to lay over the surface with no ground disturbance in a fully reversible manner. When the adverse impacts are balanced against the significant improvements to nationally important relics, such as Stonehenge itself, then it is considered that the application makes a credible and compelling case for concluding that with respect to archaeology and heritage this application will lead to an overall net benefit for the World Heritage Site, without doing any lasting direct damage to archaeological features.

In policy terms the loss of the 'best and most versatile agricultural land' as defined by the Government (DEFRA) as grades 1, 2, and 3 should be resisted. The Countess East Site is designated Grade 2 land. The supporting text with the policy makes it clear that this land should only be developed if there is an overriding need that cannot be met elsewhere. The need for a new visitor centre to serve Stonehenge has long been accepted as an exceptional need as expressed through policy T3 of the Salisbury Local Plan and the unequivocal injurious impact the existing visitor facilities have on the Monument and its wider setting.

The exceptional need for the new visitor centre having been established, it must be examined whether alternative sites are available that would help safeguard the best agricultural land. The analysis of site selection and consideration of alternatives is contained in section 16, page 36 of this report. As there is a very strong presumption against new development within the World Heritage Site, this narrows options for the alternative visitor centre. The environmental assessment of alternative sites is compelling, and taking a view of all land use constraints, the Countess Road Site does emerge in planning terms as the most acceptable site. Therefore the proposals are considered to accord with the provisions of C12 as exceptional need that cannot be elsewhere accommodated has been demonstrated.

The unique and exceptional circumstances related to the case, the environmental and economic benefits to be gained, together with the lack of feasible alternatives all lead to the unavoidable conclusion that this planning application is in accordance with those provisions of the development plan, which will permit the principle of development.

## **Conclusion**

In this case, starting from the Development Plan policy framework, through to issues such as impact on the highways network, landscape, archaeology and wildlife issues, there emerges grounds for approving this application. Whilst the local community have made fair and robust objections, as is their prerogative, on analysis it becomes clear that their arguments cannot be substantiated as planning grounds for refusal.

A detailed re-appraisal of the previous refusal reasons has been carried out, including a members' site visit to the rear of the houses in Fargo Road. This analysis has further strengthened the case for concluding that the any impacts originally perceived will be minimal and can be successfully mitigated. These findings strongly advocate the approval of this application.

Members are advised that this planning application is well conceived, in accordance with policy, and benefits from some excellent architectural design in the form of the new visitor centre building. Furthermore, while there are areas where adverse impacts will be produced, most notably upon the Cursus and the loss of high grade agricultural land, it is undoubtedly the case that these impacts are more than compensated for through the net benefits that the application will bring; not least of which is that it will help to return Stonehenge to a more respectful setting more befitting of its international reputation.

**Recommendation**

That this application be approved, subject to:

**Recommendation - Approve** subject to:

- the conditions and Section 106 agreement as set out in the report;
- and referral to the Secretary of State for consideration

and that members **endorse** the findings of the Appropriate Assessment

## 51. Conditions

It is important if members are minded to approve this application that means of control are exerted by this Local Planning Authority to ensure that the essential mitigation measures are implemented and maintained. That is, controls should be used to ensure a comprehensive development is delivered which is fully supported by the social and technical infrastructure and one which does not adversely affect its environment. However we should also have in mind the key tests in Circular 11/95: Use of conditions in planning permission and ensure that the conditions applied are: necessary; relevant to planning; relevant to the development to be permitted; enforceable; precise; and reasonable in all other respects. This must include consideration of whether conditions applicable outside of the application area (so called Grampian style conditions) give the applicant a reasonable chance to adhere to them.

In this case and bearing in mind the tests from Circular 11/95 the following conditions are recommended should members be minded to approve this application.

### Time

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of seven years from the date of this permission. (A07A)

*Reason: To comply with the provisions of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.*

### Compliance

2. The development shall be carried out in strict accordance with the drawing[s] hereby approved, or with such other details as may subsequently be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. (B05A)

*Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and to ensure the effective mitigation measures as identified in the ES*

### Materials

3. The development hereby approved shall not commence until a schedule of materials and finishes, and, where so required by the Local Planning Authority, samples of such materials and finishes, to be used for the external wall[s] and roof[s] of the proposed development, including visitor centre building, car park surfacing, transit route and drop off shelters, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

*Reason: To ensure that the external appearance of the proposed development is acceptable in the interests of visual amenity*

### Boundary Treatment

4. The development hereby approved shall not commence until there has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority a plan indicating the positions, design, materials and type of boundary treatment to be erected. The boundary treatment shall be completed before the building is occupied and in accordance with a timetable agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

*Reason: To enable the Local Planning Authority to secure the satisfactory treatment of the boundaries in the interests of visual amenity and securing adequate standards of privacy for occupants of the neighbouring premises.*

## **Landscaping**

### **(a) Landscaping Scheme**

5. The development hereby approved shall not commence until details of the landscaping scheme including site clearance and a statement of the methods of its implementation shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority and approved in writing.

The scheme must include details of the proposed planting including a plan, details of species, stock sizes and numbers/densities where appropriate, and including a timetable for its implementation. This shall include for the early landscaping of the land train route, before commencement of the visitor centre hereby approved. If any plant dies, becomes diseased or fails to thrive within a period of 5 years from the date of planting, or is removed, uprooted or destroyed, it must be replaced by another plant of the same kind and size and at the same place, unless the Local Planning Authority agrees to a variation beforehand in writing.

The landscaping must be carried out in accordance with the agreed scheme and statement, unless the Local Planning Authority has given its prior written consent to any variation.

**Reason:** *To comply with the duties indicated in Section 197 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 so as to ensure a satisfactory appearance to the development*

### **(b) Retention of Existing Trees and Shrubs:**

6. No tree, shrub, or hedge which are shown as being retained on the approved plans shall be cut down, uprooted, wilfully damaged or destroyed, cut back in any way or removed other than in accordance with the approved plans and particulars, without the written approval of the Local Planning Authority. All tree works approved shall be carried out in accordance with British Standard Recommendations for Tree Work (B.S.3998: 1989).

If any tree shown to be retained in accordance with the approved plans and particulars is removed, uprooted or destroyed, or dies, or becomes severely damaged or diseased within 5 years of the completion of the development, another tree, shrub, or hedge shall be planted at the same place, and that tree, shrub, or hedge shall be of such a size specification, and species, and should be planted at such time as may be specified in writing by the Local Authority.

If within a period of five years from the date of planting any replacement tree is removed, uprooted or destroyed, or dies or becomes seriously damaged or defective another tree of the species and size as that originally planted shall be planted at the same place, unless the Local Planning Authority gives its written consent to any variation.

**Reason:** *To comply with the duties indicated in Section 197 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 so as to safeguard the amenity of the existing trees and to ensure a satisfactory appearance of the development.*

### **(c) Submission of Tree Protection Statement:**

7. No development shall take place on site, including site clearance, tree works, demolition, storage of materials or other preparatory work, until all details relevant to the retention and protection of trees, hereafter called the Arboricultural Method Statement, have been submitted to the Local Planning Authority and approved in writing. Thereafter the development shall be undertaken only in accordance with the approved details, unless the Local Planning Authority has given its prior written consent to any variation.

The Arboricultural Method Statement shall show areas, which are designated for the protection of trees, shrubs and hedges, hereafter referred to as Tree Protection Zones. Unless otherwise agreed, the Tree Protection Zones will be fenced, in accordance with

British Standard Guide for Trees in Relation to Construction (BS5837: 1990) and no access will be permitted to the Tree Protection Zone for any development operation. Tree protection zones shall be provided for all trees to be retained on the site and also to take account of the root spread into the site of trees on adjoining sites.

The Arboricultural Method Statement shall also include all other relevant details, such as changes in levels, methods of demolition and construction, the materials, design and levels of roads, footpaths, parking areas and of foundations, walls and fences, placement of service runs i.e. BT, water, gas, sewage, electric etc. It shall also include the control of potentially harmful operations, such as burning, the storage, handling and missing of materials, the movement of people and machinery across the site, where these are within ten metres of any designated Tree Protection Zone.

The Arboricultural Method Statement shall indicate the specification and timetable of any tree works, which shall be in accordance with the British Standard Recommendations for Tree Works (BS3998, 1989).

The Arboricultural Method Statement shall include the provision for the supervision and inspection of tree protection measures on a regular basis throughout the different phases of construction. Reports produced as a result of these inspections shall be forwarded to the Local Authority Arboricultural Officer. The fencing, or other protection which is part of the approved Statement shall not be moved or removed, temporarily or otherwise, until all works, including external works and soft landscaping have been completed and all equipment, machinery and surplus materials removed from site, unless the prior approval of the Local Planning Authority has been given in writing.

***Reason:** To comply with the duties indicated in Section 197 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, so as to ensure that the amenity value of the most important trees, shrubs and hedges growing within or adjacent to the site is adequately protected during the period of site clearance and construction.*

**(d) Details of Hedges Retained.**

8. The development hereby approved shall not commence until there has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, a plan indicating the existing hedge or hedges which are to be retained, the minimum heights at which they will be maintained and appropriate trees within the hedge or hedges which shall be retained and allowed to grow on. The plan shall also show where hedgerows are to be reinforced with further planting, details of which indicated in a timetable of implementation. The hedges shall be maintained in accordance with the approved details.

**Reason:** to ensure the maintenance of screening to the site and to protect the appearance and character of the area.

**(e) Submission of landscape management plan:**

9. The development hereby approved shall not commence until there has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, a landscape management plan.

The landscape management plan shall contain a statement for the long-term effective maintenance of the agreed landscape scheme plus the additional management of existing grassland that will be affected by the altered access routes, and full details of all management and establishment operations over a ten-year period, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. It shall also include details of the relevant management, and supervisory responsibilities.

The landscape management plan shall also include the provision for a review to be undertaken during the course of the plan with a final review being undertaken before the end of the ten-year period. A revised landscape management plan shall be submitted for the agreement of the Local

Planning Authority before the ten years has expired. The revised details shall make similar provisions for the long-term maintenance and management of the landscape scheme. The revised scheme shall also make provision for future revision and updating.

The provisions of the landscape management plan and subsequent revisions shall be adhered to and any variation shall have been agreed beforehand in writing by the Local Planning Authority. No trees, shrubs, hedges or other plants shall be removed for the duration of the landscape management scheme or its revisions, without the prior written approval of the Local Planning Authority. Any trees, shrubs, hedges or other plants being so removed shall be replaced in the first available planting season by an equivalent replacement or replacements to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority. Management of the landscape scheme in accordance with the landscape management plan or their agreed revisions shall not cease before the duration of the use of the development unless agreed in writing by the local Planning Authority.

**Reason:** *To comply with the duties indicated in Section 197 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, so as to ensure that the amenity to be provided by the new landscaping is achieved and safeguarded, and to ensure satisfactory appearance to the development.*

#### **(f) Early implementation of landscaping to northern route**

10. A scheme shall be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority, which will allow the establishment of effective landscape screening of the northern transit route as it passes south of Fargo Road, prior to the operation of the land trains.

**Reason:** *To ensure that mitigation measures proposed by the applicant are satisfactorily implemented in a manner consistent with the Environmental Statement.*

### **Highways**

#### **(a) Details of Egress - No Right Turn**

11. The development hereby approved shall not commence until the Local Planning Authority has approved details of the egress junction onto Countess Road. This shall be designed to discourage right turn, north onto Countess Road. The building shall not be occupied until that junction has been constructed in accordance with the approved details.

**Reason:** *In order to prevent rat-running through northern villages on narrow, unsuitable roads.*

#### **(b) Details of Airman's Cross Junction**

12. The development hereby permitted shall not be brought into commercial operation until a scheme providing for a revised layout of the Airman's Cross junction (to include speed reduction works involving narrowing the entrance to the gated road) has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority, and until the LPA has confirmed in writing that it is satisfied that adequate arrangements have been secured with the local highways authority to secure alterations to the junction

**Reason:** *In the interests of highway safety at a location where an existing road is proposed to be fenced off and traffic priority movements altered.*

13. Prior to the commencement of development hereby permitted drawings shall be submitted and approved by the Local Planning Authority detailing arrangements to secure access to the restricted length of the A344 (between Airman's Corner and the A303) to that traffic permitted under the provisions of the traffic regulation order, including arrangements for the parking and turning of vehicles in a safe manner. The drawings shall be accompanied by a statement of how the gate will be managed. The approved works shall be fully implemented



prior to closure of the existing Stonehenge visitor car park for public use, and thereafter managed in accordance with the approved management plan.

**Reason:** *In order to secure the proper and intended function of the decommissioned A344*

**(c) Reinstatement of the A344**

14. No development of the Visitor Centre shall commence until such time as a timetable for the closure and partial restoration of the A344, as described in this planning application has been submitted to and approved by the LPA. The scheme of closure and restoration shall be implemented in accordance with the agreed timetable.

**Reason:** *To ensure the removal of the A344's impact on the World Heritage Site in accordance with the WHS Management Plan and the Environmental Statement.*

**(d) Access**

15. The visitor centre shall not commence commercial operation until a means of vehicular access has been constructed in accordance with the approved plans. (I02A)

**Reason:** *In the interests of highway safety.*

**(e) Gates**

16. Any gate[s] provided to close the proposed access and egress to the visitor centre shall be set a minimum distance of 4.5 metres from the carriageway edge and shall be made to open inwards only. (I09A)

**Reason:** *To ensure that a satisfactory form of access is provided in the interests of highway safety.*

**(f) Service Roads**

17. The visitor centre shall not commence commercial operation until that part of the service road, which provides access to it, has been constructed in accordance with the approved plans. (I13A)

**Reason:** *To ensure that each of the [dwellings/buildings] hereby permitted is provided with adequate means of vehicular access before being brought into occupation.*

**(g) Construction traffic access/egress**

18. Prior to commencement of the development hereby permitted any temporary access arrangements for construction traffic entering and leaving the site shall be agreed with the Local Planning Authority and implemented in accordance with a programme of works to be approved. The programme shall provide for completion of the egress arrangement and works, and use of the egress shall not be permitted unless or until the egress works have been completed in accordance with details approved by the Local Planning authority

**Reason:** *In the interests of highway safety*

**(h) Pedestrian crossing**

19. The Visitor Centre shall not be brought into commercial operation until a provision has been made on the A345 Countess Road for a signal controlled pedestrian crossing point in accordance with details that shall have been agreed with the local planning authority

**Reason:** *To provide for the safe passage of pedestrian visitors and site staff.*

**(i) Local traffic signage**

20. The Visitor Centre shall not be brought into commercial operation until a scheme of local traffic direction signs has been agreed by the local planning authority and signs have been erected and/or removed in accordance with the agreed scheme.

*Reason: In order that there is clear direction in the vicinity of the A303 Countess Junction and on local roads for unfamiliar visitors.*

**Parking**

21. The visitor centre shall not commence commercial operation until the approved car parks have been constructed, surfaced and drained in accordance with the approved plans

*Reason: To ensure that the development hereby permitted is provided with adequate facilities for the parking of vehicles.*

22. The visitor centre shall not commence commercial operation until the provision has been made on site for the parking for a number of coaches to be agreed in accordance with a plan to be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority

*Reason: in order to make provision for sustainable transport modes to the site and provide ample space for accommodating future growth for travel by coach*

**Provision for Cyclists**

23. Prior to the development hereby permitted being brought into use by the public cycle stands shall be erected in accordance with numbers, locations and specification to be approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

*Reason: To encourage the use of cycling as a means of travel in connection with the proposal.*

**Servicing**

24. The visitor centre shall not commence commercial operation until the delivery bay and parking and turning areas have been provided within the site in accordance with the details shown on the approved plans. And thereafter they shall be retained for these purposes only. (J08A)

*Reason: To ensure that the development hereby permitted is provided with adequate facilities for the turning/loading and unloading of servicing vehicles.*

**Transit Route and Drop Off Points**

25. The visitor centre shall not commence commercial operation until the transit route and drop off points have been provided within the site in accordance with the approved plans.

*Reason: To ensure adequate access to Stonehenge is provided for visitors.*

26. The transit route and drop off points hereby approved shall be used solely for transporting visitors between the new visitor centre and Stonehenge and for ancillary purposes such as the transport of equipment and for no other purposes whatsoever. Should the visitor centre cease to operate then all traces of the land train, its track and drop off points shall be removed and the land reinstated to its condition prior to its introduction.

*Reason: In the interests of the amenity of the World Heritage Site*

### **Internal Footpaths**

27. The Visitor Centre shall not be brought into commercial operation until such time that a system of internal pedestrian footpaths, within the visitor centre site itself, has been completed in accordance with detailed drawings to be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority

**Reason:** *to facilitate pedestrian movement on identified desire lines*

### **Drainage**

28. The visitor centre shall not commence commercial operation until works for the disposal of sewage and surface water have been provided on the site to serve the development hereby permitted, in accordance with details to be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

**Reason:** *To ensure that the development is provided with a satisfactory means of drainage.*

### **Fumes**

29. No development shall take place until a scheme/schemes for the control of fumes from extractor fans and equipment (and for the sound insulation of that equipment) have been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority; and the development shall not be brought into use until that scheme/those schemes have been implemented in accordance with the approved details.

**Reason:** *To minimise the effect which the emission of fumes from the proposed development/use could have upon neighbouring premises.*

### **Hours of Operations**

30. The use hereby permitted shall take place only between the following hours:
- 0800 to 21.00 1<sup>st</sup> June to 31<sup>st</sup> August (last train to stop running by 8pm)
  - 8.30 to 20.00 - 1<sup>st</sup> September to 15<sup>th</sup> October (last train to stop running at 7pm)
  - 8.30 to 18.00 - 16<sup>th</sup> October to 15<sup>th</sup> March (last train to stop running at 5pm)
  - 08.30 to 20.00 - 16<sup>th</sup> March to 31<sup>st</sup> May (last train to stop running at 7pm)

**Reason:** *to protect the amenity of neighbouring residents*

31. No deliveries shall be taken at or despatched from the site outside the hours of 0800 to 1800 nor at any times on Sundays, Bank or Public Holidays. (M29A)

**Reason:** *In the interests of amenity for the occupants of the neighbouring/ nearby dwelling(s).*

### **Lighting**

32. The details of all lighting proposals, including street lighting, lighting for the car and coach parks, lighting for footpaths, lighting at the drop off points, including intensity of the lighting and design for the light column shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to the development hereby permitted commencing. All the works shall subsequently accord with the approved plans.

**Reason:** *To ensure that the lighting scheme respects the overall design qualities required from the development and to minimise impact of the lighting scheme upon both the World Heritage Site and wider landscape and the amenity of neighbours.*

### **Retail Development**

33. The retail unit within the visitor centre hereby permitted shall not commence trading until details of the broad range of goods to be sold have been submitted to and agreed by the Local Planning Authority. The shop shall not sell goods outside of the agreed range, other than as a minor and ancillary part of the stores operation without the prior written approval of the Local Planning Authority.

**Reason:** *To enable the Local Planning Authority to exercise adequate control over the kind of goods which are sold from the premises, in the interests of maintaining the vitality and viability of Amesbury town centre.*

### **Archaeology**

34. The developer shall afford access at all reasonable times to any archaeologist nominated by the Local Planning Authority, and shall allow him to observe the excavations and record items of interest and finds.

**Reason:** *To ensure that the archaeology of the site is adequately recorded.*

### **Environmental Management**

35. The development hereby approved shall not commence until a detailed Construction Environmental Management Plan (to expand on the outline plans at appendix F in the Supplementary Information ) are submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority. The construction and future management of the development shall subsequently accord with the approved working practices as set out in the approved plan.

**Reason:** *In order to protect the environmental interests on the site and the amenity of neighbours.*

36. The visitor centre shall not commence commercial operation until Ecological Management and Monitoring Plan (to expand on the outline plans at appendix G in the Supplementary Information received on 2.6.05) to include long term management of the fen, are submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority. The future management of the development shall subsequently accord with the approved working practices as set out in the approved plan.

**Reason:** *In order to protect the environmental interests on the site and the amenity of neighbours.*

37. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved Water Strategy (see appendix E in the Supplementary Information received on 2.6.05). The construction and future management of the development shall subsequently accord with the approved working practices as set out in the approved plan unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

**Reason:** *In order to protect the environmental interests of water quality and avoidance of flooding.*

### **Security**

38. No development shall commence until measures to secure the access track between 24-26 Countess Road, in order to prevent general access has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The access shall be secured as specified unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority

**Reason:** *in the interests of security and the amenity of existing residents.*

### **Farm Access**

39. No development shall commence until details of continued farm access (including for combine harvesters) is to be provided between Countess Road and Byway 9A has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and the development shall be in accordance with these plans and access maintained thereafter.

**Reason:** *to ensure continued access to land for farming.*

### **Water Management**

40. No development approved by this permission shall commence until a scheme for water efficiency has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall be implemented in accordance with the approved programme and details.

**Reason:** *To maximise the preservation of groundwater resources in the Hampshire Avon catchment, through the most efficient use of water.*

41. No development approved by this permission shall be commenced until a scheme for the provision and implementation of a surface water run-off limitation has been submitted to and approved in writing by of the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall be implemented in accordance with the approved programme and details.

**Reason:** *To prevent the increased risk of flooding.*

42. Prior to being discharged into any watercourse, surface water sewer or soakaway system, all surface water drainage from impermeable parking areas and hardstandings for vehicles, shall be passed through an oil interceptor designed and constructed to have a capacity and details compatible with the site being drained. Roof water shall not pass through the interceptor.

**Reason:** *To prevent pollution of the water environment.*

### **Timing with the A303 Road Scheme**

43. The new Stonehenge visitor centre shall not commence commercial operation until the Countess Roundabout flyover has been completed and is brought into use.

**Reason:** *To ensure the scheme is adequately served by requisite junction improvements*

44. The development hereby permitted shall not commence until the Government has approved a scheme for the improvement of the A303 at Stonehenge as set out in the published Stonehenge Improvement Order 200 and comprising the following elements

- A flyover at Countess Roundabout;
- A 2.1 km bored tunnel;
- A bypass round Winterbourne Stoke;
- Junction improvements at Longbarrow Crossroads.

And a timetable for implementation of the works has been announced by the Government.

**Reason:** *The ES including the Transport Assessment explicitly refers to the Scheme being assessed on the assumption that the A303 improvements, as per the published Stonehenge Improvement Order 200, have been completed.*

### **Other Use of the Visitor centre**

45. The new visitor centre building hereby permitted may be used for functions and events such as fundraising and corporate entertaining. The numbers of functions and events shall not exceed 20 in any calendar year unless otherwise approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority'

*Reason: To control extra-curricula use of the building.*

### **Land Train**

46. The development hereby permitted shall not commence until full details of the design and specification (including actual noise emissions) of the land train to be used to take visitors between the new visitor centre and the World Heritage Site, have been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority. The minimum criteria it should meet are those as set out by English Heritage in their document entitled "Outline Design Principles For Land Train System" dated 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2006. The land trains used must be in accordance with the approved details and shall not be materially altered or replaced without the written approval of the Local Planning Authority

*Reason: In the interests of the amenity of the World Heritage Site*

### **Waste Audit**

47. The development hereby permitted shall not commence until a waste audit, to include measures to deal with littering has been completed in accordance with the supplementary planning guidance to the Wiltshire Structure Plan and been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority. The waste management measures identified shall be implemented in accordance with the approved programme and details.

*Reason: in the interests of achieving a sustainable development*

### **Conditions Required by the Highways Agency**

48. The construction of the New Stonehenge Visitor Centre shall not commence until the applicant has provided, to the satisfaction of the Highways Agency, an operational strategy for the management, both within and outside the designated site, of "exceptional peak" traffic flows to and from the New Stonehenge Visitor Centre. The operational strategy shall consider and provide mitigation for the risk that the New Visitor Centre's capacity to absorb vehicle entry would be exceeded at exceptionally busy periods. Mitigation should include, but not exclusively, the efficient management of available on-site parking and the provision for temporary signing of alternative destinations on approach to Countess Roundabout. The operational strategy shall set out proposals for pre-emptive action if the trend of vehicle entry numbers to the New Visitor Centre site exceeds the capability of the internal car parking and access road arrangements to accommodate the demand. The operational strategy shall include proposals for the active and continuous monitoring of the available parking space and traffic flows into and out of the New Visitor Centre during high-risk periods.

*Reason: The existing arrangement at Countess Roundabout would be inadequate to cater for the additional traffic that would be generated by the New Visitor Centre. The nature of the development is such that "exceptional peak" visitor demand (for example at busy bank holidays) cannot be ruled out. Free flow traffic conditions and hence safety on the trunk road network would then be at risk. To address this eventuality, potential visitors should be dissuaded from joining queues into the New Visitor Centre, particularly any queue that may develop on the A303 eastbound slip road.*

49. The construction of the New Stonehenge Visitor Centre shall not commence until the applicant provides, to the satisfaction of the Highways Agency, its road signing and lane marking proposals for the New Visitor Centre on the approach to and on the circulatory carriageway of Countess Roundabout.

**Reason:** *Signing proposals for the New Visitor Centre in normal operation need to be further developed to ensure lane discipline is maintained, particularly for visitors approaching from the east. This signing will need to be coordinated with signs for the Countess Services.*

50. The construction of the New Stonehenge Visitor Centre shall not commence until the necessary orders preventing informal parking on Stonehenge Road are made and are in force.

**Reason:** *Informal parking on Stonehenge Road, if it were allowed to occur, would compromise emergency services access to the proposed Eastern Tunnel Portal of the A303 Stonehenge Improvement and would therefore affect safety of the trunk road network.*

## **Noise Mitigation**

51. No development shall be undertaken before a detailed scheme to protect adjacent premises from noise arising from construction activities has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. All construction activities shall be undertaken in accordance with the approved scheme.

**Reason:** *in the interests of the amenity of neighbours*

52. The normal working hours for construction related activities shall be as follows:  
0800 – 1800 Monday – Friday  
0800 – 1300 Saturday  
Only essential or traffic related construction work will be permitted on Sundays and public holidays subject to first obtaining the written agreement of the Local Planning Authority.

**Reason:** *in the interests of the amenity of neighbours*

53. Noise from fixed plant and equipment at the Visitor Centre site shall not exceed the following levels at the following times as measured at the boundary of any adjacent residential properties unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority:  
Day (0700 – 1900): 45dB  $L_{A90, 15mins}$   
Evening (1900 – 2300): 35dB  $L_{A90, 15mins}$   
Night (2300 – 0700): 30dB  $L_{A90, 15mins}$

**Reason:** *in the interests of the amenity of neighbours*

54. Noise from land train operations within the Visitor Centre site and noise from other vehicles operating within the Visitor Centre site shall not exceed the following levels at the following times as measured at the boundary of any adjacent residential properties unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority:  
Day (0700 – 2030): 45dB  $L_{Aeq, 60mins}$   
Evening (2030 – 2300): 35dB  $L_{Aeq, 60mins}$  No land train movements permitted.  
Night (2300 – 0700): 30DB  $L_{A90, 15MINS}$  No land train movements permitted

**Reason:** *in the interests of the amenity of neighbours*

55. The route taken by the land train between the Visitor Centre and the World Heritage Site shall be that shown on the approved plans. No more than a total of 10 land train movements per hour shall operate on the approved route unless previously agreed in writing with the local planning authority.

**Reason:** *in the interests of the amenity of neighbours*

56. Noise from land trains operating on the approved route outside of the visitor centre site shall not exceed the following levels at the following times as measured at the boundary of any adjacent residential properties unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority:

Day (0700 – 2000): 45dB  $L_{Aeq, 1min}$  and 35dB  $L_{A90, 15mins}$

Evening and night (2000 – 0700): No land train movements permitted

**Reason:** *in the interests of the amenity of neighbours*

57. Noise from all sources at the passenger drop off points shall not exceed the following levels at the following times as measured at the boundary of any adjacent residential properties unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority:

Day (0800 – 1900): 35dB  $L_{A90, 15mins}$

Evening (1900 – 2000): 30dB  $L_{A90, 15mins}$

Evening and Night (2000 – 0700): No use of passenger drop off points permitted.

**Reason:** *in the interests of the amenity of neighbours*

### **Byway Diversions**

58. The development hereby permitted shall not be commenced until all by-way diversions required under Section 257 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and detailed in the application have been implemented.

**Reason:** *in the interests of public rights of way.*



## **52. Section 106 Requirements**

A single tripartite agreement with the applicants the County and Salisbury District Council and to include any other landowners as necessary (such as the National Trust) should be reached to ensure the following measures are secured.

### **Travel Plans**

We need to ensure that the measures outlined in the Travel Plan are delivered and it will need to address the following:

- Links to public transport
- Travel plan co-ordination
- Promotion of the plan.
- Monitoring and review
- Travel awareness
- Location and provision of bus stops

### **Off site Highways Works**

Planning permission shall only be granted subject to an agreement being completed that provides for EH to meet the full costs of providing and implementing works associated with any traffic regulation orders that might reasonably be required by the highway authorities to regulate traffic on local roads including any costs associated with the closure and reinstatement of the A344 as a result of the existence of the proposed visitor centre.

### **Securing Cycle Links**

Measures will be agreed to facilitate cycle routes to, from and within the sit The provisions shall include for upgrading links to Amesbury Town Centre, links to the proposed Countess Road controlled crossing and links shared with the proposed land-train.

### **Contributions to local cycle/pedestrian routes**

There remains some uncertainty in relation to the precise links to connect with Sustrans Route 45. The County Council seeks a contribution from the development to secure provision of a link between this leisure route and the visitor centre to be secured through a planning obligation.

### **Byways**

No occupation of the Visitor Centre until a Maintenance Management Plan for rights of way within the World Heritage Site to incorporate any necessary diversions which need to be agreed with the Director of Environmental Services, Wiltshire County Council, including agreement of costs.

### **Free access for locals**

A scheme to ensure continued free access for local residents to all facets of the scheme for local residents

### **TIC plus joint promotion**

The following measures will be secured:

The tourist information provision will be specified and delivered including measures to encourage local partnerships to promote other attractions within the area.

## 53. Appendix I - Schedule of Consultees

1. The Association of Professional Tourist Guides
2. Association of Wessex Tourist Guides
3. BBCJV (Highways Agency)
4. Berengaria Order of Druids
5. Bourne Valley Historical, Record & Conservation Society
6. CABE
7. Campaign to Protect Rural England
8. Campaign Protect Rural England (South Wilts Group)
9. Coach Drivers Club GB
10. Countess Road Residents Group
11. Council For British Archaeology
12. Council For British Archaeology
13. Council for British Druid Orders
14. Countryside Agency
15. Country Landowners Association
16. DEFRA
17. Defence Estates
18. Department for Culture Media & Sport
19. Editor, British Archaeology Magazine
20. English Heritage - Ancient Monuments
21. English Heritage - Gardens
22. English Nature
23. Environment Agency
24. Europae Archaeologiae Consilium
25. Forestry Commission
26. Garden History Society
27. GOSW
28. Health and Safety Executive
29. Heritage Lottery Fund
30. Highways Agency HA2 (Bristol)
31. ICOMOS (UK)
32. Larkhill Residents Group
33. Loyal Arthurian Warband
34. MOD - Defence Estates Organisation
35. MOD - Defence Estates Westdown Camp
36. MOD - Defence Estates Tilshead
37. MOD - Headquarters Larkhill Garrison
38. Mott McDonald
39. National Farmers Union
40. National Grid Company
41. National Trust
42. Parish Council - Allington
43. Parish Council - Amesbury
44. Parish Council - Berwick St James
45. Parish Council - Bulford
46. Parish Council - Cholderton
47. Parish Council - Durnford
48. Parish Council - Durrington
49. Parish Council - Figheldean
50. Parish Council - Firsdown
51. Parish Council - Great Wishford
52. Parish Council - Idmiston
53. Parish Council - Milston
54. Parish Council - Newton Tony

55. Parish Council - Orcheston
56. Parish Council - Shrewton
57. Parish Council - South Newton
58. Parish Council - Stapleford
59. Parish Council - Steeple Langford
60. Parish Council - Tilshead
61. Parish Council - Wilsford - cum - Lake
62. Parish Council - Winterbourne
63. Parish Council - Winterbourne Stoke
64. Parish Council - Woodford
65. The Prehistoric Society
66. Ramblers Association
67. Robert Key MP
68. Royal Astronomical Society
69. RSPB
70. Salisbury District Council - Arboricultural Officer
71. Salisbury District Council - Building Control
72. Salisbury District Council - Chief Executive
73. Salisbury District Council - Community Initiatives
74. Salisbury District Council - Conservation Officer
75. Salisbury District Council - Design Forum
76. Salisbury District Council - Economic Development
77. Salisbury District Council - Environmental Health
78. Salisbury District Council - Principal Planning Officer
79. Salisbury District Council - Forward Planning
80. Salisbury District Council - Salisbury Joint Transportation Unit
81. Salisbury Tourism Partnership
82. SEB Electricity Company
83. S&S Electricity Company
84. Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings
85. South West Tourism
86. South West Regional Development Agency
87. Southern Water Authority
88. Transport 2000
89. Salisbury Transport 2000
90. Wiltshire County Council
91. Waste Services
92. Wessex Water
93. Wessexplore Tourist Services
94. Wiltshire Archaeological & Natural History Society
95. Wiltshire Bridleways Association
96. Wiltshire Constabulary
97. Wiltshire County Council - Highways
98. Wiltshire County Council - Libraries & Heritage
99. Wiltshire County Council - Planning
100. Wiltshire County Council
101. Rights Of Way Officer
102. Wiltshire Fire Brigade
103. Wiltshire Wildlife Trust
104. WS Atkins Highways and Transportation
105. UNESCO - The World Heritage Centre
106. Amesbury Society
107. Ancient Monuments Society

## 54. Appendix 2 - Planning Histories

**SITE LOCATION:** LITTLE CHEF (TRUST HOUSE FORTE) COUNTRESS  
**ROUNDBABOUT**

**POST CODE:** SP4 7AS

Planning Ref	Proposal	Approved/ Conditions/ Refused	Date
85/1283	O/L restaurant 14.11.85	R	
	05.09.86	App WD	
87/260	O/L trunk road service area including public toilets access 10.04.87	R	
	26.04.88	App all	
88/1499	Approval of reserved matters – trunk road service area including restaurant, sleeping accommodation, filling station & parking area 03.11.88	AC	
89/934ADV	Illuminated restaurant travel lodge sign 12.10.89	AC	
89/2313	Internally illuminated shop fascia & company pole sign 17.04.90	AC	
90/219	Self service petrol filling station & associated retail shop 10.04.90	AC	
91/930	Internally illuminated pole sign 31.07.91	AC	
92/1072	Removal of condition no. 4 (opening hours) from permission no's S/87/0260 and S/90/0219 09.09.92	R	
93/0094	O/L - Erection of a CRS foodstore and associated car parking at land adj. to Little Chef 24.11.93	R	
	03.06.94	App dis	

93/146	Restaurant extension to Little Chef 09.03.93	AC
95/0128	Extension to car park to provide 20 additional spaces 12.04.95	AC
95/0283	Internally illuminated pole sign 05.04.95	AC
95/1650	Internally illuminated static advert 23.01.96	AC
96/1822	Lowering of window cill and installation of new window 21.01.97	AC
96/1886	Internally illuminated wall mounted and free-standing display signs 05.02.97	AC
97/1610	16 bedroom extension to travelodge 27.01.98	AC
97/2039	Restaurant extension & additional car parking area 15.06.98	AC
98/0846	Internally illuminated pole sign & fascia sign 30.09.98	A
98/1028	Variation of condition 3 of S/90/1219 to extend hours of operation to 06.00- 24.00 hours daily 07.08.98	A
98/1042	Internally illuminated 7m high free standing sign 03.08.98	A
98/1815	Single storey rear extension to little chef restaurant forming new enclosed freezer and dry goods store. 22.1.99	AC
00/611	Extension for ATM (Cashpoint) machine. 23.05.00	AC
01/191	Single storey front extension to little chef restaurant. 23.03.01	AC
02/954	Single storey front extension to Little Chef and Burger King restaurant. 01.07.02	AC

**SITE LOCATION: STONEHENGE VISITORS FACILITIES, AMESBURY****POST CODE:**

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<b>Planning Ref</b>	<b>Proposal</b>	<b>Approved/ Conditions/ Refused</b>	<b>Date</b>
87/1932	Circular 18/84 – Improvements to visitors and staff facilities 24.02.88	A	
91/1650	Circular 18/84 - Proposed alterations to existing ticket & sales facilities 02.01.92	A	
91/700	O/L Erection of visitor facilities and car parking, construction of access road. Removal of existing visitor facilities and appropriate reinstatement of the site together with associated works 17.05.93	R App WD	
92/1378	Works to restore the landscape and improve the setting of Stonehenge and associated monuments by the restoration and re-contouring of the site 14.05.93	WD	
93/374	Circular 18/84 - Improvements to toilets, compound area and new hardstanding 19.05.93	A	
93/739	Temporary portable building for Stonehenge exhibition unit 07.07.93	AC	
93/1542	Relocation of car park entrance and exit with associated highway, car park, footpath and fence alterations 15.12.93	R	
94/1644	Temporary building to be used as a shop for a maximum period of 12 weeks 28.12.94	AC	
95/1229	Minor alterations to existing car park entrance. Alterations to existing accesses 04.06.96	AC	
96/754	Installation of temporary membership cabin for a period of 12 months 08.07.96	AC	

97/80	Alterations to existing storage compound at visitors facilities 28.02.97	AC	
97/307	Installation of a mobile ice-cream shop for a period of three months each calendar year 16.06.97	AC	
97/709	Alterations to existing membership cabin 03.07.97	AC	
97/1848	Renewal of circular 18/84 for improvements to toilets, compound and hardstanding 02/01/98	NO OBJ	
02/0728	Temporary car access 17/05/02	AC	
03/0657	Temporary planning for a purpose made 'membership recruiting' unit. 01.05.03	AC	
03/0658	Temporary planning permission for stationing of mobile ice cream unit for 3 months each calendar year. 08.05.03	AC	
03/0659	Temporary planning permission for main site compound and storage and toilets etc. 02/05/03	AC	
03/885	Temporary portakabin style shop and catering unit (6 month duration each year) 26/6/03	R	
04/0001	Construction of new Stonehenge visitor centre transit system undergrounding of 33kv power line removal of existing visitor facilities and replacement with new underground operations facility restoration works to A344	No Decision	
05/0388	Alterations to car park and provision of pedestrian footway and access ramp to existing visitor centre	AC	06/04/05

## LAND SOUTH OF FARGO ROAD

91/0700	O/L application - erection of visitor facilities & car parking, construction of access road, removal of existing visitor facilities & appropriate reinstatement	R	16/12/91
92/1378	Works to restore the landscape and improve the setting of Stonehenge and associated monuments		

	by the restoration and recontouring of the site	WD	14/5/93
89/1615	New substation	AC	12/10/89
99/1028	Renewal of substation security fence	AC	29/7/99

### **DURRINGTON FARM**

97/0780	Replacement silage clamp	Nob'	3/7/97
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### 55.Appendix 3 - Neighbour/Third Party Objections and Officers Response

Neighbour Objection Raised	No.	Officer Comment	Action
Tourism			
Visitor centre too far from Stones	98	<p>A through analysis of sites confirms both in policy and environmental terms that Countess is the best suited. A land train option will be provided to take visitors within 1.1 km of the Monument along a level walk with electric wheelchairs for the mobility impaired.</p> <p>Policy and SPG states that new facilities should be built outside of the World Heritage Site</p>	None
Length of stay for visitors will be too long/Casual visitors will be lost	66	<p>The business plan of the applicants is to make a much-improved visitor experience including multi-media interpretative information. Average visit will be in the region of 3/4 hours. The business plan is outside of the scope of planning considerations as are the vagaries of the behaviour of tourists</p>	None
Detriment of existing coach operators	10	<p>Patterns of tourism will change. However a 'fast track' system is planned for coach operators lasting @2 hours. The existing facilities have been branded a national disgrace and safeguarding the interests of one group against the wider public interest is not legitimate</p>	None
Detrimental to other aspects of local tourism	3	<p>It is considered that the improved quality of the experience and increased length of visit will encourage visitors to explore the neighbouring area and use facilities. This will be prompted by the new TIC within the Centre. There is expected to be a net benefit for other tourist attractions win the area</p>	<p>The Operational Management Plan will be required by condition and this will be expected to demonstrate how the tourist attractions in the surrounding area are to be promoted.</p>

<b>Neighbour Objection Raised</b>		<b>No.</b>	<b>Officer Comment</b>	<b>Action</b>
Visitor numbers will never be sufficient to finance the scheme	1	Market research indicates that visitors would welcome a more meaningful experience with greater information and a visit to the monument incorporating a walk. The applicants business plan is not a valid planning consideration	None	
<b>Local Community</b>				
Visitor centre site will affect the lives of local people adversely	36	A rigorous assessment of the likely impacts of the scheme has been conducted and this confirms that provided the mitigation measures proposed are satisfactorily implemented and maintained then there will be no unacceptable adverse impact upon the amenity of neighbouring residents. Mitigation measures are numerous but include landscaping, noise monitoring, design and siting and operating hours	Conditions/S106 to ensure mitigation measures proposed are satisfactorily implemented and maintained.	
Needs of local people and impact on community ignored	13	The application will all told create some 76 fulltime construction jobs and 79 FTE jobs, which would provide local opportunities. The proximity of the Centre to Amesbury will encourage linked trips and contribute to the viability and vitality of the existing town centre. Local people will be afforded free access to the monument and local anglers will enjoy free access to the river.	None	
Devaluation of property prices	12	Property prices are not planning issues. The impacts on residents amenity is covered above	None	
Pressure on Salisbury employment situation	1	The application will all told create some 76 fulltime construction jobs and 79 FTE jobs, which would provide local opportunities.	None	
VC is component of Amesbury so all it's components need to be exposed.	1	This objection is not sufficiently clear to be answered	None	

Neighbour Objection Raised		No.	Officer Comment	Action
Location				
Site is completely wrong Fargo plantation/Airman's cross/A344 is a better site	61	A through analysis of sites confirms both in policy and environmental terms that Countess is the best suited. The Environmental Impact Assessment confirms that Fargo/Airman's would cause very serious archaeological damage	None	
Too close to residential area	22	A rigorous assessment of the likely impacts of the scheme has been conducted and this confirms that provided the mitigation measures proposed are satisfactorily implemented and maintained then there will be no unacceptable adverse impact upon the amenity of neighbouring residents	Conditions/S106 to ensure mitigation measures proposed are satisfactorily implemented and maintained.	
Centre site positioned in area where most disruption will be caused.	14	A through analysis of sites confirms both in policy and environmental terms that Countess is the best suited. Although other alternative sites considered are more remote from existing settlement patterns invariably there are other environmental and policy reasons which mean that they are less suitable	None	
Site is too near to sewage works and recycling centre	9	This has been evaluated and discussed with Wessex Water who operate this facility and they have no objections on these grounds	None	
Entrance/Exit of visitor centre in wrong location	7	Both the County Engineer and Highways engineer raise no objections to the proposed access and egress. It is agreed that in order to comply with the Planning Brief for the VC site that the egress must physically prohibit right turn	Condition/106 to ensure egress junction is left turn only	
Area inside WHS should be used/was formerly acceptable	4	The World Heritage Site Management Plan has the objective of trying to remove 20 <sup>th</sup> /21 <sup>st</sup> Century development from the WHS. The Local Plan backs this up. What may have been considered acceptable years ago does not mean it will always be so.	None	

<b>Neighbour Objection Raised</b>		<b>No.</b>	<b>Officer Comment</b>	<b>Action</b>
Visitor centre should be on the west side of the A345	3	A through analysis of sites confirms both in policy and environmental terms that Countess is the best suited. Alternative sites considered invariably subject to significant environmental and policy constraints which mean that they are less suitable	None	
Downland setting is not appropriate as it would have been forested in those days	2	No one is claiming that a downland setting would have been the original setting for Stonehenge, but the Management Plan does state that it would be a more respectful, peaceful and appropriate setting than the existing one.	None	
Locate visitor centre in Solstice Park	2	Alternative site analysis did take inn Solstice Park, but the distance from the Monument and the incompatible land uses proposed meant it was considered inappropriate	None	
E H have not proved beyond all doubt that Countess East is best site	1	The Environmental Assessment and systematic analysis by officers makes a compelling case that Countess East is the best site.	None	
Cost to tax payers to screen site and build land train tunnel far more than any other site	1	The funding of the scheme is a matter for the applicants and outside of the remit of planning. Any planning consent will be controlled to ensure that what is approved is delivered	Conditions/106 ensuring the scheme is delivered as per the approved plans	
Site should be located behind Countess Farm	1	A through analysis of sites confirms both in policy and environmental terms that Countess is the best suited. A land train option will be provided to take visitors within 1.1 km of the Monument along a level walk with electric wheelchairs for the mobility impaired.  Policy and SPG states that new facilities should be built outside of the World Heritage Site	None	
VC should be in Amesbury to draw more tourists into the town	1	The site is in a good location to encourage linked trips with Amesbury, while still making the World Heritage Site accessible.	None	

Neighbour Objection Raised		No.	Officer Comment	Action
<b>Free Access</b>				
Loss of free visual access especially from A303	31	The A303 scheme is being pursued under the appropriate highways regulations and is not within the scope of this application	None	
Stones were gift to nation, access should be free	19	This is something of a fallacy. The Stones were given to the Commissioner of Works as a gift to the nation. This has passed through the hands of relevant Government ministries as reorganisation has taken place. It is now owned and charged by DCMS and charging for visitor centre entry is legal.	None	
The project is designed to deny the non-paying public views	6	Walking, cycling and riding throughout the VHS is encouraged and free of charge. If the A303 is placed in a tunnel obviously motorists will be denied the current view. The A303 scheme is being pursued under the appropriate highways regulations and is not within the scope of this application	None	
Visitors should be allowed access to Stonehenge in the way they wish	3	The application encourages dispersed access in a manner with far more choice than existing arrangements. People will be encouraged to walk, cycle and ride throughout the VHS and the transit system will have 4 drop off points to encourage exploration of a much wider area. Choice for mobility impaired visitors will vastly improve	None	
Stones will not stay free to local residents	2	This is incorrect. The application states that locals will benefit from a pass which allows free access to the VC, land train and VHS. (see Supplementary Submission Para 1.32, Page 15) This council should seek to ensure this commitment is followed through	Condition/106 to ensure free access scheme for locals	
Option to be bussed to the stones should be available to all visitors	2	This would require a drop off and pick up point, a turning area and shelter near to the monument, which is contrary to policy.	None	

<b>Neighbour Objection Raised</b>		<b>No.</b>	<b>Officer Comment</b>	<b>Action</b>
<b>Parking</b>				
Parking and traffic issues with visitors avoiding car park charges	8	This is a potentially serious issue. The applicants seek to control it by working in conjunction with the county council and adherence to their Travel Plan. The County are satisfied that these measures plus their own powers under Traffic Regulation Orders will be adequate to control the potential problem	106 to require the agreement of a Travel Plan which includes active measures to manage and prevent fly parking	
Parking issues with non paying visitors parking on local roads	3	As Above	As above	
Amesbury parking will be affected	3	The VC will have more than adequate parking spaces to cope with their busiest day. Visitors choosing to park in Amesbury Town Centre and then walk to the VC will be encouraged as this may bring new business to the existing service centre.	None	
Solstice parking on Fargo road etc	1	Solstice arrangement will continue as they have and temporary parking on land to the west of the Stones may be permitted as a one off occasion.	The Travel Plan should include details of Solstice management to discourage fly parking on neighbouring residential roads.	
<b>Transportation and Highways</b>				
Traffic impact and congestion on Countess Roundabout and road, access and egress will exacerbate this	91	The Traffic Assessment demonstrates satisfactorily that with the new flyover that the Roundabout will have more than adequate capacity to cater for the new Visitor Centre. However without the flyover then the junction will be inadequate	Condition/106 to ensure the flyover commences construction prior to the Visitor centre and is operational before the VC opens.	
Traffic impact and congestion on local road network	46	Traffic Assessment has confirmed that the proposal will not cause unacceptable impacts upon the local road network	As above	
Traffic increase in countess road	5	Assessments show that there is adequate capacity to cope with extra traffic on the road, providing the improvements to Countess Roundabout are secured	As above	

Neighbour Objection Raised		No.	Officer Comment	Action
Increased traffic will cause more accidents		5	Highways specialist for the County have expressed they are satisfied within highway safety impacts	None
It will encourage rat-running through northern villages		3	This is a concern shared by SDC and is expressed in the Planning Brief for the site, which is explicit in requiring no right turn junction from the VC. The plans submitted show that right turn, north up Countess Road is possible and it is considered that this will encourage rat-running	Condition/106 to ensure egress junction is left turn only and physically prohibits right turn north onto Countess Road
Travel Plan targets not acceptable		5	The Travel Plan framework is generally considered acceptable, although it will become more detailed during the section 106 discussions	Section 106 agreement to specify detailed content of the Travel Plan
Land train crossing Countess Road will cause traffic delay		1	The Land Train will pass under Countess Road in a tunnel	None
Validity and clarity of traffic assessments		1	These have been scrutinised by the County Specialists and officers and are considered to be credible and convincing	None
No reference to Solstice Business park traffic		1	Traffic modelling has taken into account potential growth in use of the network in the future	None
Increase in traffic on A303 which will impact on other sensitive areas		1	No major net increase in the number of visitors are envisaged, it is projected to stay at @800,000 per year. This means that any increase of traffic on the A303 as a result of this scheme will be negligible	None
Roads of the Turnpike trust cannot be closed down or removed without a proper debate in parliament. The A344 was a toll road, the milestone is sited near the heel stone		1	The Highways Authority under the correct legal framework will pursue the closure of the A344. This application is confined to the reinstatement works	None
Bus park is too far away from centre		1	The coach park is some distance from the Visitor Centre, but they will only park there once they have dropped visitors off at the designated drop off points which are only some 200 metres from the main entrance.	None
Proposal to build a monorail linking Avebury, Stonehenge and Salisbury cathedral as solution.		1	This is not part of the application before us and we must confine deliberations to the application as submitted	None
<b>Traffic Pollution</b>				
Traffic pollution		3	Our environmental analysis indicates that there will be no adverse impacts as a result of the scheme	None

<b>Neighbour Objection Raised</b>	<b>No.</b>	<b>Officer Comment</b>	<b>Action</b>
Additional cars will cause exhaust pollution	2	Our environmental analysis indicates that there will be no adverse impacts as a result of the scheme	None
<b>Government spending</b>			
Excessive cost/Waste of money	55	The funding of this scheme is not a planning issue	None
Project purely financially driven to allow English Heritage to make money	12	This is a subjective comment and one outside the scope of planning consideration. Analysis of the plans does make it clear that English Heritage's scheme will make significant in-roads to delivering key objectives of the Management Plan	None
Money should be spent on new local facilities	6	The funding of the project is not a planning issue. It should be taken up with central Government	None
Community charge will rise in order to pay for the project	4	This is not a locally funded project, and it will be expected to pay business rates on opening. There is no reason it should add to the burden of local taxation	None
Money should be used on the roads	3	How the Government chooses to prioritise spending is not a planning issue	None
Wrong government priority	2	How the Government chooses to prioritise spending is not a planning issue	None
Money should be used to improve the road to Devon Cornwall	1	How the Government chooses to prioritise spending is not a planning issue	None
Money should be spent on a new hospital	1	How the Government chooses to prioritise spending is not a planning issue	None
Use the tunnel money to build Salisbury a bypass.	1	How the Government chooses to prioritise spending is not a planning issue	None
<b>Land train</b>			
Land train route will destroy the quality of life for local residents of Fargo road and Larkhill	36	Assessment has shown that the land train will not have an unacceptable impact on neighbours provided the mitigation measures are implemented and maintained. These include landscape screen planting and control of noise levels.	Conditions/S106 to ensure mitigation measures proposed are satisfactorily implemented and maintained.



<b>Neighbour Objection Raised</b>		<b>No.</b>	<b>Officer Comment</b>	<b>Action</b>
Land train impractical/not environmentally friendly/suitable	31	There is no reason to assume the land train is impracticable. The non-penetrative and reversible nature of the track construction is a good environmental design solution. It will be designed to run on low emission LPG and also electricity when technology permits	None	
Land train is a safety worry for local children	10	Due to the routing of the land train and its comparative slow speed (Max. 15kph), it is considered that such safety issues are negligible.	None	
Land train runs too close to houses	11	The land train will run comparatively close to the rear boundaries of properties at 50-120 Fargo Road, (@30 meters at the nearest point) However with the mitigation measures proposed and substantial screen planting it is not considered that it will cause unacceptable detriment to residents.	Conditions/S106 to ensure mitigation measures proposed are satisfactorily implemented and maintained.	
Access route to the stones is in the wrong location	7	Careful analysis of alternatives has confirmed that the twin routes of central and northern are in environmental terms the most acceptable	None	
Modern Land trains are not fitting for Stonehenge	2	From the Stonehenge amphitheatre the land trains will not be visible. Furthermore to the northeast portion of the WHS the routes are discreetly planning alongside existing routes and hedgerows, which minimises the impact. Also the impact should be weighed against the removal of the A344 and existing facilities from the setting of the Stones	None	
No details of land train refuelling	2	Refuelling and servicing will be carried out to the rear of the Visitor Centre		
Land train tunnel will have a significant visual and noise impact on Countess Road residents	3	Analysis of noise and vibration demonstrates that the operation of the land train will not cause a nuisance to neighbours. As it enters and exits the tunnel it is in a cutting and therefore at it's closest point to residential properties will be hidden from view	Conditions setting maximum noise levels permitted and a monitoring and enforcement regime	

<b>Neighbour Objection Raised</b>		<b>No.</b>	<b>Officer Comment</b>	<b>Action</b>
How will visitors who have booked an out of hours visit get there?	1	As with current arrangements there will be the opportunity to book a visit into the Stone circle itself, prior to general opening. These visitors, who are comparatively few in number will be taken to the monument by minibus, utilising the adapted bed of the A344	None	None
<b>Crime and Security</b>				
Security breach to local houses	23	Measures are proposed to minimise opportunities for crime. The VC site will be secured and guarded at night and the route of the land train and its tunnel will be gated. The applicant has offered to erect new fences for neighbours following discussions. Both the Police and MOD have been consulted and do not object to the application.	A condition requiring details of boundary treatments will be recommended	A condition requiring details of boundary treatments will be recommended
Security breach to army camps	6	The MOD have not raised objections to this proposal	None	None
Increased crime	1	See above	None	None
Increased likelihood of trespass on local properties	1	See above	A condition requiring details of boundary treatments will be recommended	A condition requiring details of boundary treatments will be recommended
Drugs will increase	1	This is speculation. If there is a breach of the drugs laws then this is a matter for the Police	None	None
How will fire and ambulances get to the stones themselves?	1	An access will be retained along the adapted bed of the A344	None	None
<b>A303</b>				
Project should not be determined until decision has been made on the tunnel	21	It is agreed that the flyover is a critical element, without which the visitor centre could not proceed. It is considered that conditions and legal agreements must be used to ensure that the visitor centre application cannot proceed until such time as the flyover is constructed.	Condition/106	Condition/106

Neighbour Objection Raised	No.	Officer Comment	Action
A303 should be dualled	9	The A303 scheme is being pursued under the appropriate highways regulations and is not within the scope of this application. For information the proposal is to dual the carriageway	None
A303 tunnel dangerous and a waste of money	2	The A303 scheme is being pursued under the appropriate highways regulations and is not within the scope of this application	None
A303 should be sunken	1	The A303 scheme is being pursued under the appropriate highways regulations and is not within the scope of this application	None
Application dependant on tunnel which is not certain	1	It is agreed that the flyover is a critical element, without which the visitor centre could not proceed. It is considered that conditions and legal agreements must be used to ensure that the visitor centre application cannot proceed until such time as the flyover is constructed.	None
<b>Access for the mobility impaired</b>			
Insurmountable obstacles for disabled, elderly or those with young children	23	It is considered that the scheme will in fact improve access for the disabled, by providing choice and a much wider opportunity to enjoy wider tracts of the World Heritage Site via 4 land train drop off points.	None
<b>Current site</b>			
Improve the existing site, buildings and roads	19	The existing site is extremely injurious to the setting of the stones and even with a facelift would still form an incongruous 21 <sup>st</sup> Century incursion on the monuments setting. Polices and the WHS Management Plan indicate the new centre should be built outside of the World Heritage Site	None
Build it underground at present site	9	There are a number of environmental constraints especially archaeological destruction through the extensive additional digging that would be required. Polices and the WHS Management Plan indicate the new centre should be built outside of the World Heritage Site	None

<b>Neighbour Objection Raised</b>		<b>No.</b>	<b>Officer Comment</b>	<b>Action</b>
The existing facilities are adequate		7	Disagree, the existing facilities are of a very poor quality, detract from the setting of Stonehenge and provide an overwhelming visitor experience.	None
<b>Noise pollution</b>				
Noise pollution		18	Analysis of noise and vibration demonstrates that the operation of the new proposals will not cause a nuisance to neighbours. The council will require and environmental monitoring scheme to be in place and will set maximum noise levels which the land train and visitor centre must not exceed. Opening hours will be controlled to prevent early morning and night-time operation	Conditions setting maximum noise levels permitted and a monitoring and enforcement regime
Problems with increased noise and property access on countess road		6	See above	
Noise of gunfire, planes from MoD use of plain		1	It is not envisaged that this application has any relationship with the MOD's continued use of Salisbury Plain.	None
<b>Wildlife</b>				
Impact on wildlife		16	The council has carried out an Appropriate Assessment under the Habitat Reg's. This along with the Environmental Impact Assessment show that providing the mitigation measures proposed are implemented and maintained then this scheme will not cause significant harm to ecological interests	Conditions/106 will be used to ensure that the Construction Environmental Management Plan is implemented
<b>Contrary to planning policies</b>				
Loss of greenfield site		9	A thorough analysis of sites confirms both in policy and environmental terms that Countess is the best suited.	None
Not complimentary to the local area		4	To the contrary, in sustainability terms the proximity to Amesbury is considered to be a major benefit of this site. It will contribute to the vitality and viability of the Town Centre through encouraging linked trips. The application will all told create some 76 fulltime construction jobs and 79 FTE jobs, which would provide local opportunities.	None

Neighbour Objection Raised	No.	Officer Comment	Action
Main design not in keeping with local agreed designs	2	The design is considered to be excellent. It is innovative, modern, subtle and appropriate. The council is not aware of any plans being agreed locally prior to this application	None
Back land development	2	This is not the case	None
Proposed VC site does not form part of the Local Plan for development adopted in 2003	1	True the Countess Site is not allocated in the Local Plan. But if the development plan is read as a whole in conjunction with SPG of the WHS Management Plan and Countess Planning Brief and taking into account the site selection process, then it does emerge in policy terms as the best site available.	None
Supermarket was refused permission on this site. What's different about the VC?	1	An application for a food store was refused over ten years ago. The policies affecting the two land uses are very different and out of town retail use, which could draw trade, away from existing Town Centres is strongly resisted. The VC application is linked to very significant environmental benefits for the World Heritage Site	None
Does not form part of local plan adopted in 2003	1	Not true, the local plan has policy T3: 'It is proposed that a new visitor centre will be provided for the Stonehenge World Heritage Site'. True the Countess Site is not allocated in the Local Plan. But if the development plan is read as a whole in conjunction with SPG of the WHS Management Plan and Countess Planning Brief and taking into account the site selection process, then it does emerge in policy terms as the best site available.	None
Not consistent with the Management Plan	3	Disagree, assessment shows that the application is based on delivering key objectives of the Management Plan	None
Not consistent with planning policy	1	Disagree. In principle this development is supported by the Development Plan	None

Neighbour Objection Raised		No.	Officer Comment	Action
Environment				
Impact on River Avon	12	The council has carried out an Appropriate Assessment under the Habitat Reg's. This along with the Environmental Impact Assessment show that providing the mitigation measures proposed are implemented and maintained then this scheme will not cause significant harm to ecological interests	Conditions/106 will be used to ensure that the Construction Environmental Management Plan is implemented	
Strategic environmental impact assessment inadequate/non-existent	7	Initial assessment of the ES did identify gaps in their information and hence further information was requested. This was supplied as a supplementary submission and further consultation and analysis undertaken. The Environmental Assessment is considered to be a thorough, credible and acceptable document	None	
Appropriate Assessment for River Avon has not been done	4	The council has carried out an Appropriate Assessment under the Habitat Reg's. It is included at Appendix 5 of this report.	None	
Environmental 'cost' is too high	7	Scrutiny of the Environmental Impacts indicates that providing mitigation measures proposed are implemented and maintained that the scheme will not have a significant adverse impact on the environment	Conditions/S 106 to ensure mitigation measures proposed are satisfactorily implemented and maintained.	
WHS is too sensitive to be doing anything to it.	2	The scheme is based on delivering key objectives of the WHS Management Plan. It is seeking to deliver a net benefit through removal of a substantial amount of inappropriate development from the setting of Stonehenge	None	
Large number of visitors will cause litter	4	Agree, this may be a problem and could have a serious adverse impact on the WHS. A management regime to deal with this is required from the applicants	Condition/106 to ensure adequate measures to control litter	

<b>Neighbour Objection Raised</b>		<b>No.</b>	<b>Officer Comment</b>	<b>Action</b>
Increased production of waste material	1	Infrastructure is in place to deal with the volumes of waste that will be produced. However there are opportunities for recycling that are yet to be fully exploited and in accordance with County Council SPG, should this application go ahead a full waste audit should be carried out to address these issues	Condition/106 to require a waste audit and measures for recycling.	
Excessive environmental impact on northern land train route when bridleway 9a could be used	1	Assessment of alternative routes wit the dispersed strategy adopted has confirmed that the northern route will not cause excessive environmental impact. The track lies over the ground needing no excavation and the scheme is fully reversible.	None	
<b>Landscape character</b>				
Ruining the unique character of Stonehenge	6	Disagree. The scheme is based on delivering key objectives of the WHS Management Plan. It is seeking to deliver a net benefit through removal of a substantial amount of inappropriate development from the setting of Stonehenge thereby returning it to a more respectful landscape.	None	
Destroying an historical landscape	2	Disagree. The scheme is based on delivering key objectives of the WHS Management Plan. It is seeking to deliver a net benefit through removal of a substantial amount of inappropriate development from the setting of Stonehenge thereby returning it to a more respectful landscape.	None	
Currently Stonehenge is largely uncommercialised. VC would change that.	1	The numbers of visitors are expected to stay at current levels of about 800,000 per year, but the quality of the experience is to be improved. The manifestation of commercialisation right next to the Stones will be removed.	None	
<b>Archaeology</b>				
Impact on archaeology	22	The whole of the application has been subject of a very high level of archaeological scrutiny and quite right to. The conclusions drawn are the application can proceed without significant harm.	None	

<b>Neighbour Objection Raised</b>		<b>No.</b>	<b>Officer Comment</b>	<b>Action</b>
Site must be closer to the monument to comply with UNESCO's criterion for WHS's		1	Disagree - The WHS Management Plan has been written based on guidelines prepared by the International Committee on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), the expert body which advises UNESCO	None
<b>Construction</b>				
Construction work will cause congestion and inconvenience		4	Construction will inevitably cause some disruption, however the Construction Environmental Management Plan will mitigate these impacts as far as possible.	Conditions/106 will be used to ensure that the Construction Environmental Management Plan is implemented
<b>Pedestrian</b>				
Will ruin a beautiful and popular walking route		4	Disagree. The scheme is based on delivering key objectives of the WHS Management Plan. It is seeking to deliver a net benefit through removal of a substantial amount of inappropriate development from the setting of Stonehenge thereby returning it to a more respectful landscape. It will also seek to provide increased free access around the WHS.	None
Crossing the land train route will be dangerous for walkers		3	The junction will be carefully planned to ensure the safety of all	Condition/106 detailing how this junction is to work
Pedestrian access to stones via Byway 12 is dangerous		1	Byway 12 will be part surfaced and incorporate some segregation between users who will be predominantly pedestrians, cyclists, wheelchair users and horses. There is no reason to suppose that this will cause unacceptable conflicts	None
Proposal wants to change Bridleway routes and use.		1	The use of the Bridleways will still be open to current users. There will be some minor diversion, but this will not alter the overall connectivity or truncate it	None



Neighbour Objection Raised		No.	Officer Comment	Action
VC Design				
Turning it into amusement park	3	Disagree. The design of the visitor centre is considered to be excellent and a fitting, subtle and dignified building to herald the trip to Stonehenge	None	
Size of car park is inadequate	4	Disagree. Parking analysis shows that the car park has more than enough capacity to cope with the busiest days. For freak events or unplanned growth an area of overflow car parking is shown.	Condition. The car park must be complete prior to opening of the VC building	
Car and coach parks will be an eyesore	2	Disagree. The parking facilities are subject to land reprofiling and substantial landscape planting, which will render them inconspicuous when, viewed from outside of the site.	Conditions	
Centre too large	1	In design and landscape terms the building is considered to be subtle and non intrusive within the landscape.	None	
Architecture not sympathetic with the area/will be a hazard on sunny days	1	Disagree. The design of the visitor centre is considered to be excellent and a fitting, subtle and dignified building to herald the trip to Stonehenge	None	
The centre and train will be an eyesore	1	Disagree. The design of the visitor centre is considered to be excellent and a fitting, subtle and dignified building to herald the trip to Stonehenge. From the Stonehenge amphitheatre the land trains will not be visible. Furthermore to the northeast portion of the WHS the routes are discreetly planning alongside existing routes and hedgerows, which minimises the impact. Also the impact should be weighed against the removal of the A344 and existing facilities from the setting of the Stones	None	
The large VC is designed to make visitors feel they don't need to see the Stones themselves	1	The business case is not a planning consideration. Visitors will need to make up there own minds	None	
VC looks like a bunker.	1	Partially agree and this is positive making it subtle and unobtrusive within the landscape.	None	

<b>Neighbour Objection Raised</b>		<b>No.</b>	<b>Officer Comment</b>	<b>Action</b>
<b>Drop off points</b>				
Drop off point too far from stones	4	The shortest walk to the monument from the Durrington Farm Complex would be 1.1km each way along a level path. Electric wheelchairs would be provided. Severely disabled people would be bussed to the Stones. These are considered reasonable and acceptable arrangements	None	
No design plans for the drop off structures	1	Detailed plans have been submitted and are further included in the Supplementary document at Appendix H	None	
Drop off shelters are major structures and will interfere with the look of the landscape of the WHS	1	The shelters are lightweight largely transparent and discreetly located. It is not considered that they will be unduly detrimental to the character of the WHS	None	
<b>Agriculture</b>				
Impact on agriculture	6	This is an important issue. Some of the best and most versatile agricultural land will be lost at the Countess Road East site. Structure Plan policy seeks to protect such land. However, the unique and exceptional circumstances related to the case, the environmental and economic benefits to be gained, together with the lack of feasible alternatives all lead to the unavoidable conclusion that this planning application is in accordance with those provisions of the development plan, which will permit the principal of development.	None	
<b>Comments on EH</b>				
Project ill-conceived	3	The planning application has been well put together and is comprehensive. The plans for the new visitor centre have been well thought through and justified.	None	
The project is a fait accompli	1	No. This application has been subject to an impartial planning process. It is determined upon its own planning merits taking into account planning policy and all other material considerations	None	
English Heritage are incompetent and should be abolished	1	Subjective and erroneous comment.	None	

<b>Neighbour Objection Raised</b>		<b>No.</b>	<b>Officer Comment</b>	<b>Action</b>
EH can't take no for an answer. Amesbury residents have objected to this many times.		1	The motivation for the application is clearly explained by the applicants. The planning issues are confined to scrutiny of its acceptability and not the character of the applicants.	None
<b>Comments on stones</b>				
Stones should be sold to the Americans		1	Subjective and erroneous point	None
Stones are dreary and uninteresting		1	Subjective and erroneous point	
Stonehenge should be ground up and used for a sub-base for local roads		1	Subjective and erroneous point	
Craziest idea anyone has ever dreamt up for this country. Will be a complete white elephant		4	Subjective and erroneous point	
<b>Bad weather</b>				
Nowhere for people to go during bad weather at the monument		1	Visiting Stonehenge has, by its very nature always been an outdoor pursuit. There will be shelters at the principle drop off points and limited shelter at the retained underground facilities at the monument. As the monument is in England visitors will have to live with the vagaries of the weather.	None
<b>Screening</b>				
Screening issues for affected residents		1	The applicants have agreed to offer residents new fences to be agreed. There is also substantial landscape planting proposed to screen the proposals.	Condition to ensure boundary strategy and screening is adequately implemented and maintained.
<b>Electricity</b>				
Re-siting of electricity pylon will create eyesore for residents facing west on countless road		1	This has been clarified as part of the supplementary submission. Two 33kv power lines that cross the site are to be buried. With regard to the 132kv high voltage lines Scottish and Southern have drawn up plans to direct electric cable underground under there own permitted development rights.	None

<b>Neighbour Objection Raised</b>	<b>No.</b>	<b>Officer Comment</b>	<b>Action</b>
<b>Flooding</b>			
VC will increase flooding of the countess services site	1	The Environment Agency have been consulted and are satisfied that these proposals are acceptable	None
<b>Cyclists</b>			
Provisions for cyclists will worsen especially with loss of underpass	1	Disagree. There will connectivity to the surrounding area, byways will be improved to facilitate cycling, 40 cycle parking spaces will be provided at the VC, bicycle hire will be available, and the SUTRANS link will pass thorough the site.	None
<b>Plan detail</b>			
Plans not correct as farmland will remain farmed and with relevant buildings in it	1	English Heritage owns the Countess Road site and the application contains no plans for the continued farming of this land. The wider WHS is predominantly is arable and livestock use and there are no plans to later or interfere with this as part of these proposals	None
<b>Light pollution</b>			
Light pollution	1	Agreed, it is important that sky glow does not impact upon the WHS. The Royal Astronomical Society has been consulted. If the application proceeds then a condition will specify all lighting will be 'cut off' design and limited to certain hours to avoid this issue	Condition.



## 56. Appendix 4

### How to Appraise Design

It is often argued that appraisal of what constitutes good design is subjective and that "beauty is in the eye of the beholder. This is not a credible argument and will not be accepted by Salisbury District Council as an excuse for poorly exercised and ill-conceived schemes. The appraisal of good design has widely accepted and internationally established principles as much as any other of the recognised professions.

It has been one of the purposes of this guide to try and break down some of the mystique and misconceptions that surround the issue of design. To this end this appendices highlights the stages that The Local Planning Authority will go through when appraising your scheme. There are no secret formulas and it may provide you with some very valuable guidance that you can apply to your ideas at an early stage to see if they are likely to be acceptable to the Council

#### **Step 1: Think about the spaces around your site and consider how they connect.**

Think about the framework of routes and spaces that connect locally and more widely, and the way other developments, routes and spaces relate to one another. Consideration of how your particular proposals can plug into the existing framework and not harm it should be your starting point. These issues are often referred to as "**Layout: Urban Structure**"

#### **Step 2 Take a look at the predominant pattern of buildings in the area?**

You should look at the pattern of the arrangement of street blocks, plots and their buildings in a settlement. Is your area characterised by a regular pattern such as a 1930's style development, or is more irregular due to the use of many different types of buildings. You should try and ensure that your proposals are in keeping with the general pattern that prevails in your area. These issues are often referred to as, "**Layout: Urban Grain**"

#### **Step 3 Take time to look at the wider landscape**

Consider the character and appearance of the land, including its shape, form ecology, natural features, colours and elements, and the way these components combine. Then think how your proposal can be designed to blend into it. May be the use of native species for new hedges, or the creation of contours could help. Is there an established field pattern your development could sit within without causing harm?

#### **Step 4 How much can you realistically expect to get on this site?**

You should consider the amount of development on a given piece of land and the range of uses. Density influences the intensity of development, and in combination with the mix of uses can affect a place's vitality and viability. However all sites have their limits and you will need to carefully go through steps 1 to 3 to help you arrive at a reasonable amount of development. Overdevelopment, which is shoehorning too many buildings on one site, can have a damaging impact on the appearance of a settlement, similarly bland low-density units may be inappropriate in an area characterised by high-density development such as the centre of Salisbury. In each case the key to getting this step right is making sure steps 1 to 3 are carried out rigorously. These issues are often referred to as **Density and Mix**

#### **Step 5 Consider how big your development should be**

You must design your new building taking full care to ensure it is of an appropriate scale. Scale is the size of the building in relation to its surroundings or the size of parts of a building or its details, particularly in relation to the size of a person. Height determines the impact of development on views, vistas and skylines. You must also consider the combined effect of the arrangement, volume and shape of the building in relation to other buildings and spaces. Again it is essential that the scale of your development respects its context and is in keeping with the surrounding pattern of development. You must consider the impact the building would have when viewed by other people passing by.

#### **Step 6 What is your finished building actually going to look like?**

Once you have gone thoroughly through steps 1 to 4 you must then think about the design details of your proposal. Things to consider are the craftsmanship, building techniques, decoration, styles and lighting of a building or structure. This includes careful choice of materials where you should consider the texture, colour, pattern and durability of materials and how they are used. Care should be taken so that the style of the building respects those of the wider context, although this doesn't necessarily

mean you must copy what's already there. Often a different style can be just as effective. Look for example at the contrasting styles that sit together so well in many of our settlements.

### Step 7 How to realise your plans

Once you have been through the previous 6 steps, you will be in a position to draft up your plans. We strongly suggest that a qualified architect with a proven track record is chosen, as drawing up detailed plans is a skilful and difficult job. Once the plans have produced then please send them into this office for pre-application discussion so that we can inform you if they are on the right lines. When finally submitting your planning application you should keep your workings from stages 1 to 6 and submit them in the form of a "design statement" that explains and supports your chosen design.

### Checklist for Appraising a Scheme

CRITERIA	ASSESSMENT
<p><b>Layout: Urban Structure</b> The framework of routes and spaces that connect locally and more widely, and the way developments, routes and spaces relate to one another</p>	
<p><b>Layout: Urban Grain</b> The pattern of the arrangement of street blocks, plots and their buildings in a settlement</p>	
<p><b>Landscape</b> The character and appearance of the land, including its shape, form ecology, natural features, colours and elements, and the way these components combine</p>	
<p><b>Density and Mix</b> The amount of development on a given piece of land and the range of uses. Density influences the intensity of development, and in combination with the mix of uses can affect a place's vitality and viability</p>	
<p><b>Scale; Height</b> Scale is the size of the building in relation to its surroundings or the size of parts of a building or it's details, particularly in relation to the size of a person. Height determines the impact of development on views, vistas and skylines</p>	
<p><b>Scale: Massing</b> The combined effect of the arrangement, volume and shape of the building in relation to other buildings and spaces</p>	
<p><b>Appearance: Details</b> The craftsmanship, building techniques, decoration, styles and lighting of a building or structure</p>	
<p><b>Appearance: Materials</b> The texture, colour, pattern and durability of materials and how they are used</p>	

## 57. Appendix 5 - Stonehenge Planning Application

### Appropriate Assessment under The Conservation (Natural Habitats & c) Regulations 1994

**Proposal:** Full Planning Application for New Visitor Centre and Associated Works for Stonehenge

**Location:** Land East And West Of Countess Road Amesbury

**International Nature Conservation Site:** River Avon System Site of Special Scientific Interest and River Avon Candidate Special Area of Conservation

**Nature/Description of Application;** Construction Of New Stonehenge Visitor Centre, Transit System, Undergrounding Of 33 Kv Power Line, Removal Of Existing Visitor Facilities & Replacement With New Underground Operations Facility, Restoration Works To A344 And Environmental Statement

#### **Purpose of this Document**

To set an agreed framework with English Nature and other parties as to how the Appropriate Assessment both alone and in combination will be carried out for the Stonehenge application. In each category below the relevant guidance is quoted to set the framework and then the work or proposed course of action to relate it to this specific planning application is highlighted within the yellow box.

#### **Legislative Framework**

Required by Regulation 48 of the *Habitats Regulations 1994* implementing Article 6(3) of the *Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC)*.

#### **Why is an appropriate assessment required for the Stonehenge Application?**

Under Regulation 48(1), an appropriate assessment needs to be undertaken in respect of any plan or project which:

- either alone or in combination with other plans or projects would be likely to have a *significant effect* on a European Site, and
- is not directly connected with the management of the site for nature conservation.

#### **Salisbury District Council (Competent Authority) Action**

The visitor centre is adjacent to and bordered by the River Avon cSAC and represents a major infrastructure proposal that may have significant impacts both alone and in combination on the ecology of the watercourse.

#### **When does the appropriate assessment need to be Carried Out?**

An appropriate assessment needs to be undertaken in respect of a plan or project described above before any "*competent authority*" decides to give any consent, permission or other authorisation for the plan or project. (Regs. 48(1) *et al*);

#### **Salisbury District Council (Competent Authority) Action**

Therefore the Appropriate Assessment (which includes an in-combination assessment) needs to be complete prior to the application being placed before the decision-making Planning and Regulatory Committee.



### **Determining significant Impacts**

Likely significant impacts have already been determined and hence the need for this appropriate assessment.

#### **Salisbury District Council (Competent Authority) Action**

English Nature in letter dated 28<sup>th</sup> October 2004 confirmed that the Stonehenge Application may have significant effect on the River Avon cSAC and that an Appropriate Assessment is required, alone and in combination with other plans and projects.

### **Who is the Competent Authority that will undertake the appropriate assessment?**

#### **Salisbury District Council (Competent Authority) Action**

Salisbury District Council.

### **What is an Appropriate Assessment?**

It is a self contained step in a wider decision making process,

According to the nature conservation value of the site, an appropriate assessment will identify whether particular aspects such as hydrology, disturbance to habitats and any other affects with a negative impact on a SAC will occur. When adverse impacts are identified the assessment will then indicate whether these impacts could be successfully mitigated, whereupon conditions may be applied or whether the destruction to habitat is so severe that the development should be refused. While the assessment required under the Habitats Regulations does not correspond to an environmental assessment, for some projects such as this where an EA will be necessary, it will be appropriate to use the information assembled for the purposes of the EA also for the assessment required by the Habitats Regulations.

### **Scope and Content**

The scope and content of an appropriate assessment will depend on the location, size and significance of the proposed plan or project (PPG 9 box C10). English Nature will advise on a case-by-case basis. According to the nature conservation interests of the site, English Nature will identify particular aspects that the appropriate assessment should address

#### **Salisbury District Council (Competent Authority) Action**

English Nature in their letter dated 28<sup>th</sup> October 2004 have confirmed that The AA is required both alone and in combination with other projects. This could be based on previously completed AA's, but updated with new information obtained by the Council. Based on previous AA's and in combination work carried out related to the River Avon cSAC the key impacts to be assessed can be summarised as:

- Runoff, spillage or leakage directly or via groundwater polluting the river during construction.
- Increase or decrease in run off during operational use of the development
- Increased demand upon water resources arising from increased visitor and employee populations
- Increased sewerage disposal impact upon
  - a) Capacity of existing treatment works
  - b) Quality/quantity of discharge into the Avon
  - c) Need for additional works to treatment works
- Direct loss of habitat
- Indirect pressures on the river system if floodplain dynamics are altered.

### **Relationship with Environmental Statement**

An Environmental Statement has been prepared and submitted with the planning application.

The ES addresses all significant environmental effects. It is appropriate to use the information assembled for the ES when carrying out the appropriate assessment under the Habitats Regulations. In view of this the ES clearly identifies, under a specific subject heading, the likely significant effects on the internationally important habitats and/or species.

### **Methodology - How the Appropriate Assessment, Alone and in Combination will be carried out for the Stonehenge application**

The Appropriate assessment will comprise of the following key stages:

The competent authority:

1. *Must consult English Nature*
2. *May consult the general public*
3. *Should clearly identify and understand the site's conservation objectives having regard to the advice of English Nature*
4. *Should require the applicant to provide such information as may reasonably be required for the purposes of the assessment*
5. *Should identify the effects of the proposal on the habitats and species of international importance and how those effects are likely to affect the site's conservation objectives*
6. *Should decide whether the plan or project, as proposed, would adversely affect the integrity of the site in the light of the conservation objectives*
7. *Should consider the manner in which the plan or project is proposed to be carried out, whether it could be modified, or whether conditions or restrictions could be imposed, so as to avoid adverse effects on the integrity of the site*
8. *Should conclude whether the proposal, as modified by conditions or restrictions, would adversely affect the integrity of the site*
9. *Should record the Assessment and notify English Nature of the Conclusions*

### **The Key Stages Related to the Stonehenge Planning application**

#### **1. Consulting English Nature**

Under Regulation 48(3) the competent authority must consult English Nature and must have regard to any representations made by English Nature.

#### **Salisbury District Council (Competent Authority) Action**

English Nature were consulted by letter dated 16.9.04 and have confirmed by letter dated 28.10.04 that an Appropriate Assessment both alone and in combination is required. Salisbury District Council as competent authority fully accepts these representations and will implement the requirements accordingly. English Nature provided detailed comments to Salisbury District Council and these form the basis for the request for further information in section 4 below

## 2. Consulting the General Public

Under Regulation 48(4) the competent authority may (if it considers it appropriate) take the opinion of the general public, on the implications of the proposal for the site's conservation objectives, using whatever steps they consider necessary. This may usefully include taking the opinion of others with relevant knowledge or expertise.

### **Salisbury District Council (Competent Authority) Action**

After discussion with Legal services and balancing the nature of the proposals, the character and proximity of the cSAC against the extensive public consultation of 11 weeks already undertaken as part of the planning process, it has been decided that additional consultation was not merited in this case.

## 3. The Site's Conservation Objectives

English Nature will be able to give a clear statement of the site's conservation objectives.

### **Salisbury District Council (Competent Authority) Action**

Related to the previous Appropriate Assessment work it is apparent that the sites conservation objectives are based on the River Avon and its major tributaries, The Bourne, Till, Wylye, Nadder and Dockens Water being recommended as eligible for cSAC status in 1998 because it contains a high diversity of habitat types and species which are of European importance given that they are either rare or threatened.

The species of European importance are:

- Atlantic Salmon (*salmo salar*)
- Bullhead (*Cottus gobio*) for which the River Avon catchment is considered to be one of the best areas in the United Kingdom
- Brook Lamprey (*Lampetra planeri*) a small, jawless, eel like freshwater fish, for which the River Avon catchment is considered to be one of the best areas in the United Kingdom
- Sea Lamprey (*Petromyzon marinus*) The largest lamprey found in the UK. Inhabits coastal waters and spawns in rivers, for which the River Avon catchment is considered to be one of the best areas in the United Kingdom (although not the upper reaches of the River Avon)
- Desmoulin's whorl snail (*vertigo moulinsiana*) a small snail usually found in long established environments bordering lowland rivers and lakes. It occurs in scattered sites between the Norfolk Broads and Dorset. Within Europe, only England and Ireland have reasonable populations. The River Avon catchment is considered to be one of the best areas in the United Kingdom
- Flowing water vegetation (*Ranunculus fluitantis* & *Callitriche-Batrachion*). Watercourses dominated by water-crowfoot species reflecting relatively unpolluted water. The River Avon catchment is considered to be one of the best areas in the United Kingdom

#### 4. Requiring Further Information

The competent authority, taking the advice of English Nature where necessary, should require the applicant to provide such information as the competent authority may reasonably require for the purposes of making the assessment (Reg.48(2)).

##### **Salisbury District Council (Competent Authority) Action**

In this case to allow the assessment to be made additional information has been requested from the applicants English Heritage and their agents, Chris Blandford Associates at a meeting held in the Planning Office, Salisbury on 18<sup>th</sup> November 2004. The information requested was as follows:

- Empirical evidence on potential future growth in visitor numbers. Calculations for likely foul water loads and demand for water resources have been based on current levels of visitors. No account has been taken of potential growth and this needs to be accounted for. This may also have implications for traffic loadings and resulting pollution risk.
- Further detail is required of the method used to assess demand for water, especially with regard to how increased demand on resources resulting from this proposal may have adverse impacts on the flow.
- Figures on water usage from this proposal have been provided to inform previous AA's. The applicants should work with Wessex Water to provide an updated estimate of demand from this proposal and to relate demand to impacts on flows alone and in combination with other projects and proposals.
- Foul water assessments are satisfactory; with the exception that further detail will be required for higher visitor projections.
- The detailed drainage scheme is not considered to be sufficient to conclude that there will be no significant effect on water quality during operation. Further detail of the system is required; to cover operation and maintenance requirements and to ensure high water quality can be maintained.
- In particular it is imperative that all possible eventualities for removing any risk of pollution to the river and swamp area are addressed. The location of the infiltration trench is not clearly specified and needs to be clarified to ensure there are no direct impacts on habitat
- The assessment of the risk of pollution is inadequate to justify the conclusion of a neutral effect on the river. The following further detail is required
  - a) The risk assessment should include an attempt to identify the magnitude and likelihood of occurrence as separate parameters. Together these generate the level of risk for each issue. At present there is no information on the expected relative significance of the various "risk" identified
  - b) De-icing for winter maintenance is not mentioned. This can be a major source of pollutants, introducing sodium and chlorine into run off. The detention/swale/wetland system should be designed with these impacts in mind
  - c) Storage requirements for on-site de-icing agents need to be carefully considered. Cyanide compounds can be present and represent an additional risk.
- The ES states, at para 10.4.26, that a "modification of the final outfall position ...may be necessary to coordinate with the A303 Stonehenge Improvement Scheme". English Nature understands that there may still be a requirement for a separate treatment system for this scheme, due to liability and management issues. In view of this, scheme designs for the Visitor Centre should be developed and described within the ES which account for both possibilities
- There is no specific assessment of potential impacts on groundwater and effects in relation to the SSSI/cSAC. This needs to be clearly outlined and conclusions justified.
- English Nature is concerned that there could be impacts on the SSSI/cSAC and associated species from disturbance and pollution if access should increase as a result of the development. However we are concerned that access should be managed to ensure disturbance and negative impacts are minimised and the detail of any access proposals would need to be clarified
- Further detail on the design and operational arrangements for mitigation measures proposed for the construction and operational stages and for management post-construction are required in order for English Nature to be satisfied that their implementation and maintenance has been duly considered. The detail will need to be agreed with the Environment Agency and English Nature.
- There is an intention to bury some electric cables to "re-emerge on the East bank of the River Avon". This has the potential to cause an adverse effect on the SSSI/cSAC and further detail is required of the methodology for this works.

## 5. Identifying Effects

Having regard to English Nature's advice and other consultation responses and, where relevant, taking account of the ES or any other information supplied by the developer/proposer, or otherwise available, the competent authority should identify what the effects of the proposal are likely to be. The effects considered should be those of the plan or project, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, on the habitats and species of international importance and how those effects are likely to affect the site's conservation objectives. This will involve considering, for example, the nature, scale, geographic extent, timing, duration and magnitude of direct and indirect effects; considering the degree of certainty in the prediction of effects; considering all mitigating measures already contained in the proposal and the extent to which these measures are likely to avoid, reduce or ameliorate adverse effects on the international nature conservation interests. It is the residual effects, after mitigation, that are considered at this stage.

### **Salisbury District Council (Competent Authority) Action**

The information supplied by the applicants to allow an Appropriate Assessment to be made is contained within the Environmental Statement, which accompanies the planning application. From this information, which has been the subject to scrutiny and assessment by the key consultees and the Technical Consultative Group, the following risks can be identified

There are the following acknowledged impacts and risks:

- Changes to water quality from run-off during construction and operation affecting flora and fauna
- Changes in hydrology caused by construction events, including drying out of the floodplain fen and subsequent changes in vegetation
- Increased need for foul water treatment and potential upgrade of existing facilities.
- Noise impacts from piling and machinery.
- Risk of pollution and failure of mitigation measures during construction, which is assessed as a moderate adverse impact
- There is a small adverse impact that may occur due to a rise in Biochemical Oxygen Demand (BOD) in the River through additional foul sewage treatment at Amesbury Sewage works.
- Increase in visitor numbers, which is key to calculating likely foul water loads and demands for water resources
- Groundwater pollution could occur during construction and operation
- Increased and unmanaged public access to the river could cause damage to habitats
- Burying of the 33 kV power lines has the potential to cause harm.

## 6. The In-combination Assessment

As well as determining what impacts the planning application on its own may have on the integrity of the SAC, there is also a requirement to look at other planned developments and extant consents in the area to assess whether cumulatively they will have an adverse impact on the nature conservation of the river.

In 2002 a report was endorsed by the Planning and regulatory committee which considered an in combination assessment of major development proposals may have upon the health and integrity of the River Avon. This report has been used as a baseline with the major developments identified at this time being updated to include any subsequent major developments where their potential contributory impacts need to be taken into account cumulatively:

Plan or Project	Brief Description
Project Allenby	Redevelopment of Salisbury Plain Garrisons at Tidworth, Bulford and Larkhill
Training Estate, Salisbury Plain	EIA submitted to LPA's addressing post strategic defence review use of the Plain
Solstice Business Park	Business park development
Residential development	Up to 1000 houses, land south of Boscombe Road Amesbury
Stonehenge Visitors Centre	As per this application
A303 Improvements	Undergrounding and flyover
Wylve Valley Relief Road	Route options
Brunel Link and Harnham Relief Road	Major road schemes in Salisbury
The Maltings Redevelopment	Major city centre redevelopment in Salisbury
Ringwood, New Forest	Retail redevelopment
Old Sarum	Up to 650 dwellings
Council Office Centralisation	New centralised offices at Bourne Hill

The 2002 report has formed the baseline for the in-combination assessment of the Stonehenge application the status of major projects reviewed. This shows there are two new major projects planned which have been taken into account and that in fact a number of the projects included above are not likely to happen within the foreseeable future (e.g. the Maltings Redevelopments and Wylve Valley Relief Road). There has been therefore a net reduction on the likely in-combination impacts and the conclusions drawn in 2002 are therefore still germane to this case. Further information where it can reasonably be expected to be attained, such as the A303 Stonehenge Improvement Scheme, Statement to Inform the Appropriate Assessment, then the most up to date information has been used to produce the most up to date assessment of the current pressures on the River Avon.

#### **Salisbury District Council (Competent Authority) Action**

The conclusions of the in-combination appropriate assessment: construction pollution issues controllable through management programme. Surface run off to be attenuated to greenfield rate. Requirement for additional abstraction and effluent treatment, which will need to be agreed with the appropriate authorities.

The overall impact of the Stonehenge planning application in combination with other projects is that there are minor tangible risks but they can be successfully mitigated through condition.

### **7. Integrity of the Site**

Having regard to English Nature's advice, other consultation responses and any other information available, the competent authority should decide whether the plan or project, as proposed, would adversely affect the integrity of the site, in the light of its conservation objectives. That is, whether the plan or project would adversely affect the "coherence of the site's ecological structure and function, across its whole area, or the habitats, complex of habitats and/or populations of species for which the site is or will be classified" (PPG 9 box C10). An adverse effect on integrity is likely to be one which prevents the site from making the same contribution to favourable conservation status for the relevant feature as it did at the time of its designation.

The form of words used in Regulation 48(5) implies that a precautionary approach should be taken in considering effects on integrity, in line with the Government's principles for sustainable development (see *Sustainable Development: the UK strategy* page 33). Regulation 48(5) says that (subject to Regulation 49) projects may only proceed if the competent authority has ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the European site

#### **Salisbury District Council (Competent Authority) Action**

Risks of the adverse impacts on the River Avon as identified above are considered to be minor. They are short-term, based principally around the construction phase of the Visitor Centre, but with some operational risks due to visitor number impacting on water quality. These risks are highlighted at section 5 above. However by securing proper and permanent safeguards (see section 8 below) then it is not considered that the development will have an adverse impact upon the integrity of the European site.

## 8. Considering How To Avoid Adverse Effects

If the proposal would adversely affect the integrity of the site then, having regard to English Nature's advice, the competent authority should consider the manner in which it is proposed to be carried out and whether the plan or project could be modified, or whether conditions or restrictions could be imposed, so as to avoid the adverse effects. This may include, for example, changes to the siting, layout, timing or use of the proposal and the use of obligations or legal agreements. (Reg. 48(6)).

Compensatory measures that may be offered in the proposal at this stage, seeking to redress but not remove residual harm to the international interests (such as the provision of land for habitat creation purposes), should not be considered in the appropriate assessment, but may be considered later in the decision making process. (See Reg. 53).

### **Salisbury District Council (Competent Authority) Action**

In order to avoid the potential impacts outlined above, the applicants are suggesting a number of mitigation measures. This is based around an Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan, which has been submitted with the application, Ecological Construction Management and Monitoring Plan (ECMMP) and a Water Strategy. A project ecologist would oversee the works including the following safeguarding measures:

1. Defined works areas would be clearly marked and no construction works, storage of materials or workers would be allowed outside these areas, particularly in areas of important grassland habitats or near areas of importance for terrestrial invertebrates.
  2. No entry would be allowed by employees/construction/site workers to the River Avon bank-side during the construction period to limit disturbance impacts on the river SAC and associated habitats and fauna.
  3. Works external to buildings would be restricted to daylight hours to avoid the use of external lighting, which would be required with night-time works to prevent unnecessary disturbance to nocturnal and crepuscular species such as certain invertebrates, bats and birds.
  4. No herbicide would be used within or adjacent to important grassland areas identified
  5. To reduce the risk of fire damaging habitats within the Site, smoking would not be allowed on Site during construction.
- Specific protected species mitigation guidance would be provided including:
    - \*DEFRA Licence guidance with regard to bats; Seasonal constraints such as vegetation clearance only allowed outside the breeding bird season
    - Specific construction methodology near to badger setts to be agreed with Project Ecologist and English Nature (EN) and if necessary carried out under an EN licence;
    - \* Methodology of relocation of reptiles to be agreed with EN;
    - Any steep sided excavations to be provided with plank/ramps to allow animals, which could fall in such as deer and badger an opportunity to get out.
  - Water Strategy includes a "sensitivity test" based on higher projected estimate of visitors
  - Water Strategy outlines potential impacts and mitigations on water resources and water quality including foul run-off and groundwater.
  - The management plan makes it clear that there will be no access to the water courses for general public hence preventing the risk of human activity causing habitat destruction or damage
  - Information indicates that burying of electric cables will not occur in the vicinity of the River Avon

It is considered that the mitigation measures proposed will prove effective if they are properly implemented and this may be secured via an appropriate condition up an planning permission granted.

### **9. Conclusion on Effects In The Light of Conditions and**

The competent authority should reassess the conclusions in the light of any such modifications, conditions or restrictions that may be agreed or imposed.

It is not considered that the scheme either alone or in combination would have an adverse impact on the SAC. Some minor risks have been identified, but it is considered that the mitigation set out within the Construction Environmental Management Plan, the Ecological Construction Management and Monitoring Plan (ECMMP) and the Water Strategy would minimise the likelihood of occurrence and make the risk negligible. It is however, necessary to ensure that the measures promoted are adequately implemented and the management regimes maintained and this should be secured through condition should planning permission be granted. Requirement for additional abstraction and effluent treatment has been agreed between the applicant and appropriate authority.

### **10. Recording the Assessment**

It would be advisable for this conclusion, and the reasons for it, to be recorded. English Nature should be notified of the conclusion of the appropriate assessment and the authority's decision as to the effects on the integrity of the site, before the authority undertakes the plan or project or issues any permission, consent or other authorisation (PPG 9 para 30).

The subsequent courses of action open to a competent authority are set out in Regulations 48(5) - (7), 49 and 54(3). The Regulations prohibit a competent authority from undertaking or giving consent to any plan or project unless the appropriate assessment concluded that it would not have an adverse effect on the integrity of the site, or specific criteria are met and the Secretary of State has been informed.

#### **Salisbury District Council (Competent Authority) Action**

To record the assessment the local authority will adopt the Good Practice Outline at paragraph 29 of the English Nature, Habitats Regulations Guidance Note (May 1997) and will append the assessment to the Committee report, place a public inspection copy on deposit in the public reception area, copied to English Nature and all parties who were consulted on the assessment and a copy placed on the planning application file.

### **Background Papers**

The Conservation (Natural Habitats &c) Regulations 1994  
Habitats Regulations Guidance Note 1 - English Nature 1997  
Planning Policy Guidance Note 9  
Committee Report to Planning & Regulatory Panel - John Hammond, Salisbury District Council 2002  
Counsel's Opinion & Guidance Note - James Maurici 2003

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