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Please quote our reference number on all correspondence

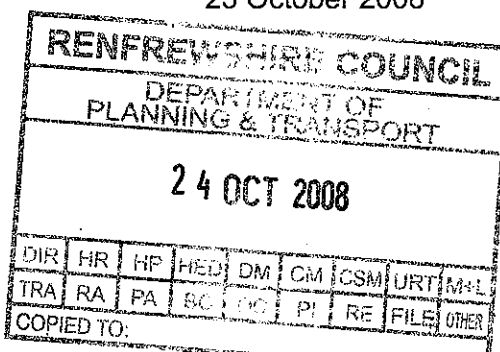
G C Russell
Head of Planning
Renfrewshire Council
South Building
Cotton Street
Paisley
PA1 1LL

Your Ref: 06/1065/PP

Our Ref: CNS/EIA/R

23 October 2008

For the attention of David Bryce



Dear Sirs

THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT (SCOTLAND) REGULATIONS 1999

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997

**PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION OF MOTORWAY JUNCTION ON LAND AT
INTERSECTION OF M8 MOTORWAY/A8 GREENOCK ROAD, SOUTH OF
CRAIGMUIR FARM, EAST OF BISHOPTON**

Thank you for consulting Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) over the amendments and additions to the Environmental Assessment for the above proposal. I hope that you will find the following comment to be of use in determining the application.

1. BACKGROUND

This application relates to a motorway junction proposed to provide access to a new housing development proposal at Bishopton, Renfrewshire. This housing development forms part of a wider decontamination and redevelopment proposal covering 923ha of the old Bishopton Royal Ordnance Factory (ROF) site, which SNH provided advice on - in relation to the outline application and Environmental Assessment for the wider over-arching development proposal - in December 2006.

Subsequent to this, SNH were consulted over an application and Environmental Statement for this motorway junction, providing advice to your council in April 2007. At that time we raised no in-principle objections to the proposal, but advised that a number of conditions should be applied to any planning permission, intended to protect the natural heritage interests of the site.

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SNH understands that this amended version of the motorway junction proposal has arisen to accommodate the requirements of Transport Scotland. The principle changes will therefore be to the design of the roundabouts proposed for the existing A8, with consequent alterations to vegetation management and minor changes to the location of one of the proposed SUDS ponds.

2. SNH POSITION

Information on the natural heritage interests of the site – particularly in terms of protected species – was provided by the applicants as part of the initial planning application for this proposal. SNH are therefore of the view that – although the development footprint has been slightly altered and some time has passed since the initial application – no additional survey information will be required at this stage to allow adequate consideration the natural heritage interests likely to be affected (including for European Protected Species where were not recorded as using the site by any previous surveys).

It is the view of SNH that the proposed changes will not fundamentally alter the natural heritage impacts likely to arise from the development of this motorway junction. A full appraisal of these impacts and the policy context can be found in our consultation response of 23 April 2007. Our position with regard to the proposal therefore remains as detailed in that response, namely - that **SNH raises no objection to the proposed construction of this junction as now detailed, provided any permission for the development is made subject to conditions that address the potential for significant natural heritage impacts.** Our required conditions also remain as previously detailed:

1. That all mature trees be checked for bat roosts immediately prior to any works affecting them commence. Even where roosts are not identified, works affecting trees with the potential to support bat roosts should be carried out in such a way as to minimise impacts on bats should they be present. Should any bats be encountered while undertaking these works, operations must be immediately discontinued and advice sought from SNH on how to proceed.
2. That all water bodies be checked for otters immediately prior to any works commencing that will encroach to within 50 metres of such water bodies. Should any evidence of otter places of rest or shelter be identified, relevant works should not commence until SNH has been contacted for advice on how to proceed.
3. That the area of trees/woodland identified as Site B on the applicant's plans be checked for badgers immediately prior to felling operations commence. Should any evidence of badgers be identified, works should not commence until SNH has been contacted for advice on how to proceed.
4. That all works involving the clearance or felling of vegetation be undertaken outwith the bird breeding season of March to July inclusive. Where this is not operationally possible, a survey for birds breeding should be undertaken prior to the commencement of works.

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Works should only proceed where this survey has identified that no nesting bird species will be affected.

5. That prior to works commencing the applicant identifies any requirement to protect the hydrological unit of the southern raised bog SINC and, if required, produces plans to ensure its protection, to be agreed by the planning authority in consultation with SNH.

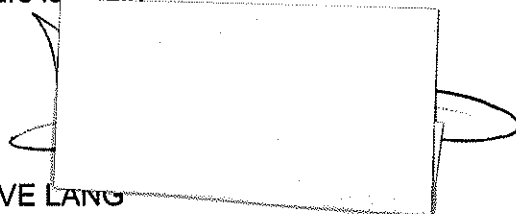
In addition to our required conditions above, we would also continue to advise that the further following additional conditions also be applied to any permission for this development:

1. That in keeping with the mitigation proposed in the applicant's ES, dry tunnels are incorporated into the new roadworks to allow for the passage of badgers. SNH would be happy to comment further on any detailed designs or proposals that are brought forward in this respect.
2. That the planting proposals indicated in the applicant's ES are introduced to mitigate the visual impact of the development, using only site native species. The particular species mix to be used should be agreed by the planning authority in consultation with SNH.
3. That prior to any works commencing, the applicant's be required to conduct an investigation into the possibility of reducing the extent of lighting that is associated with the scheme and of selecting lighting infrastructure that will minimise the visual impacts of the lighting used. SNH would be happy to comment further on any proposals that are brought forward.

As previously discussed however, the applicant's have proposed the implementation of an agreed Ecological Design and Management Plan or "Wildlife File" to address the potential for biodiversity impacts arising from the decontamination and redevelopment of the Bishopton ROF site – the project for which this motorway junction is required. Many of the above conditions could be ensured by simply requiring the applicants to extend this Plan to cover all associated elements of the wider development including this junction.

I hope that the above is sufficient to your requirements. We would be grateful if you could inform SNH of your Council's decision with regard to this application in due course. In the meantime however, please do not hesitate to contact me if there is any aspect of the above which you would wish to discuss further.

Yours faithfully



DAVE LANG
Area Officer
Strathclyde and Ayrshire