

**Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership**  
The Old Post Office, Shrewsbury Road, CRAVEN ARMS, SY7 9NZ  
T:01588 674080 F:01588 674099 E: SHAONBO@shropshire.gov.uk

Mr Peter Walker

Direct Line: 01588 674085  
Email: Glynn.barratt@shropshire.gov.uk  
Your Ref:  
Our Ref: 10\_04482\_GB1/11

27 January 2011

**10/05197/FUL; Erection of 16,000 bird Free Range Poultry House, land west of Egremont Farm, Longville in the Dale**

Dear Mr Walker

Thank you for your consultation on the above application. The Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership objects to this application to build a 16,000 bird poultry unit as an addition to the existing poultry complex at this location. The proposed site lies within the Shropshire Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, a factor which is not taken into consideration in any of the supporting documentation. In this respect visual and landscape impacts have not been addressed in relation to the AONB and such investigations are considered a pre-requisite within such a sensitive area of landscape. It is the view of the AONB Partnership that the development will, by adding considerably to the existing complex of buildings and have a significant negative impact on landscape character. We therefore suggest that a full study and mitigation strategy should be a requirement of this application before it is further considered within the planning process.

#### Policy Background

Shropshire Council's Policy 4 in the 2009-2014 Shropshire Hills AONB Management Plan states that "*Farm diversification enterprises need to be in harmony with environment and protecting this resource, which also provides an important economic asset for the future.*"

Paragraph 21 of Planning Policy Statement 7 states that "*the conservation of the natural beauty of the landscape (in AONBs) ... should be given great weight...in development control decisions in these areas.*" Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 requires planning authorities to "*have regard to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the area of outstanding natural beauty*". These requirements are reflected in saved Policy E1 of the South Shropshire District Local Plan which states that "*Development will not be permitted which would adversely affect the character or natural beauty of the Shropshire Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty*".

#### Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment

The Visual Impact/ Landscape Assessment sections (4.4 and 4.5) of the Design and Access statement supporting the application are entirely inadequate. Nowhere in this text is there even a mention that the site lies within the Shropshire Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. There has been no attempt to assess the potential impacts of the proposed development on this nationally protected landscape in terms of landscape character or visual impact.

A brief examination of the location of the site shows that it will have a visual impact upon the hills to the west, both in its setting and in views out from the hills themselves. A full study to assess these impacts, to identify the extent of the visual impact area and to identify the sensitivity of receptors is considered a vital requirement in advance of any such development within the AONB. We would suggest therefore that the application does not fully comply with the Town & Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 1999 requiring Environmental Impact Assessment of relevant classes of development.

Cont'd

Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment study should be undertaken as part of Environmental Impact Assessment to the standards set out in the Landscape Institute's publication '*Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment*' 2002. It is important to note that landscape and visual assessments are separate, although linked, procedures. Landscape effects derive from changes in the physical landscape, an environmental resource, which may give rise to changes in its character and how this is experienced. Visual effects relate to changes in views, and to people's responses to these changes. While a proper assessment will therefore include assessment of views in relation to receptor sites (viewpoints such as settlement, roads, public paths and visitor locations), and consider the sensitivity of those receptors, visibility is not the only consideration. The scale and nature of a development may have an adverse effect on landscape character, the physical characteristics and sense of place of that area of land, irrespective of how visible it may be.

While the AONB Partnership supports the need for farms and rural communities to remain sustainable, and is sympathetic to farm diversification we strongly believe that it is a necessary requirement of any such scheme to consider in detail the potential impacts on the AONB's nationally important landscape. Only in this way can the acceptability of the scheme, and/or appropriate landscape mitigation measures be determined. The documentation currently supplied with the application does not comply with these requirements in any way.

G Barratt  
Planning & Landscape Officer  
On behalf of the Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership