



Defence Infrastructure Organisation

Defence Infrastructure Organisation
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Carole Crookes
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Dear Mrs Crookes

**City of York Local Plan Examination
Queen Elizabeth Barracks: Sites (ST35 and H59)
Comments on Letter from Natural England (EX/OTH/13)**

DIO has noted that Natural England has written to the Local Plan Inspectors (letter dated 27 April), setting out its views on the Queen Elizabeth Barracks (QEB) Allocations (Sites ST35 and H59), the evidence that has been assembled on the potential for the development of these sites to impact on the integrity of the adjacent Strensall Common SAC, and DIO's proposals for the mitigation of potential adverse effects.

The Natural England letter does not correctly reflect the evidence which is before the Inspectors (for example, the 2019 Footprint ecology report). We intend to present to the Inspectors a detailed response to the letter once we have seen and been given the opportunity to comment on the 'homework' that the Council was due to publish on 27 March 2020.

In the meantime, we write to express our concern that DIO has been excluded from discussions that have taken place between Natural England and the Council about our interests at Strensall. We were excluded when Footprint Ecology reported on the findings of its Visitor Survey (December 2018) and have again been excluded from discussions that it transpires have been had about QEB since the Phase 1 Hearing Sessions closed in December.

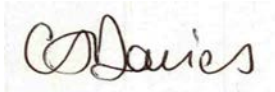
In the light of what was said during the Phase 1 Hearing Sessions, we were anticipating a period of joint working in an effort to find solutions to the problems that Natural England and the Council believe exist (especially in the light of the assurances given to the Inspectors on behalf of the Council by Mr Elvin). It is important that we do so in the light of the significance of the legal compliance issues that have been identified and the fact that it is in the interests of all parties to find a way of unlocking the redevelopment of these sites if we can. We are concerned that, despite our best efforts, this has not come about.

DIO's Planning Consultants, Avison Young, sought, pro-actively, earlier this year, to engage with the Council and to contribute to draft documents. However, their requests were rejected despite the Council continuing to have discussions with Natural England about MOD interests.

This leaves us in the unfortunate position of having to challenge what is being done and said by Natural England and the Council, rather than working together to agree common ground.

We will write to the Inspectors with further representations in due course.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "C. Davies". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'C'.

Catherine Davies
Head of Estates
Defence Infrastructure Organisation