

## NOTES on Meeting with FC & Presentation by LUC (25<sup>th</sup> February 2014)

### Present

(Note LUC = Land Use Consultants Ltd)

Sarah Young (LUC) - EIA Project Manager

Ben Millar (LUC) – her assistant – Environmental Planning

Eric Heath (LUC) - Ecologist

Omar Shola (Cascade Consultancy) - Hydrologist

Jane Smith- FC

Mariane Bergin – FC

Ailsa Farrand (AF)

Fiona Macdonald (FM)

John Shepherd (JGS)

Firstly we were given some background information on LUC – previous work they have undertaken including guidance documents for NE. Also they explained their membership of the various Professional Institutes relevant to different areas of expertise (IEMA & CIEEM). The ecological component of the EIA will be CIEEM compliant. They also do assessments of other people's EIAs.

They then explained that the draft Scoping Report will go to the NPA, who will then involve the statutory consultees and others before forming a Scoping Opinion, and approving the Scope (or not). The approved report will then define the Scope of the EIA.

The EIA will cover the whole catchment but with emphasis on different parts for various aspects. It will form the basis for the Environmental Statement which is to be submitted as part of the Planning Application, which has a 16 week determination period (because it is an EIA development).

We were then shown a PowerPoint presentation (which is available and has been circulated) on the Background, Project Team, Outline of the Proposal, Topics to be covered in EIA, Final outputs, Habitats Regulations Assessment, and Consultations and Key dates.

The topics to be covered in the EIA are

- Ecology to include fish, macro-invertebrates, *Odonata*, birds, reptiles, mammals and plants. Fish will be surveyed by electro-fishing (reply to FM question). The plant work takes account of Classification of Habitat types and will be sampled in 2 metre quadrats.
- Hydrology to include geomorphology, water quality and flood risk. To take account of WFD and other Directives. They plan to use data that are routinely collected by the EA on Dockens Water, where appropriate. Will also consider the construction and operational impacts of any work.
- Archaeology –
- Traffic and Transportation
- Landscape and visual – this is the first time that these have been formally included as far as we know.

The printed handout of the slides also stated that a Habitats Regulations Assessment will be undertaken and produced alongside the ES, but these slides were omitted from the presentation..

### **Questions & Answers (etc)**

JGS - Will NPA be co-ordinating consultation on the draft scope ? – Yes

Eric Heath – The ecological work will be starting afresh with Baseline data, impartial assessment and feed back into process.

Omar Shola: Hydrology - They plan to use Dockens Water as there are data available. But confirmed local observations & data will also be used.

JGS: Are time-lapse cameras to be used as previously suggested by JBA ?

JS (FC) They don't know yet

Breeding Birds Survey – Probably 6 visits over the year starting Feb – May, concentrating on the over-wintering and breeding populations. (Have they already started)? Local data could be used if available & accredited.

Archaeology – AF queried whether HAS will be used - Yes

Transport Routes will be considered as part of the ES - JGS stated that 10,000 tones of anything would not be acceptable

Options to be considered will include the 'do nothing' option

How will the success of the scheme be judged – what pre- and post-monitoring will take place? To be determined as part of the scoping study.

Consultation – Preliminary & Pre Application – ongoing throughout the process – LUC will welcome any input. There will be web-site postings, stakeholder Meetings, Public Exhibitions,

JGS stated that all HLS partners have a conflict of interest, and he pointed out NE have not been carrying out their survey duties adequately. SY - Conflict of interest is not the business of LUC

JS Information will go on to the HLS website (being remodelled)

JGS pointed out we had a good relationship with FC until halfway through the last meeting when MS said the FC wouldn't share information as it became available, which was regrettable and had triggered a return to a more adversarial attitude.

SY Data will not be released until Planning Application is submitted as it is time consuming and difficult to link component parts

JGS offered help to carry out surveys – EK says they can't use local help as they have to use qualified people and they must not be personally involved. However it was accepted that local knowledge would be helpful (we can make sure that they find any relevant/important species or archaeological features!).

JGS – also pointed out that we can supply photographs and do water quality testing – this was agreed. OS – we could share methodology (??)

Scoping Report: draft should be completed late March/April. In the Summer - Public Exhibition, Winter – target for ES to be completed. JGS pointed out that at least one full year's data were needed (JS then said it may be delayed to Spring 2015 or even Summer 2015)

AF remarked much had been made of the EIA being 'voluntary' (It was even stated in the introduction) and queried if it made any difference to the EIA in terms of surveys or how the work is carried out. SY - it makes no difference.

Methodology to be used for each topic will be in the scoping report

JGS queried the 'Favourable/unfavourable' binary assessment which is very crude, "past its sell-by date" and has been superseded in other legislation (e.g. Water and Marine Strategy Framework Directives). The assessments are often not backed up by the surveys

MB said the Mire was in a terrible state – AF disagreed – JS said gravel was washing down the stream, AF pointed out the 200 metres of illegal felling had compromised the stream banks.

The NPA is deciding re the Habitats Regulations AA – NPA decision unknown as yet. JGS queried whether it would be a separate assessment, SY said LUC would advise it should be in a separate document, but use much of the same information.

JGS . Queried when SDF survey results would be available – JS it will be on the website in due course

JGS pointed out that the side channels are very important for SDF habitat, and will be very difficult to handle.

AF said the Pond is a Priority pond – JS said ALL ponds in the forest are Priority Ponds

JGS Mentioned other 'Failed' restorations – failed technology, seriously flawed, hasn't worked, heavily critical of same methodology being used. Re-engineering streams is tricky and monitoring is needed – he hope the FC will take the opportunity to adopt reversible, adaptive and incremental methods.

SY said to email information to her and CC Ben Miller with further information

We need to feed comments back to NPA

JGS asked when there will be an update on the JBA Modelling. JS says it will go through in the 2 months and it appears our meeting with JBA is still on some time in the next couple of months.