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STRATEGIC AND TECHNICAL PLANNING COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 30 SEPTEMBER 2024

Present: Cllrs Duncan Sowry-House (Chair), Toni Coombs, Richard Crabb, Spencer Flower, Craig Monks and Sherry Jespersen (substitutue for Cllr Belinda Ridout)

Apologies: Cllrs Dave Bolwell, David Northam, Belinda Ridout, Pete Roper, David Taylor and David Tooke

Cabinet Leads in attendance: Cllr Shane Bartlett

Also present: Cllrs Jon Andrews, Simon Christopher, Scott Florek and Jane Somper

Officers present (for all or part of the meeting):

Mike Garrity (Head of Planning), Elaine Tibble (Senior Democratic Services Officer), Lara Altree (Senior Lawyer - Regulatory) and Andrew Douglas (Senior Tree Officer)

41. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 2 September 2024 were confirmed and signed.

42. Declarations of Interest

Cllr Flower reminded the committee that he had made a declaration at the previous meeting and that was still applicable to the application.

43. Application No: P/TRT/2024/03586 Land At E 388252 N 120480 Dinahs Hollow Melbury Abbas SP7 0DE

The Head of Planning explained that due to an administrative error, interested parties had not been notified in advance of the committee meeting held on 2 September 2024. The application was therefore being reported back to the Strategic and Technical Planning Committee on 30 September 2024. No formal decision had been issued from the previous decision made on 2 September 2024.

An update had been received from the applicant which is attached as an appendix to these minutes.

The Head of Planning detailed the background of the application for tree works only at Dinah's Hollow, which was subject to a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) The applicant was Dorset Council in it's capacity as Highways Authority. Cabinet had approved funding for the stabilisation works at it's meeting of 9 July 2024, this

included taking the necessary steps for submission of a Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) to the Secretary of State.

The key elements of the proposal were summarised, a correction to the number of trees was highlighted and confirmed that 80 trees were to be felled, 38 coppiced and 100 retained without coppicing.

By way of a visual presentation the site location was highlighted showing its proximity to Shaftesbury and Blandford. The Head of Planning advised that a further representation had been received from Melbury Abbas & Cann Parish Council.

A summary of the key considerations identified, and details of the landscape were presented. An additional consideration of the application was ecology and a separate licencing process would have to be agreed with Natural England. The approval of tree works was sought in order to proceed with the CPO which could take 18 months to 2 years, during which time there could be changes to the ecology and protected species, it was therefore proposed to add a condition requiring all licences be in place prior to commencement of work.

Other considerations taken into account were heritage, it was considered that the tree works would have no adverse effect on the listed building "Spring House", amenity and consideration of alternative options.

The Senior Tree Officer explained the details of the proposal and the reasons behind the reduction in the number of trees being removed from the original application. A visual presentation indicated the trees to be removed and coppiced, the majority were juvenile trees, midway and lower down the bank. Their removal would allow the stabilisation of the hollow and coppice regeneration. If left the trees would become leggy and have an overbearing effect on the Hollow. A concrete barrier had already been put in place to prevent further slippage onto the road.

Disregarding the highway scheme a number of trees needed to be coppiced to prevent them collapsing. Coppicing allowed for future re-generation and was an ancient form of woodland management. A number of larger trees to be felled were also pointed out to the members, these needed to be addressed in terms of good woodland management and highways safety.

The Head of Planning concluded the presentation and the recommendation to grant subject to conditions and consent for a 5 year period.

Oral representation in objection to the application was received from Richard Burden on behalf of Cranborne Chase National Landscape and David Webber the Chair of Melbury Abbas & Cann Parish Council.

Jack Wiltshire – Head of Highways for Dorset Council, the applicant addressed the committee in support of the application.

In response to member questions the Senior Tree Officer advised that there should be no negative impact on the fungi in the tree roots. The work to be carried out on the east and west side of the Hollow was to be carried out at the same

standard and as part of good woodland management as well as being part of a cog in the wider stabilisation scheme. Officers had looked at alternative options and that had resulted in the reduction of the removal of 80 trees, down from 90.

Having heard no additional information to persuade him to sway from the officer recommendation it was Proposed by Cllr Flower and seconded by Cllr Coombs.

Decision: That the tree works application be GRANTED subject to the following conditions:

- Works may only be carried out directly in advance of, and in conjunction with the Dorset Council Dinah's Hollow Slope Stabilisation project.
- Work to be undertaken in accordance with BS 3998:2010 Tree works – recommendations, BS 5837: 2012 Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1995.
- Any works identified in addition to the works outlined in the Arboricultural Impact Assessment and Arboricultural Method Statement dated 14th August 2024 will be subject to a further application.
- The tree works shall be undertaken in accordance with the Dorset Council Impact and Arboricultural Impact Assessment and Arboricultural Method Statement dated 14.08.2024 and combined tree works plans 1 and 2 August 24.
- This consent is given only in accordance with the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and the Town and Country Planning (Tree Preservation) (England) Regulations 2012. It does not override any other statutory or non-statutory controls which may exist; you and/or your agent are responsible for compliance with any other relevant legislation. Wildlife and habitat controls are administered by Natural England who can be contacted on 0300 060 3900. It is an offence under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 to disturb roosting bats, nesting birds or other species protected by this Act. All required licences must be in place prior to work commencing.
- All work to be carried out in its entirety within five years of the date of this decision.

Informative:

National Planning Policy Framework Statement In accordance with paragraph 38 of the NPPF the council, as local planning authority, takes a positive approach to development proposals and is focused on providing sustainable development. The council works with applicants/agents in a positive and proactive manner by: - offering a pre-application advice service, and - as appropriate updating applicants/agents of any issues that may arise in the processing of their application and where possible suggesting solutions. In this case: - The applicant/agent was updated of any issues and provided with the opportunity to address issues identified by the case officer.

There were no urgent items.

45. **Exempt Business**

There was no exempt business.

Update Sheet

Duration of meeting: 10.00 - 11.17 am

Chairman

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Planning Committee – Update Sheet

Tree Works Application

Application Ref.	Address	Agenda ref.	Page no.
P/TRT/2024/03586	Land at Dinah’s Hollow	5	7
<p>Update(s):</p> <p>The applicant has provided an updated technical note with updated options that have been considered by the Highway Authority as part of the information (prepared by WSP on behalf of the applicant). It notes that the review of options relates solely to the stabilisation measures for the Holloway slopes. Any drainage measures and highway improvements are beyond the scope of the technical note.</p> <p>In summary, the note confirms the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slope re-grade – option discounted • Retaining structures: option discounted • Vertical realignment – option discounted • Bio-engineering – option discounted • Passive barriers – option discounted • Soil nailing - Preferred <p>The report concluded, in summary, the following:</p> <p>The potential stabilisation options have been reviewed for the proposed Dinah’s Hollow stabilisation scheme.</p> <p>Soil nailing is considered the most appropriate long-term solution to stabilise the slopes of the Hollow, whilst balancing the sensitivity of the environment and maintaining existing landscape and habitat.</p> <p>The facing system used in conjunction with the soils will comprise a tensioned flexible mesh combined with erosion protection matting. The erosion protection matting will support re-establishment of vegetation around the retained trees and contribute to surface soil stability, whilst allowing for a return to the typical visual appearance of the Hollow</p> <p>Officer comment:</p> <p>The additional information relates to the highway works and summarises the options considered. This does not change the officer report and recommendation which concludes that, having regard to the amenity value of the protected trees, it is considered on balance that the proposed tree works are justified in order to enable the approved highway scheme to be implemented.</p>			

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TECHNICAL NOTE

DATE:	25 September 2024	CONFIDENTIALITY:	Public
SUBJECT:	Updated Options Statement – Revision 2		
PROJECT:	70092067 – Dinah’s Hollow	AUTHOR:	B Ward
CHECKED:	S Rhodes	APPROVED:	A Indoe

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 WSP UK Ltd (WSP) have been instructed by Dorset Council (DC), the Client, to undertake an updated appraisal of the previously presented options to stabilise the slopes at Dinah’s Hollow.

1.2 The scope of this technical note is:

- To provide a summary of the options considered as part of the design development;
- To provide commentary on more broadly discussed alternative proposals; and
- To summarise the ecological mitigation strategy developed alongside the preferred option.

1.3 The review of options discussed in this technical note relate solely to the stabilisation measures for the Holloway slopes. Any drainage measures and highway improvements are beyond the scope of this technical note.

2 PROPOSED OPTIONS

2.1 Proposed options are discussed in detail in the Dinah’s Hollow Stabilisation Options Report [1].

2.2 The table below provides a summary of those options and comments on suitability.

Table 1 - Stabilisation Options Summary

Option	Solution	Comments
Slope re-grade	Discounted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Significant land take, material removal and associated costs. - Unacceptable visual and ecological impact.
Retaining structures	Discounted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Significant construction constraints on site. - High levels of cost. - Unacceptable visual and ecological impact.
Vertical realignment	Discounted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Not considered suitable to contribute to slope stability improvements if used in isolation. - Site geometry may not be suitable for standard highways alignments. - Realignment of services and drainage would be required, with associated costs and disruption.

Option	Solution	Comments
Bio-engineering*	Discounted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Limited to typically 1m below surface, and insufficient to resist deeper slip surfaces. - No reliable method to quantify or guarantee vegetation as a stabilisation measure, with particular reference to difficulties establishing certain plant species within the Hollow. - Cannot meet the design life requirements without significant maintenance and planning.
Passive barriers	Discounted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Not suitable for fine particle / debris style flows failures previously observed at the site. - High visual impact and significant engineering works required to construct catchfence at certain locations within the site extents. - Due to site geology and the aperture of mesh used in typical barrier applications, solution unlikely to fully contain a landslide event, resulting in road closures to remove debris. - Undefined maintenance costs over design life, to repair barriers following landslide events.
Soil nailing	Preferred	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Minimal removal of in-situ material and land take. - A proportion of existing vegetation can be retained. - Native vegetation can be re-introduced to maintain habitat diversity. - Lowest visual impact.

* further discussion is provided in the remaining sections of this technical note

2.3 Previous assessments of the observed and potential instabilities present at Dinah’s Hollow indicate that slip surfaces of greater than 1m in depth have occurred and are also evidenced through back analysis of slope stability [1]. Vegetation as a remedial solution without other stabilisation measures is not recommended for the mitigation of landslide risk, where assets have previously been affected by slope failures [2].

2.4 Therefore, the application of bio-engineering as the sole stabilisation measure is not considered a robust long term stabilisation solution. The potential risks and disadvantages are further highlighted below:

- Potential installation difficulties within the anticipated ground conditions for techniques such as the installation of willow poles [3];
- Concerns over reliable plant establishment;
- High risk highway environment previously affected by landslides;
- Steep sided slopes with observed and potential slip surfaces greater than 1m; and

- Increased maintenance and management requirements.
- 2.5 It is recognised that vegetation assists in the very near surface stabilisation of soils and reduction of erosional effects. As referenced in BS 6031:2009 Code of Practice for Earthworks, the benefits highlighted include the reinforcing action of roots and moisture content control [4]. The promotion of vegetation re-establishment will be achieved through incorporation of a planting scheme within the proposed stabilisation solution, this is discussed further in the Ecological Mitigation section below.
- 2.6 Soil nailing has been considered the most appropriate solution to ensure the global stability of the Holloway slopes and balances the aspects of implementing sustainable engineering solutions against the requirements to reduce the risk to the general public, operatives and maintain long term operation of the highway.

3 ALTERNATIVE PROPOSALS NOT CONSIDERED SUITABLE

ELECTROKINETIC

- 3.1 Electrokinetic strengthening of slopes utilises the process of electro-osmosis to transport water through fine grained soils with low hydraulic permeability. The technique is applied to fine grained soils which are clay or cohesive soils [5]. The process is not considered suitable in coarse grained soils, which generally have a relatively high hydraulic permeability, such as sands. The geology of Dinah's Hollow has been mapped as the Shaftsbury Sandstone Member passing into the Cann Sandstone Member at the lower, southern end of the Hollow, both of Cretaceous Age. The geological materials of Dinah's Hollow comprises weakly cemented, weak to medium strong medium grained sandstone, weathered to a silty sand. There is evidence on the exposed faces of the Hollow slopes that a localised degree of cementation remains. As such, this material is predominantly a coarse-grained soil and is therefore not considered suitable to be treated using electrokinetic techniques. This is further supported by a review of soil testing against acceptability criteria for the treatment, in which the majority of the values for the insitu material are outside the acceptable ranges [6].
- 3.2 It should be noted that to strengthen suitable slopes using electrokinetic techniques requires the insertions of anodes and cathodes, which to operate at safe operating voltages need to be installed at close spacings. The power for this system would likely be produced by a diesel generator operating continuously for an extended period of time. The spacings for the anodes and cathodes may be closer than those required for a soil nail and flexible facing system. There is also limited evidence on the long-term performance of Electrokinetic systems and in particular no examples where this system has been used on slopes with gradients similar to those found at Dinah's Hollow.

4 LANDSCAPE AND ECOLOGICAL MITIGATION

- 4.1 A Landscape and Ecological Mitigation strategy has been developed in conjunction with DC, the details of which can be found in the Landscape and Ecology Report [7].
- 4.2 A summary extract has been provided below, which outlines the mitigation proposed as part of the stabilisation scheme. This includes:
- Retention of trees to maintain a wooded habitat;
 - Retention of as many trees along the west and eastern slope crest lines;
 - Key trees of landscape, ecological and amenity value retained on the upper slopes;
 - Retention of existing topsoil and avoidance of introducing soils;

- Coppicing of appropriate trees and shrubs;
- Replanting through a range of hole sizes in the mesh facing; and
- Implementation of other planting associated with the eastern drainage works and in other agreed locations such as along the crest of the western slope where opportunities allow.

4.3 It shall be noted that a number of trees and low-lying vegetation will be removed in order to undertake the works. The removal of selected trees is required to enable construction, reduce slope loading, ensure the integrity of the soil nail system, as well as generally reducing any identified current and future maintenance risks.

5 SUMMARY

- 5.1 The potential stabilisation options have been reviewed for the proposed Dinah's Hollow stabilisation scheme.
- 5.2 Soil nailing is considered the most appropriate long-term solution to stabilise the slopes of the Hollow, whilst balancing the sensitivity of the environment and maintaining existing landscape and habitat.
- 5.3 The facing system used in conjunction with the soils will comprise a tensioned flexible mesh combined with erosion protection matting. The erosion protection matting will support re-establishment of vegetation around the retained trees and contribute to surface soil stability, whilst allowing for a return to the typical visual appearance of the Hollow.

REFERENCES

- [1] Parsons Brinckerhoff, "Dinah's Hollow Stabilisation Options Report Issue 2," Parsons Brinckerhoff, London, 2014.
- [2] CIRIA, "CIRIA C810 Natural slopes and landslides - condition, assessment, and mitigation," CIRIA, London, 2023.
- [3] TRL, "TRL Report 508 A review of the use of live willow poles for the stabilising of highway slopes," TRL Limited, 2001.
- [4] British Standard, "BS 6031:2009 Code of practice for earthworks," BSI Standards Publication, London, 2010.
- [5] Ground Engineering, "Technical paper: Validation of electrokinetic stabilisation of M5 Junction," 2019.
- [6] ICE, "Electrokinetic geosynthetics: from research to hype to practice," *ICE Proceedings*, vol. 170, no. CE3, 2017.
- [7] T. Harris and D. Alder, "Landscape and Ecology Report Dinah's Hollow Melbury Abbas," 2024.

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