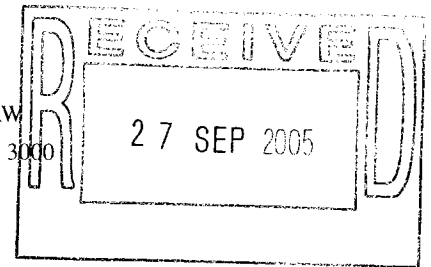


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NE1 1JF

**Your ref:** DMB/NT02260/054  
**Our ref:** Case 2005- 332/Exeter  
Gateway/ES/ML  
**Date:** Wednesday, 21 September 2005

Dear Ms Stroud

**RE: EXETER GATEWAY INTERMODAL FACILITY. UPDATED  
ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT, JULY 2005 – ENGLISH NATURE COMMENTS**

Thank you for sending English Nature the revised ES for the Exeter Gateway proposal. All in all it is a comprehensive account of the area and is quite comprehensive in terms of the anticipated degree of impact. Initial generalised mitigation strategies also appear satisfactory, though will require 'fine-tuning' to maximise biodiversity benefits.

I shall not comment on the flood risk analysis part as this is in the capable hands of the Environment Agency.

**Appropriate Assessment scoping report**

After discussing the matter with my colleague, Chris Davis (Conservation Officer for the Exe Estuary) we would like to see a small addition to the **Scoping report for an Appropriate Assessment**. At present the report satisfactorily addresses the potential effects upon the Exe Estuary SPA when the Gateway is **operational**. However, the scoping does not consider likelihood of effects during the construction phase (possibly the most vulnerable phase). Therefore, we would like to see the scoping document amended to reflect the potential for effects during construction (see River Clyst, below).

I am also somewhat concerned that we have not actually seen the outline planning application to date. Without seeing this and, in particular, any detail of suggested working procedures to address the potential effects on the estuary English Nature cannot properly advise as to the likelihood or not of any significant effect upon the estuary.

**Environmental Statement**

The ES appears to satisfactorily describe the on-site interests and ascribe degree of impact upon them.

*Case 2005-332 Exeter Gateway ES comments ML 21-09-05*



English Nature would like to be engaged in the detailed formulation of a mitigation package/conditions/S.106 agreement.

Some points which arise in the ES are worthy of further comment at this stage:

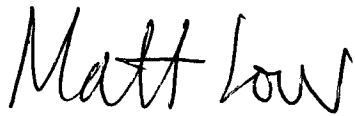
- **BATS** – The presence of a bat roost in the Hayes Farm complex will necessitate a DEFRA licence for the demolition works. The DEFRA licence application will need to include detailed proposals for how the loss/destruction of a bat roost will be compensated for and will possibly require that the compensatory provision is being used by the bats **prior** to demolition of the existing roost. It is also possible that the compensation may require a replacement structure, rather than just provision of bat boxes.
- **BADGERS** – More work on mitigation will be required. As the ES points out, the colony is vulnerable due to becoming isolated from any adjacent foraging territory. As a suggestion, I wonder if it would be possible to put some sort of badger run alongside the railway along the northern edge of the site? This would allow badgers to access land to the east of the gateway.
- **OTTER** – Again, as the ES points out the River Clyst (their primary habitat) will be buffered from the development by the area of meadow. Lighting should be designed to shine away from these areas.
- **BREEDING BIRDS** – Though only common breeding birds were encountered on site, the development should seek to minimise adverse impacts by incorporating features to encourage birds to nest both in the ‘natural areas’ of the site and utilise parts of the new structures.
- **HEDGES & TREES** – The development should seek to retain as many of the mature trees on site as possible. This should include satisfactory protection of trees to be retained during construction. Where it is necessary to remove trees and hedges, these should be replaced as far as is possible. As the projected overall length of hedgerow post-development is some 850m short of the current extent, it should be possible to ensure that, through a combination of gapping up and new hedgerow creation, the new/enhanced hedgerows are thicker. This would compensate for the loss of overall length as thicker hedgerows support greater biodiversity than thin ones.
- **FLORA** – If the area containing orchids etc. is to be lost, it may be possible to remove the topsoil (containing plants, rhizomes and seed bank) and re-use this in a suitable location – possibly in a wet area of meadow or around the attenuation lagoon. The restoration of the meadows adjacent to the River Clyst should ensure that, at the very

least, there is no overall loss of floristic diversity on the site and offers opportunity to significantly enhance diversity. Ensuring the correct management regime for the meadows is introduced (low intensity grazing in late summer and possibly late spring) and maintained will be a major factor in securing biodiversity gains and as such should be a component of the S.106 agreement.

- **LANDSCAPING** – All on site landscaping should be carried out using native species of trees and shrubs. Grassed areas (if there are any) should be sown using locally suitable wildflower/grass mixes and managed with a suitable cutting regime.
- **RIVER CLYST** – As the ES points out, the river is buffered from the development by an area of wet meadow creation. The greatest potential for negative impact upon the river (and potentially the Exe Estuary SPA) is through contamination of the river from surface water drainage via the ditch system. Measures will have to be taken to ensure that this risk is minimised. English Nature assume that the Environment Agency will make detailed inputs to this aspect, however the following comments may be useful:
  - **Construction phase** – The potential for spillages of materials to occur should be minimised through careful storage and use. Fuel should be stored in bunded areas and materials such as cement should be protected from rain etc. ‘Dirty water’ should be kept from entering the ditch system. It may be sensible to boom off ditches which enter the Clyst as a ‘failsafe’ in the event of an accidental spillage. Arrangements should be made and agreed in writing with EDDC and or the Environment Agency for the proper excavation of the landfill site found within the application area. Particular care should be taken to prevent any liquor arising from the landfill entering the ditch system and subsequently the River Clyst and Exe Estuary.
  - **Operational phase** – Again, polluted water entering the ditch system is the main threat. This should be avoided through a combination of oil/fuel interceptors located in the drainage system (which must be regularly maintained) and possibly inclusion of reedbeds (as indicated in the ES) to filter out solids, preventing turbidity of the river during heavy rainfall events. As the ES points out, all fuel and other liquids stored on site should be bunded to a 110% capacity and all valves etc. padlocked.

I hope you find these comments useful. I am happy to liaise with you further over the scoping for the Appropriate Assessment, particularly in relation to formulating suitable procedures to include in the application and or conditions to be applied to any permission.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Matt Low". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Matt Low  
Conservation Officer  
(Direct line 01392-889779)

cc Janthia Aldgate – East Devon District Council  
Mary-Rose Lane – Environment Agency

