

VOLUME 4: APPENDICES

APPENDIX A3 – EIA SCREENING OPINION

FAREHAM

BOROUGH COUNCIL

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Head of Development
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Lee Smith

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Dear Mr Brown,

SCREENING OPINION UNDER REGULATION 6 OF THE TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT) REGULATIONS 2017 FOR:

APPROXIMATELY 250 DWELLINGS TOGETHER WITH ASSOCIATED PARKING, AMENITY SPACE PROVISION, LANDSCAPING AND ACCESS

LAND SOUTH OF ROMSEY AVENUE, PORTCHESTER

REFERENCE: P/17/1068/EA

I refer to the above request for a screening opinion received by this Council on 1st September 2017. In this letter all references to “the Regulations” are in reference to the Town & Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017.

For the avoidance of doubt, at the outset it is important to state that it is the opinion of the local planning authority that the proposed development falls within Schedule 2 (10b) of the Regulations; *Urban development projects...* in that it comprises an urban development project in an area which exceeds 5 hectares.

Assessment under Regulation 5(5) in relation to Schedule 3 of the Regulations

Taking into account the criteria set out within Schedule 3 of the Regulations; the characteristics of the development, the location of the development and the types and characteristics of the potential impact are such that the Local Planning Authority is of the view that the proposal represents EIA development for which an environment statement is required. The environmental sensitivity of the site likely to be affected by the development has in particular led to this decision as explained further below.

Environmental sensitivity of location of development

Impact on adjacent designated sites

The proposed location of the development would be within, adjacent to or in close proximity to the Portsmouth Harbour Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Portsmouth Harbour Special Protection Area (SPA) and Portsmouth Harbour Ramsar Site.

In consultation on this matter Natural England has identified that the proposed location of the development is used by qualifying features (Brent Geese) of the Portsmouth Harbour SPA. Natural England is concerned that the development could have significant direct impacts upon the qualifying features of this designated site and potential for indirect effects through increase disturbance on adjacent functional land. In the absence of detailed mitigation their advice is that there is potential for significant environmental effects to arise.

Impacts to protected habitats and species

It will also be important to ensure that on-site habitat and protected species surveys are undertaken, with survey methodologies conforming to best practice standards. Your letter confirms that survey work is being carried out in relation to bats, badgers and slow worms. The results of the surveys and any mitigation required should be included within the submitted Environmental Statement and assessed to ensure no significant impact on the habitats and species on site, or that significant impacts can be satisfactorily avoided, mitigated or compensated.

Hydrological impact

Given the site's close proximity to the Portsmouth Harbour SPA there is a possibility that the hydrology of the site is linked to the designation. If this is the case there is a risk that if water flows are changed then the SPA could be deprived of freshwater inputs, gain too much freshwater flow or be contaminated by oil, petrol, heavy metals and other pollutants.

Loss of greenfield land designated as 'very good' agricultural land

The site is undeveloped greenfield land located outside of the defined urban settlement boundaries of the Borough and within a designated strategic gap. The land is designated as Grade 2 (very good) agricultural land within the Regional Agricultural Land Classification Maps produced by Natural England.

Potential increase in traffic

Your letter is accompanied by a short statement provided by Stuart Mitchell Associates on the transport effects of the development. The statement estimates that the development would generate 164 two way trips in the AM peak and 143 in the PM peak hour. The site has not previously been developed and the environmental effects of the increase in traffic are in the local planning authority's view potentially significant.

Cumulative effect of approved development on adjacent land

Planning permission was recently granted on appeal for the construction of up to 120 dwellings on land to the east of the development site (land to north of Cranleigh Road, Portchester – PINS reference APP/A1720/W/16/3156344). That development was itself subject to an Environmental Impact Assessment.

The local planning authority considers that the cumulative environmental effects of the proposed development along with those of the approved development on the adjacent site have the potential to be significant.

Summary

The local planning authority considers that proposed development is likely to have significant environmental effects meaning that it is EIA development within the meaning provided in the Regulations. This conclusion has been made principally due to the environmental sensitivity of the site as well as taking into account the generation of traffic and cumulative effect of approved development on adjacent land as described above.

Please contact me should you wish to discuss the content of this letter further.

Yours sincerely,

Richard Wright
Principal Planner (Development Management)