

Land east of Park Road, Didcot, Oxfordshire
Catesby Estates Ltd

May 2017



BIDWELLS

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT SCREENING REPORT

Quality Assurance

Site name:	Land off Park Road, Didcot
Client name:	Gatesby Estates Ltd
Type of report:	EIA Screening Report
Prepared by:	Rebecca Smith AssocRTPI
Signed	
Date	May 2017
Reviewed by:	Jake Nugent BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI
Signed	
Date	May 2017



Table of Contents

1.0	Introduction	1
	Structure of the Screening Report	1
2.0	Description of Site and Surroundings	2
3.0	Nature and Purpose of the Proposed Development	4
4.0	The EIA Regulations	5
	Legal Context	5
	The Steps in Screening for EIA	5
	Consideration of the EIA Regulations	6
5.0	Appraisal of Schedule 3 Criteria	7
	Introduction	7
	Characteristics of Development	7
	Location and Characteristics of Potential Impacts	8
	Cumulative Impacts with Other Development	13
6.0	Conclusion	16
Appendix 1		
SITE LOCATION PLAN		

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This report has been prepared by Bidwells on behalf of Catesby Estates Ltd in relation to proposed residential development at Land east of Park Road, Didcot, Oxfordshire (“the Site”).
- 1.2 The report is provided to assist South Oxfordshire District Council (“SODC”) in making their formal Screening Opinion as to whether the proposed development is EIA Development requiring EIA pursuant to Regulation 5 of the EIA Regulations.
- 1.3 In accordance with Regulation 5, this Report includes:
- A plan sufficient to identify the land (see Appendix 1);
 - A brief description of the nature and purpose of the development (Section 3); and
 - A brief description of its possible effects on the environmental (Section 5).

Structure of the Screening Report

- 1.4 The remaining structure of this EIA Screening Report is set out below:
- Description of the Site and Surroundings;
 - Nature and Purpose of the Proposed Development;
 - The EIA Regulations;
 - Appraisal of Schedule 3 Criteria; and
 - Conclusion.

2.0 Description of Site and Surroundings

- 2.1 The Site lies to the south-west of Didcot within the administrative boundary of South Oxfordshire District Council. The Site lies within the Parish of East Hagbourne, albeit immediately adjacent the southern built-up extent of Didcot.
- 2.2 The Site is approximately 7 hectares in area and is currently in agricultural use for grazing sheep.



- 2.3 To the north, the Site is bounded by a post and wire fence and hedgerow, beyond which lies Public Right of Way Footpath 189/17. Beyond the footpath, lies the back gardens of existing residential properties, predominately 1 or 1.5 storeys, which form the current built-up extent of Didcot. To the east, the Site is bounded by agricultural fields, with Mowbray Fields Local Nature Reserve approximately 400m beyond. Further to the east, lies the large village of East Hagbourne.
- 2.4 To the south, the Site is bounded by an existing post and wire fence demarcating the existing field boundary. Beyond this, lies further agricultural fields (under the same land ownership), and further beyond, the small hamlet of Coscote.
- 2.5 To the west lies Park Road, a single carriageway with a national speed limit slowing to 30mph as it enters Didcot. There is no existing vehicular access to the Site from Park Road. To the north-west of the Site and on the western side of Park Road, lie agricultural fields which form part of the strategic scale committed development, known as Great Western Park. The masterplan for Great Western Park shows proposals for green space, allotments and structural woodland planting to the west of Park Road, adjacent the Site.
- 2.6 Didcot Parking railway station is situated a short distance to the north of the site which serves the Bristol to London Paddington railway line.

Environmental, Landscape and Historical Designations

- 2.7 The Site lies in Flood Zone 1 with a low risk of flooding, and therefore, is suitable for residential development.
- 2.8 There are no Public Rights of Way (PRoW) passing through the site. PRoW Footpath 189/17 runs adjacent the northern boundary of the Site. PRoW footpath 197/1 runs north-south approximately 300m to the west of the Site. The Sustrans Cycle Route 544 runs along the disused railway embankment approximately 640m to the east of the Site.
- 2.9 The Site does not lie within a Conservation Area. The nearest Conservation Areas are within East Hagbourne and West Hagbourne. There are no Listed Buildings or other heritage assets within, or in close proximity, to the Site.
- 2.10 There are no statutory or non-statutory nature conservation sites within or near the Site. The Mowbray Nature Local Nature Reserve lies c.600m to the east of the Site.
- 2.11 There are no national or local landscape designations within the Site. The North Wessex Downs AONB lies over 1km to the south-west of the Site. The Site lies within the 'Open Rolling Downs' Landscape Type, and the 'Western Downs and Western Vale Fringes' Landscape Character Area as set out within the South Oxfordshire Landscape Assessment Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) (2003). The SPG notes that this area of landscape has a 'weak or absent hedgerow structure'. In this context, the management strategy for this landscape is to 'repair and restore' by reintroducing a 'stronger pattern and structure of field boundaries, belts of trees and blocks of woodland'.
- 2.12 The Site is not in an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA).

Surrounding Area

Great Western Park (LPA ref: P02/W0848/O)

- 2.13 To the north-west of the Site, on the western side of Park Road, lies agricultural fields subject to the committed development, known as Great Western Park. It is a mixed-used urban extension located immediately to the west of Didcot. It comprises a site area of approximately 180 hectares of largely agricultural land.
- 2.14 Outline planning permission was granted in July 2008. The proposals include 3,300 new dwellings together with within a 2.5ha District Centre and two Neighbourhood Centres (c.1.3ha each) comprising community, retail and leisure facilities, along associated open space, drainage and utility infrastructure. Development commenced in 2011 and approximately 1,600 homes have been completed. It is envisaged that by 2024 the site will include multiple sports pitches, a park, pavilion, more community centres, more plays areas, allotments and 48 hectares of open and urban space.

3.0 Nature and Purpose of the Proposed Development

- 3.1 The Applicant intends to submit an outline planning application with all matters reserved apart from access (hereafter referred to as the “Proposed Development”).
- 3.2 The proposals are to include:
- Up to 135 dwellings;
 - Up to 40% affordable housing;
 - New vehicular and pedestrian access off Park Road leading to the main estates and site wide network;
 - Balancing pond as part of site wide drainage infrastructure;
 - Landscaping and open space, including play space.
- 3.3 It is proposed that the planning application would comprise the following description of development:
- “Outline Planning Application (with all matters reserved except for means of access from Park Road) for up to 135 residential dwellings including open space, sustainable urban drainage systems and associated landscaping on land east of Park Road, Didcot, Oxfordshire.”*
- 3.4 The proposals include the provision of up to 135 dwellings, to include up to 40% affordable housing, at a density of approximately 32 dwellings per hectare. The proposed residential area would cover approximately 4.44ha. The Site will accommodate a range of housing types and tenures from 1-5 bedroom dwellings.
- 3.5 A new vehicular access via a new priority junction off Park Road towards the north-west of the Site. This will also include a new footway provision to link into the existing footway along Park Road to the north. The proposals also include informal links through to PRow 189/17 to the north and a new 2.5m wide pedestrian and cycleway, adjacent to Park Road, which provides connectivity towards Coscote to the south and West and East Hagbourne beyond.
- 3.6 A landscaping strategy has been prepared as part of the Proposed Development. Hedgerow planting with trees along the west and south boundaries is proposed to soften views of the development from the south-west and to strengthen the field boundary pattern. Further structural planting along the south and east boundaries will also help assimilate the Site into the wider countryside and provide a softer urban edge to Didcot.
- 3.7 It is anticipated that construction of the Proposed Development will commence in 2021/2022 and will last for approximately 3-4 years.

4.0 The EIA Regulations

Legal Context

- 4.1 EIA is a systematic and objective process through which the likely significant environmental effects of a development can be identified, assessed and, wherever possible, mitigated. Screening is the first stage in the process to determine if the Proposed Development should be subjected to EIA.
- 4.2 EIA is governed by European Directive 2011/92/EU for the ‘assessment of effects of certain public and private projects on the environment (“the EIA Directive”). Most recently, substantial amendments to the EIA Directive have been adopted (Directive 2014/52/EU) and now transposed into English Law through the 2017 EIA Regulations. Put simply, the EIA Directive sets out the objectives of EIA whilst the EIA Regulations set out the procedures required to meet those objectives within the context of the English planning system.
- 4.3 The new EIA Regulations came into force on 16 May 2017, with a number of changes being made to the EIA process, covering Screening, Scoping and the production for an Environmental Statement.
- 4.4 In relation to Screening proposed developments to ascertain whether they should be subject to EIA, the following principle changes have come into force:
- Any extension of time over and above the initial 3 week screening period is limited to no more than 90- days;
 - There is more focus on frontloading the provision of information and identification of mitigation; and
 - Focus on tried and tested industry standard mitigation.

The Steps in Screening for EIA

- 4.5 Certain types of development require an EIA:
- For developments described in Schedule 1 of the EIA Regulations (“Schedule 1 development”) EIA is mandatory.
 - For developments of a type described in Schedule 2 of the EIA Regulations (“Schedule 2 development”) EIA may be required if the development has the potential to give rise to ‘significant’ environmental effects by virtue to its nature, size or location.
- 4.6 If the proposed development is of a type described in Schedule 2, then two further criteria should be considered:
- If the proposed development is located in or partly located in a ‘Sensitive Area’ for the purposes of the EIA Regulations; or
 - If the proposed development exceeds the respective applicable threshold in Schedule 2.

- 4.7 Should either criteria be met, the proposed development will require screening against the selection criteria set out in Schedule 3 of the EIA Regulations. Further indicative thresholds and other guidance are also provided in the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) published in March 2012 to supersede Circular 02/99. In addition, a useful checklist is available from the Planning Portal website. If neither of the above criteria is met, the proposed development does not require formal screening for EIA.

Consideration of the EIA Regulations

- 4.8 The requirement for EIA is either mandatory or conditional, depending on the classification of the development project. This is based, in turn, on the likelihood of significant impacts arising.
- 4.9 The proposed development falls within Schedule 2 of the EIA Regulations and is classified as an ‘Urban Development Project’ (10(b)). The Proposed Development exceeds the relevant threshold of (10(b)iii) as the overall area of the development exceeds 5 hectares.
- 4.10 The Site does not however fall within a Sensitive Area as defined by the EIA Regulations. In certain instances, other statutory and non-statutory designations (e.g. a designated Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), can inform whether EIA is required and therefore, also need to be taken into account.
- 4.11 Further to this, despite the exclusion threshold criteria described above, the NPPG states:
- “...it should not be presumed that developments above the indicative thresholds should always be subject to assessment, or those falling below the thresholds could never give rise to significant effects, especially where the development is in an environmentally sensitive area. Each development will need to be considered on its merits”.*
- 4.12 It is for these reasons that the criteria described in Schedule 3 of the EIA Regulations are considered. The over-riding determination for EIA is whether the proposed development is likely to result in significant impacts on the environment.
- 4.13 As aforementioned, Schedule 3 of the EIA Regulations set out the screening criteria in relation to proposed developments classified as Schedule 2 developments. These criteria seek to understand the character and complexity of impacts as well as any sensitivities which relate to the Site. In summary, the criteria fall under three headings:
- Characteristics of the development – taking into account the size, use of natural resources, production of waste and emissions and risk of accidents;
 - Location of the development – consideration of environmental sensitivity of geographical areas likely to be affected by development; and
 - Characteristics of the potential impact – specifically having regards to the extent, magnitude, complexity, probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the impact.
- 4.14 The following section is an appraisal of the Proposed Development in the context of the above Schedule 3 criteria.

5.0 Appraisal of Schedule 3 Criteria

Introduction

- 5.1 This section provides an appraisal of the proposed development, considering Schedule 3 criteria of the EIA Regulations. This appraisal firstly considers the characteristics of the development and secondly, the environmental sensitivity of geographical areas likely to be affected by the development, and the potential for significant impacts

Characteristics of Development

Size of Development

- 5.2 The Site has an area of approximately 7ha. The Proposed Development would be contained within the Site boundary as shown in the Site Location Plan in Appendix 1. The proposed residential area would cover approximately 4.44ha and comprise of up to 135 dwellings. Green Infrastructure of circa 2.52 hectares, including landscaping, recreation and play, amenity areas and sustainable urban drainage features also forms part of the Proposed Development.

Use of Natural Resources

- 5.3 Development of the Site, would by its very nature, require the use of a range of natural and man-made construction materials to complete the build and finish of the scheme. The use of natural resources will be typical for a development of this size and nature. There are no abnormal elements of the Proposed Development that may give rise to likely significant effects in this regard.
- 5.4 The Agricultural Land Classification Report prepared by Kernons concludes that the Site is circa 55% Grade 2 and circa 45% Subgrade 3a. However, the development of 7ha of the best and most versatile land is not considered to be 'significant development of agricultural land'. It is, therefore, not considered to result in a significant impact on the environment.

Production of Waste

- 5.5 The Proposed Development does not include any demolition works, and therefore, there will be no waste arisings prior to construction commencing.
- 5.6 The construction works that will take place on Site will inevitably produce some waste. However, any construction materials will be used efficiently on Site and any re-useable waste will be reused or recycled on Site, wherever possible. Operationally, the development would implement recycling regimes and are unlikely to result in large amounts of waste that would result in a significant effect on the environment.

Pollution and Nuisances

- 5.7 When considering pollution and nuisances associated with a proposed development, the NPPG suggest that the physical scale of ‘urban development projects’ have the potential for an increase in traffic, emissions and noise – these along with other potential impacts are considered in the following section.

Location and Characteristics of Potential Impacts

- 5.8 The following matters are relevant to the environmental considerations of the proposals:

Transport

- 5.9 The following evaluation of environmental effects upon transport during the construction and operational phases of the Proposed Development are based upon the technical surveys and assessment work undertaken by Mode Transport Planning. A Transport Assessment and outline Travel Plan has been prepared for the Proposed Development. The Travel Plan is aimed at mitigating impacts on transport infrastructure and encouraging sustainable transport modes. The Travel Plan will be approved prior to commencement of the Proposed Development.
- 5.10 In terms of sustainable transport, the Site is adequately accessible to a range of sustainable modes of travel. There are existing pedestrian and cycle links in close proximity to the Site, which provide good connections with local facilities/amenities in the local area and Didcot Town Centre. Furthermore, there are bus stops located between 380m – 650m of the Site and Didcot Parkway Railway Station is situated a short distance to the north of the Site.
- 5.11 A travel demand review indicates that the Proposed Development will generate 75 and 98 two-way vehicular trips in the AM and PM peak hours, respectively. Junction capacity assessments on the Park Road and Foxhall Road roundabouts indicate that the impact of the development during the majority of scenarios is not considered to be material and significant, when compared against the ‘2022 plus committed scenario’ (takes account of 1,900 unbuilt new homes at Great Western Park). Mitigation at these roundabout junctions is not considered necessary and commensurate to the Proposed Development.
- 5.12 A Construction Traffic Management Plan will be secured by way of a suitably worded planning condition and implemented during the construction stage.
- 5.13 For the reasons identified above, we do not conclude that the transport impacts from the Proposed Development are likely to be significant to warrant an EIA.

Noise

- 5.14 The construction of the Proposed Development has the potential to affect the amenity of neighbouring uses. However, standard best practices would be employed to ensure that these effects would be minimised. In any case, the effect would be temporary and only during hours of working. Measures, such as setting maximum noise levels and duration, can be secured through

a Construction and Environmental Management Plan secured via an appropriate planning condition.

- 5.15 Once in operation, the Proposed Development is highly unlikely to generate significant levels of noise, in terms of traffic generated. The Noise Assessment prepared by RPS confirms that through appropriate design, the proposed residential development would be subject to satisfactory internal and external acoustic environments with respect to British Standard 8233:2014 'Guidance on Sound Insulation and Noise Reduction for Buildings'. Furthermore, the Site is next to residential development, so any noise generated will be similar in nature to that already occurring

Air Quality

- 5.16 The Air Quality Assessment ("AQA") prepared by RPS confirms that the Site is not in an Air Quality Management Area ("AQMA"). The AQA concludes that during the construction phase, the greatest potential air quality effects relate to dust nuisance. The AQA sets out mitigation measures to ensure that the risk of adverse dust effects is reduced to a level categorised as "not significant". These are commonly adopted measures which can be secured through a Construction and Environmental Management Plan, to be secured through the use of a suitably worded planning condition.
- 5.17 In terms of traffic-related pollution emissions, detailed atmospheric dispersion modelling has been undertaken for the first year in which the development is expected to be fully operational, 2022. Pollutant concentrations are predicted to be well within the relevant health-based air quality objectives for both existing and proposed receptors. Overall, it is concluded that the operational air quality effects are considered to be 'not significant'.
- 5.18 Furthermore, a Travel Plan will be approved prior to commencement of the Proposed Development. The Travel Plan will promote the use of public transport and active modes of travel, with an aim to reducing the reliance on the private car and therefore reducing impacts on air quality by vehicle emissions.
- 5.19 The Proposed Development is, therefore, not anticipated to have a significant impact on air quality.

Ground Conditions and Contamination

- 5.20 The Site comprises pasture land and there are no existing structures on Site. A Phase I Investigation prepared by GRM confirms that the risk of ground contamination and the risk from ground gas is very low.
- 5.21 The Phase I identifies the underlying Solid geology as a Principal Aquifer. However, given that the Site is anticipated to be underlain by cohesive strata and no significant source of potential contamination has been identified, the risk to the underlying aquifer is assessed to be negligible.

- 5.22 During construction, a Construction Environmental Management Plan will set out measures to prevent any contamination, which may result from construction practices. This can be secured via a suitably worded planning condition.
- 5.23 Further to this, there is no evidence that the proposed use on Site will release pollutants onto the Site and surrounding area. During operation of the Proposed Development, the proposed attenuation basin, which forms part of the surface water drainage strategy, will include mechanisms for the treatment of surface water, before it is discharged into the network to prevent any contamination.
- 5.24 As such, there are unlikely to be significant effects from the construction or operational use of the Site.

Flood Risk and Drainage

- 5.25 The Environment Agency's Flood Map for Planning identifies the Site within Flood Zone 1 and is therefore at a low risk of flooding (less than 0.1% or 1 in 1000 chance of flooding from rivers or seas occurring each year).
- 5.26 A Flood Risk Assessment prepared by RPS concludes that there are no anticipated negative impacts associated with the Proposed Development. It confirms the site is not at risk of flooding from any source, and outlines surface/foul water proposals.
- 5.27 The Proposed Development will be connected into the existing foul sewer and a surface water drainage scheme will be implemented to manage surface water runoff. The proposed drainage solution will attenuate flows up to and including the 1 in 100 year +40% rainfall event. This will be limited to the existing greenfield runoff rate.
- 5.28 During the construction phase, a Construction and Environmental Management Plan would minimise any potential pollution incidents to surface water
- 5.29 During operation, the attenuation basin will have mitigation indices, so that surface water arising from the development will receive an appropriate level of treatment in advance of discharge from the Site. There is also potential for the basin to be landscaped to provide amenity and ecological value. Such landscaping may further provide additional surface water treatment in advance of discharge into the existing network.
- 5.30 The Proposed Development is, therefore, not anticipated to significantly impact on flood risk or drainage.

Landscape and Visual Impact

Landscape Character

- 5.31 The Site does not lie within any nationally or locally designated landscape areas. It is not located within or in close proximity to a Conservation Area.

- 5.32 A Landscape and Visual Appraisal (“LVA”) prepared by EDP confirms that the Proposed Development lies within the Open Rolling Downs LT and Lowland Village Farmlands LCT. The LVA confirms that there is no reason to conclude that the Site has any elevated landscape value or importance above the rest of the Open Rolling Downs LT and Lowland Village Farmland LCT.
- 5.33 The key landscape characteristics of the Site include agricultural farmland of a low intrinsic value; and boundary hedgerows and trees, mostly lying outside the site. These landscape elements have been shown to be characteristic and extensively present within the site or local context, and have a medium sensitivity based upon their quality, condition and contribution to the wider value of the Site.
- 5.34 EDP have advised on appropriate landscape mitigation, which is embedded within the Development Framework, Illustrative Masterplan and Illustrative Landscape Strategy to avoid or reduce potential landscape and visual effects. These include introducing field boundary hedgerows on edge of the field parcel; strategic open space with tree planting to improve landscape structure and integrate the Proposed Development into its settlement edge; landscape planting to filter and soften views of the Proposed Development, mitigating visual effects through screening; and detailed proposals to include native planting. The mitigation measures also contribute to the restoration of landscape features which contribute to the character and visual and wildlife amenity. The Development Framework Plan and Illustrative Landscape Strategy plan will be submitted for approval under the outline planning application.
- 5.35 Although the construction phase will inevitably have major/moderate adverse effect on the landscape character. In the longer term (+15 years), there will be a moderate/minor beneficial level on the effects of the LCA and LTs.

Visual Amenity

- 5.36 In terms of visual amenity, the LVA identifies the main receptor groups and their sensitivity. The most sensitive off-site receptors from close range, include the PRow footpath 189/17 immediately to the north of the site, Sustans Cycle Route 544 and PRow footpath 197/1. Distant visibility is achieved from views from the south and south-east; and views from the south-west.
- 5.37 The proposed planting would create a substantial corridor which would afford protection to sensitive viewpoints. The Development Framework Plan and Illustrative Landscape Strategy plan will be submitted for approval under the outline planning application. A well-designed scheme could provide suitable mitigation, particularly along its boundaries, to unlikely give rise to significant effects on the environment in terms of landscape and visual amenity.

Arboricultural

- 5.38 An Arboricultural Survey was undertaken in March 2017 by Marlow Consulting. The survey identified 7 individual trees and two groupings of trees adjacent the site’s northern boundary; all are identified as BS5837 Category C (Low). There are no trees on Site protected by a Tree Preservation Order. These existing trees will not be affected by the Proposed Development. The Proposed Development will include additional tree planting within the landscaping proposals. As such, it is concluded that the Proposed Development will not have a significant impact on arboriculture.

Built Heritage

- 5.39 A Heritage Assessment prepared by EDP confirms that there are no Scheduled Ancient Monuments on the Site or in close proximity to the Site that would be affected by the Proposed Development.
- 5.40 Furthermore, there are no Listed Buildings within the site boundary. The nearest Listed Building lies within the hamlet of Coscote, approximately 300m to the south of the Site. A Heritage Assessment prepared by EDP concludes that the Listed Buildings located nearby are not visually linked with the Proposed Development site, and as such, their settings are highly unlikely to be significantly affected.

Archaeology

- 5.41 A geophysical survey of the Site confirmed the presence of anomalies relating to the extant ridge and furrow earthworks and the locations of former field boundaries. However, the value of the surviving ridge and furrow in the Site is low, and it is already truncated and fragmented.
- 5.42 In consideration of the identified archaeological potential of the site based on evidence from the wider area, together with the results of the geophysical survey, it is concluded that the Site has a low potential to contain archaeological features.

Ecology

- 5.43 An Ecological Appraisal has been prepared by The Environmental Dimension Partnership Ltd (“EDP”) which includes a desk study, Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey and detailed (Phase 2) surveys relating to roosting bats and badgers.
- 5.44 In terms of habitat, the large majority of the Site is sheep grazed, species-poor semi-improved grassland of low intrinsic value.
- 5.45 Phase II Surveys have identified suitable habitats, albeit limited in extent and associated with the boundaries of the Site, for breeding birds, foraging and roosting bats (one tree with low potential), badgers and reptiles. The proposed ecological mitigation strategy includes: avoidance measures embedded within the Development Framework Plan and Illustrative Masterplan to be submitted for approval under the outline planning application; measures to be secured via a Construction and Ecological Management Plan at the construction stage; measures designed within the landscaping scheme; and long term management measures to be secured via a suitably worded planning condition. Furthermore, habitat enhancement and creation are proposed as part of the project, which would enhance the ecological value of the site and benefit the wildlife species identified within and surrounding it.
- 5.46 It is, therefore, concluded that no further surveys are necessary due to the nature of the development proposals. Overall, the Proposed Development is not anticipated to significantly impact on ecology to warrant an EIA.

Cumulative Impacts with Other Development

- 5.47 Using the SODC online planning application database, a search was undertaken to identify any potential cumulative schemes.

Great Western Park (“GWP”)

- 5.48 Outline planning permission (LPA ref: P02/W0848/O) was granted in July 2008 for a mixed-use urban extension of 3,300 new dwellings together with associated local shops & services, leisure, open space & community facilities & transport, drainage & utility infrastructure. The site comprises approximately 180 hectares of predominantly agricultural land and straddles the boundary of Vale of White Horse District Council and South Oxfordshire District Council and is within the parishes of Didcot, West Hagbourne, East Hagbourne and Harwell.
- 5.49 GWP comprises EIA development. An Environmental Statement (“ES”) December 2005, and subsequent Supplementary Environmental Statement July 2006, prepared by RPS identified a range of impacts and proposes measures for mitigation. Overall, the GWP masterplan incorporates a mitigation strategy in respect of layout and design, including proposals for landscape, the movement network, ecological enhancement and access to facilities and services, to ensure no residual likely significant environmental effects.
- 5.50 Depending on planning, the Proposed Development is anticipated to commence construction in 2021/2022. Great Western Park is currently estimated to be completed in 2022, subject to market conditions. It is, therefore, considered that GWP is likely to still be under construction during the same time as the Proposed Development. The following text, therefore, considers the potential cumulative impacts with the proposed development.

Construction

Traffic

- 5.51 The GWP ES states that construction traffic associated with the development of GWP will only access the site via the A4130. No construction traffic is predicted to use the residential roads around Didcot. It is considered that the environmental effects of this additional traffic would be negligible. A Code of Construction Practice (CoCP) and CEMP have been approved and implemented for the Great Western Park development.
- 5.52 Similarly, a CEMP (Construction and Ecological Management Plan) will be implemented during the construction of the Proposed Development to mitigate its own impacts from construction traffic. As such, the potential cumulative impact of the Proposed Development is not considered to be significant. Further to this, any cumulative adverse impacts would be temporary and short-lived.

Noise

- 5.53 The GWP ES confirms that through implementation of a CoCP and the sourcing of low noise emission plant, that construction noise impacts would not be significant. Mitigation includes site

management, suitable sourcing of low noise emission plant for construction purposes, acoustic hoardings/screenings where possible, restricted hours of working, as appropriate and communications with both the local authority and neighbouring residential properties.

- 5.54 Construction noise impacts from the Proposed Development will also be limited, temporary in nature and managed through a CEMP. As such, it is not considered that there will be significant cumulative impacts.

Air Quality

- 5.55 The GWP ES states that potential air quality impacts associated with construction traffic are considered to be negligible and routine dust control measures ensure the at the risk of long-term impacts are insignificant.
- 5.56 Air quality impacts during the construction at the Proposed Development will be predominately localised and minimised through measures set out in the CEMP. As such, it is not considered to result in significant cumulative impacts during the construction of both schemes.

5.57 Operational

Traffic

- 5.58 The GWP ES assessed the operational effects on the settlements within the study area. The overall residual impact is considered neutral, negligible or minor adverse impacts. A Travel Plan for GWP has also been implemented with the aim of reducing the number of trips to and from GWP and encouraging the use of sustainable transport modes. The mitigation measures for GWP have been accepted by the LPA and secured through the planning permission.
- 5.59 For the Proposed Development, the Transport Assessment prepared by Mode Transport Planning considers the cumulative impact of the Great Western Park development. The roundabout junction capacity assessments indicate that the impact of development during the majority of scenarios is not considered to be material or significant.
- 5.60 Furthermore, a Travel Plan will also be implemented for the Proposed Development to reduce single occupancy vehicle journeys. It is, therefore considered there will be no significant cumulative traffic-related impacts during the operation of the two schemes.

Noise

- 5.61 In terms of operational noise on residential amenity, the GWP ES concluded that traffic noise affecting new residential areas can be mitigated by building design and layout to achieve satisfactory internal noise levels. A Noise Assessment prepared by RPS concludes that the main source of noise affecting future residents of the Proposed Development will come from traffic movements on Park Road. As with GWP, the Proposed Development will mitigate its own impact through building design and layout which achieves satisfactory internal and external noise levels.

- 5.62 The GWP ES concludes that there would be no significant adverse noise impacts from operational traffic for the majority of the wider area around the site. A moderate increase is predicted for properties on Lydalls Road and a minor increase is predicted for properties on Park Road, Didcot; A4130 at Milton Hill; Abingdon Road, East Ilsley; A417 Reading Road, Rowstock; Tower Gardens/The Oval, Didcot; B4016, High Street, Drayton; and Hagbourne Road, Didcot. However, this was deemed acceptable by the LPA with mitigation secured within the planning permission. It is considered that the limited increase in traffic generated by the Proposed Development would not result in a significant noise increase for properties along these roads.
- 5.63 Therefore, it is not considered that the operation of Great Western Park with the Proposed Development will result in significant cumulative noise impacts.

Air Quality

- 5.64 The GWP ES confirms that no mitigation measures are considered necessary once construction is complete as Air Quality Strategy objectives are likely to be achieved and impacts are likely to be negligible.
- 5.65 For the Proposed Development, the anticipated pollutant concentrations arising from traffic are predicted to be well within the relevant health-based air quality objectives for both existing and proposed receptors. Overall, it is concluded that the operational air quality effects are considered to be 'not significant' and no mitigation is advised.
- 5.66 Therefore, it is not considered that the operation of Great Western Park with the Proposed Development will result in significant cumulative air quality impacts.

Conclusion

- 5.67 Overall, the Proposed Development of 150 dwellings equates to a small increase in the number of dwellings to be considered cumulatively with the GWP scheme of 3,300 dwellings.
- 5.68 As a large urban extension, GWP has a comprehensive package of mitigation measures to ensure that it mitigates its own environmental impacts. These measures were accepted by the Local Planning Authority for planning permission to be granted.
- 5.69 The Proposed Development will also mitigate its own impacts, and therefore, no cumulative effects are anticipated.

6.0 Conclusion

- 6.1 In accordance with the EIA Regulations, this Screening Request has taken account of the proposed development, its location and the sensitivity of the existing environment. Whilst the Site area exceeds the associated exclusion threshold criteria as 'Urban development Project' the Site is not within, or in close proximity, to an environmentally Sensitive Area.
- 6.2 The over-riding determination for EIA is whether the proposed development is likely to result in likely significant effects on the environment. The Site is not considered to be sensitive to new development and any environmental impacts are unlikely to be significant, complex or widespread.
- 6.3 In summary, potential environmental effects associated with traffic, air quality, noise, waste, pollution, flooding, ground conditions, ecology, visual and other physical changes resulting from the Proposed Development have been considered and are not expected to be significant with the proposed mitigation. Further to this, the potential cumulative effects of the Proposed Development in combination with the Great Western Park scheme, are not considered to be significant during construction or operation.
- 6.4 Lastly, the environmental constraints and opportunities on Site will continue to inform the design process.

APPENDIX 1

SITE LOCATION PLAN



BIDWELLS