

14th April 2025

REF: SSLT1001

Mrs Rebecca Altman
Development Management
Eastleigh Borough Council
Eastleigh House
Upper Market Street
Eastleigh
SO50 9YN

Dear Sir/Madam

Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017: Request for Screening Opinion Pursuant to Regulation 6, relating to Land at Denham's Corner, Snakemoor Lane, Horton Heath, Eastleigh, SO32 2BW

I write on behalf of our client Southern Strategic Land to formally request the adoption of a Screening Opinion pursuant to Regulation 6 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017, in relation to a proposed residential development of Land at Denham's Corner, Snakemoor Lane, Horton Heath, Eastleigh, SO32 2BW (as defined on site location plan ref. 23063-0201, revision A.)

This request relates to a proposed development which will be subject to a formal planning application in due course, and is described in summary as:

Construction of up to 155 no. dwellings, including 40% affordable housing, with associated vehicular, cycle and pedestrian access points off Snakemoor Lane, a shared pedestrian and cycle access off Botley Road, associated landscaping, drainage, infrastructure and biodiversity net gain.

As set out in further detail below, it is our view that the proposed development does not constitute Schedule 1 or Schedule 2 development (as set out in the Regulations), as it does not meet any of the thresholds within the relevant categories. Furthermore, the site is not located within a 'Sensitive area' (as defined by the Regulations) either partly or wholly.

Notwithstanding these points, we request a Screening Opinion, for the avoidance of doubt and to provide completeness.

As required by Regulation 5(4), this request is accompanied by a site location plan and proposed site plan.

The Application Site

The application site which extends to some 9.05 hectares is bound by Scorey's Copse on its northern and north-western boundary, by the Scorey's Copse Rushes Stream on its eastern edge, by the existing dwellings and the B3354 Botley Road on its western side and by Snakemoor Lane on its southern boundary. Lane End stables and Lane End house, also sit adjacent to the site's western boundary.

The site comprises of an agricultural field in rotation between pasture and cereal crop with areas of marshy grassland and mature woodland (both designated as SINCs) located beyond the site boundary to the north and east respectively.

An excerpt of the constraints mapping, as prepared by the master planners with inputs from the whole project design team, shows our understanding of the site's constraints.



Excerpt from the Constraints and Opportunities Mapping

	Site boundary		Ancient woodland		2m contours		Visual barrier
	Site entrance		Woodland with TPO		Direction of downward relief		Inaccessible to ancient woodland
	SANG buffer		Wooded area		Pavement		Possible pedestrian route
	Green buffer		Flood risk zone 2 & 3		Public Right of Way		Bus stop
	Ancient woodland buffer		SINC		District boundary		Property adjacent to site
	20m privacy buffer				Key views		Main view from existing property onto site

Key to the Constraints and Opportunities Mapping

As shown, the central part of the site, the part identified as a developable area is relatively free from constraints. It is not at risk from flooding, is set back from the ancient woodland, SINC, trees and hedgerows. 20 metre wide buffers are shown and these have been used as fixed parameters. The diagram also shows the topography of the site, and this has also been used to guide the proposals.

The site falls entirely within the administrative boundary of Eastleigh Borough Council and entirely within the administrative boundary of Botley Parish Council; the site's northern boundary does however lie adjacent to the administrative boundary of Fair Oak and Horton Heath Parish Council.

The Proposed Development

Regulation 6(2) (b) requires a screening request to be accompanied by a description of the development, including the physical characteristics of the development (and, where relevant, demolition works) and the location of the development, with regards to the environmental sensitivity of geographical areas likely to be affected.

Accordingly, the description of the proposed development is as follows:

“Construction of up to 155 no. dwellings, including 40% affordable housing, with associated vehicular, cycle and pedestrian access points off Snakemoor Lane, a shared pedestrian and cycle access off Botley Road, associated landscaping, drainage, infrastructure and biodiversity net gain”

The proposed development is shown on the illustrative masterplan as depicted below.



Illustrative Masterplan

Determining whether an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is required

The determination for whether an assessment is required rests in the consideration of whether the development is:

- Schedule 1 development – in which case EIA is necessary, or

- Schedule 2 development – in which case EIA is necessary only if the development is likely to have significant environmental effects. Guidance on assessing whether a development would have significant environmental effects is contained in Schedule 3 to the Regulations.

Guidance on assessing whether a development would have significant environmental effects is contained in Schedule 3 to the Regulations.

The proposed development does not meet any of the categories of development in Schedule 1 of the Regulations for which EIA is mandatory. The most relevant category of development within Schedule 2 of the Regulations is category 10 which relates to 'Infrastructure Projects'. Subsection (b) of category 10 relates to "Urban development projects, including the construction of shopping centres and car parks, sports stadiums, leisure centres and multiplex cinemas" and sets the following thresholds and criteria for EIA screening:

- The development includes more than 1 hectare of urban development which is not dwellinghouse development; or
- The development includes more than 150 dwellings; or
- The overall area of the development exceeds 5 hectares.

The proposed masterplan illustrates that the development can accommodate up to 155 dwellings on a site which is approximately 9.05ha in site area. It is therefore appropriate to undertake a Screening Opinion to determine if significant effects on the environment are likely and to determine if an EIA is required.

Paragraph 002 of the National Planning Practice Guidance (Reference ID: 4-002-20140306), which relates to 'the purpose of Environmental Impact Assessment' advises that *"Environmental Impact Assessment should not be a barrier to growth and will only apply to a small proportion of projects considered within the town and country planning regime"*.

Assessing if the proposed development would have significant environmental effects

The PPG confirms that *"when screening Schedule 2 projects, the local planning authority must take account of the selection criteria in Schedule 3 of the 2017 Regulations. Not all of the criteria will be relevant in every case. Each case should be considered on its own merits in a balanced way"* (Paragraph: 018 Reference ID: 4-018-20170728).

An assessment is made below of the proposed development in relation to the relevant criteria set out in Schedule 3 of the Regulations.

Characteristics of the development

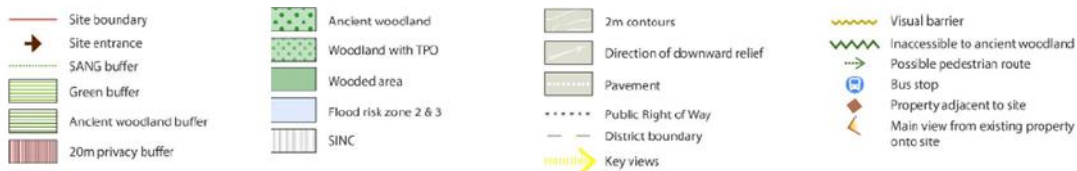
Constraints and Receptors

Careful analysis of the site's constraints and environmental receptors has been undertaken, and the plan below shows how all of the site's key features, including the contours of the land, the existing trees and hedgerows, the woodland, the nearest listed buildings, the existing water network and flood zones. The ecology, the infrastructure and highway network have been assessed and considered in detail by the technical consultant team.

These features have been used to create a series of opportunities which have shaped the emerging proposals. An excerpt of the constraints mapping is provided overleaf, and the full drawing is attached to this submission.



Excerpt from the Constraints and Opportunities Mapping



Key to the Constraints and Opportunities Mapping

Environmental Receptors

Potential environmental receptors that could be impacted by the proposed development include the following, however, these are not considered likely to be subject to significant environmental effects:

- Ancient Woodland to the north of the site Scoreys Copse;
- Tree Preservation Orders covering the woodland to the west of the site;
- Flood Zone's 2 & 3 to the north and east of the site;
- SINC to the east of the site;
- Public Right of Way wrapping around the sites north and eastern boundary;
- Nitrogen Nutrients;
- Existing neighbouring residents to the south west; and
- Future residents of the proposed development.

The site is not located within or immediately adjacent to a statutory designation of international or national importance, but the site is located within 13.8 kilometres of the New Forest SPA and is within the Solent and Southampton Water SPA impact zone for which mitigation schemes are in place.

Vision

The vision for Denham's Corner seeks to transform the existing site by introducing much needed high quality new homes including affordable homes, with a generous amount of public amenity space including an equipped play area, particularly along the sites eastern boundary which will respond positively to the site's locality. Further, a unique site with a proposal that has been carefully designed and planned to both highlight and complement its key existing features and create an environment that is appropriate for its setting and one which presents significant benefits for the local community.

The internal layout of the site includes tree lined streets, orientated to showcase key views in and out of the site. When turning into the site, individuals are presented with views of the central green space set against a backdrop of ancient woodland.

House types are generally interspersed throughout and across the site, with density higher towards the west of the site where it is screened by mature woodland to the west.

Vehicular access is to be located off of Snakemoor Lane. A network of pedestrian routes are included and ensure the site has strong walkability, with an emphasis on connectivity with the open green space on the eastern side of the site. Establishing a route that loops around the site is key and views and overlooking of the high-quality public realm created are maximised. Key pedestrian routes out of the site are directed towards key facilities in order to promote healthy lifestyles.

Substantial separation and ecology buffers from existing areas of protection have been factored into the sites layout and a naturalised approach to surface water, including the creation of swales and ponds are also included along with substantial ecology links through the site. An excerpt of the illustrative site concepts plan is included below and assists in visualising the above.



Landscape

A landscape led approach has been adopted, which in turn has driven the master plan for the site. We recognise the importance of ensuring the development proposed responds positively to the rural locality within this edge of settlement area. The masterplan incorporates numerous landscape features across the site that serve in softening the development and assist in creating a pleasant and green streetscape. An abundance of green open space is included, providing both public amenity space as well harmonising the relationship with the site's context. The proposed development is also laid out in such a way that pulls the buildings back from the lower land, away from the woodland, hedges and trees which as a result, allows the natural landscape to filter potential views of the dwellings from the countryside to the south and east.

In particular the following elements of the proposals are highlighted in terms of how the site will interact with the landscape both around the site, and within the site:

- Site access - A new vehicular access is created off Snakemoor Lane; views into the site will be of the tree lined street leading the approach towards the central green space. Views out of the site access make the most of the countryside views towards the south and beyond.
- Trees and hedges – the proposed development seeks to retain the existing trees and hedgerows within and surrounding the site's boundaries and proposes to enhance and increase native tree and hedgerow species across the site.
- Native planting – the landscaping proposed will include an ecologically friendly and diverse planting mix that will have a focus on native species and plants which can enhance the existing vegetation.
- Green connections – the landscape driven design of the site utilises tree lined streets in order to create wider green infrastructure connections via the tree planting and sustainable drainage features.
- Open space – as illustrated within the excerpt of the masterplan above, the proposed layout includes a significant quantum of open space which will provide opportunities for both ecology and recreation. It will include areas for natural play along with a traditional equipped play area.
- Play strategy – the public open space has been separated into different parts of the site, and will provide integrated natural play within the development which is inspired by the existing landscape character. This will support and create a high-quality residential environment. Traditional play equipment will provide informal play opportunities for a range of ages, within an area provided with sufficient natural surveillance ensuring that the space is both useable and safe.
- Natural – the landscaping has been designed so that it is sympathetic to the environment, with natural features and existing planting being retained wherever possible. This will assist in enhancing the rural aspects of the site.
- Hydrology – the layout incorporates the use of drainage basins within the SUDS network, which overall aims to enhance the stewardship of the adjacent SINC, in turn improving water quality through the capturing of silt and nutrients.
- Lighting – the development will be designed so as to limit external lighting. Any external lighting will be sensitively designed in order to limit any light spill from the site to ensure that any external lighting on the site is not adversely impacting any nearby ecologically sensitive areas and dark night skies.

Ecology

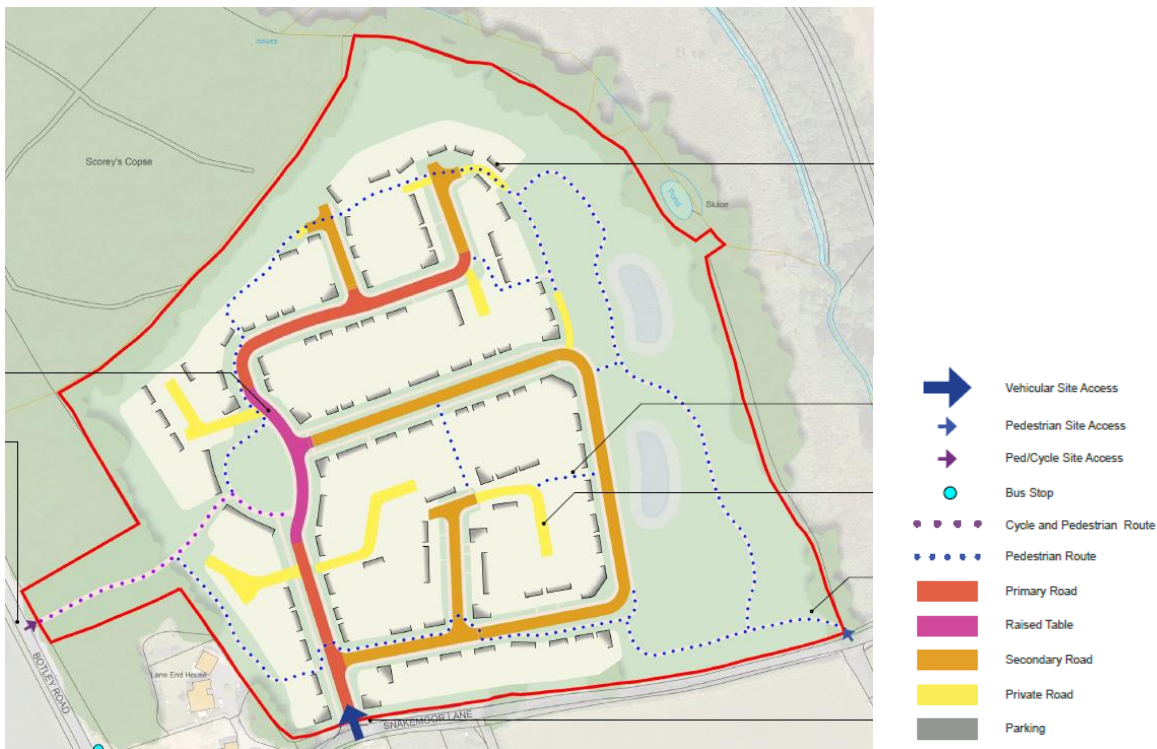
The site, which has been rotated between pasture and cereal crop over the past two years is somewhat species poor; but we do acknowledge that the edges of the site are sensitive, and of course the adjacent ancient woodland, hedgerows and water courses are rich in diversity; it is for this reason that substantial buffers have been considered from the very outset. Enhanced stewardship of the neighbouring Scorey's Copse Rush Pasture will be achieved with implementation of the proposed SuDS network, improving the quality of discharge to the SINC by reduction of silt, agricultural run-off, fertiliser, etc

A full suite of ecology reports and surveys will accompany the forthcoming planning application, including the statutory BNG metric and assessment demonstrating that 10% BNG is achieved.

Movement

The proposal allows for the safe and efficient movement of pedestrians, cyclists and motor users through the site and towards Horton Heath. Consideration has been given to the illustrative layout to ensure users of the site are not impacted in any way and to ensure that access for refuse and emergency vehicles could be maintained at all times. Provision of the shared pedestrian-cycle link to Botley Road will provide a safer route through the site, bypassing the roundabout. Additional betterment will be achieved with the provision of a new footway on Botley Road for a safe connection to the currently isolated south bound bus stop:

- The vehicular site entrance/access is positioned on to Snakemoor Lane so as to maximise visibility.
- A walkable pedestrian loop around the internal site layout.
- Strong block permeability for pedestrians.
- Cycle route between Horton Heath and Durley that avoids the busy roundabout on Botley Road.
- Proposed pedestrian crossing and access around the central green space and play area.
- Proposed pedestrian crossing and access improvements to the existing bus stop.



The proposed development is considered to reflect a more sustainable shift away from reliance on the use of the private petrol/diesel motor vehicle and encourages the use of more sustainable travel options including electric vehicles, public transport, walking and cycling – with the proposed provision of a sustainable transport hub on site.

The nature of the proposed development from a highways and transport perspective is favourable. Accordingly, we consider that the development will not give rise to significant environmental effects in this respect.

With regards to construction and demolition, natural resources will be utilised effectively, and any waste associated with the proposed development will be disposed of responsibly by a suitably qualified contractor. There would also be no risk of major accidents or disasters associated with the development; the development is sufficiently remote from the high-pressure water and gas mains.

Climate Change/Emissions

The proposed dwellings, if approved, would not be likely to be constructed until 2028/29. The UK Government is phasing out the use of traditional gas boilers by 2025. The proposed dwellings are being designed to be served by air source heat pumps and will not give rise to any emissions arising from the use of natural gas. In addition, the dwellings will be served by solar panels.

The UK Government is also phasing out the sale of petrol and diesel vehicles by 2030, but a rapid rise in the uptake of electric, hybrid and plug-in hybrid vehicles is already underway. The dwellings will all be supplied with at least one electric charging point to facilitate the rapid decarbonisation of the area. With electric vehicles having zero emissions at the point of use, and with hybrid vehicles using predominantly electric power in the first mile of any journey, emissions from the new dwellings and their occupants' vehicles will be zero eventually and certainly will not be significant at any point in time.

Although the development is located on the edge of an urban area, the development includes the retention of substantial landscaped buffers to the site boundaries; the effects of demolition, construction and operation can be managed appropriately through standard planning conditions to ensure that no adverse impact on the local population occurs.

With regards to landscape, townscape and visual impacts, a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment is being prepared, and so far, the survey work reveals limited intervisibility between the site and its environs, and being set amongst the established and heavily tree'd boundaries will ensure little landscape impact.

In light of the above, the characteristics of the development are not considered to be likely to give rise to significant environmental effects.

Location of Development

The site is located adjacent to the urban edge of Horton Heath.

The application site is not located within a 'sensitive area' for the purposes of environmental assessment as set out within the Regulations. More specifically, the site is not within or adjoining a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), National Park, The Broads, a property on the World Heritage List, a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM), Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) or a European Site.

The location of development has no impact on the absorption capacity of the natural environment in respect of those areas requiring particular attention, as set out in paragraph 2(a) of Schedule 3 of the Regulations, namely wetlands, riparian areas or river mouths; coastal zones and the marine environment; mountain and forest areas; nature reserves and parks; European sites and other areas classified or protected under national legislation; areas where there has been a failure in environmental quality; or landscapes of historical, cultural or archaeological significance.

In summary, the site lies adjacent to an establishing urban area and comprises a partly previously developed site including a scrap yard to be removed and remediated. As a result, it is not considered that the site is sensitive under the terms of the Regulations and the location of the development is not likely to give rise to significant environmental effects.

Types and characteristics of the potential impact

The potential significant effects of the development on the environment must be considered in relation not only to the selection criteria considered above, but also having regard to the magnitude and spatial extent of impact; the nature of the impact; the transboundary nature of the impact; the intensity and complexity of the impact; the probability of the impact; the expected onset, duration, frequency and reversibility of the impact; the cumulation of the impact with the impact of other existing and/or approved development; and the possibility of effectively reducing the impact.

At the construction phase, any adverse impacts in terms of noise and vibration, pollution, plant and machinery and air quality will be managed by adopting appropriate control measures and working methods. The details of this will be provided and discussed with the Council as part of a formal planning application and we would expect these measures to be secured via a planning condition.

Impacts associated with the operation of the proposed development in terms of noise and disturbance, scale of buildings and residential amenity, traffic generation and movement, flood risk and drainage and ecological considerations will be addressed and discussed with the Council as part of a formal planning application. It is noted that discussion on these matters has already commenced as part of the pre-application enquiry and that specialist consultants have been appointed to prepare detailed reports to inform the proposed layout and to support a formal planning application. These reports will outline measures to effectively minimise the impact of development. Such measures we would expect to be secured via planning conditions and legal agreements.

Overall, it is not considered that the type and characteristics of the potential impact of the proposed development will be significant. The effects of the proposed development are not considered likely to extend beyond the immediate environs or be of a scale or complexity likely to give rise to significant effects

on the environment. Furthermore, any likely effects are capable of being appropriately mitigated by employing tried and tested mitigation techniques and practices.

Summary of Potential Effects

The potential effects of the proposed development have been considered, taking into account Schedule 3 of the EIA Regulations.

The proposed development is not considered likely to result in significant effects during either the construction or occupation phases. The risk of potentially significant effects during construction can be mitigated using standard construction measures that would be secured through the implementation of a Construction and Environment Management Plan (CEMP).

During occupation, potentially significant effects would be mitigated through:

- The provision of open space and walking networks within the site to reduce the potential for pressure on nearby designated sites for nature conservation.
- Retention of the tree and hedgerow boundaries and woodland, including ecological enhancements.
- The sensitive layout of built development and provision of new structural landscaping and open space to mitigate adverse impacts on the setting of the surrounding rural area, landscape character and users of nearby public rights of way.
- The location of built development away from areas that could be sensitive to the adverse effects of noise and air quality from traffic or trains, as well as additional pot-specific noise mitigation if necessary;
- The provision of new highway infrastructure and contributions towards improvements to existing highway infrastructure.
- Implementation of measures to achieve nitrate neutrality.

On this basis, the likely environmental effects of the proposed development are not considered to be significant.

Cumulative Impacts

As the proposed development will not result in significant cumulative effects in isolation, is independent from any nearby developments already under construction or consented, and suitable measures have already been identified by Eastleigh Borough Council within those consents to mitigate the environmental effects of those developments; we consider that the proposals are not likely to result in significant cumulative effects.

Conclusion

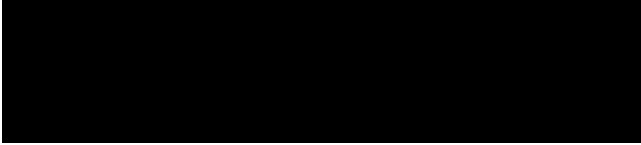
Having regard to the above detailed consideration of the relevant criteria and thresholds set out and explained within the Regulations and the Planning Policy Guidance, it is evident that the proposal does not constitute Schedule 1 development. Whilst the proposed development marginally exceeds the 150 dwelling threshold for built development in category 10(b)(ii) and marginally exceeds the 5 ha threshold for built development in category 10(b)(iii) of Schedule 2 when taken as a whole, the likely impacts of the proposed development are not considered to be significant.

In considering the development effects, we conclude that the proposal is not EIA development, and we request that the Local Planning Authority accept this. Accordingly, we request that the Local Planning

Authority adopts a Screening Opinion to confirm this, and in accordance with paragraph 6 (6) we look forward to hearing from you within the statutory period.

In the meantime, if you require any further information to enable the Council to determine this request, please do not hesitate to contact me using the details below.

Yours sincerely



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