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Application V/25/99246
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Tuesday 13th May 2025

Dear Mr Wiseman

Screening Opinion under the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017, Part 2, Regulation 6

Application No: V/25/99246

Description: Construction of up to 155 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 and associated landscaping, drainage, infrastructure and biodiversity net gain.

Site: Land at Denhams Corner, Snakemoor Lane, Eastleigh, SO32 2BW

Applicant: Gillings Planning

Date Information received:
17.04.25

Deadline for issuing screening opinion:
08.05.25

Site Description

The site comprises an agricultural field of approximately 9.05ha, located on the north side of Snakemoor Lane, to the east of Botley Road (B3354). The use of the field rotates between pasture and cereal crop. The site is bordered by Scorey's Copse to the north, which is a designated Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) and Ancient Woodland. The trees in Scorey's Copse and to the west are all covered by an area Tree Preservation Order (TPO). There is a watercourse to the east of the site, which is a tributary of the River Hamble, and the land adjacent to this is also a

SINC (Scorey's Copse Rush Pasture SINC). A public right of way (footpath 719) runs through Scorey's Copse and to the east of the watercourse. Botley Road lies beyond the woodland to the west and there are two residential properties on the corner of Snakemoor Lane and Botley Road. To the south is Snakemoor Lane with fields and scattered housing and farms beyond.

The site lies within the countryside and the nearest settlement is Horton Heath to the north. There is an existing farm access into the site from Snakemoor Lane, and the land levels on the site drop downwards to the east.

Proposed Development

The proposal is for the construction of up to 155 dwellings with associated infrastructure and open space. Vehicle access would be from Snakemoor Lane, and there would be pedestrian and cycle access points from Snakemoor Lane and Botley Road. The indicative plan shows the housing located on the central and western sides of the site, with open space mainly on the eastern side. The footpath link to Botley Road would be created through an area of woodland.

Is an Environmental Impact Assessment Required?

The Local Planning Authority are of the opinion that an Environmental Impact Assessment is **not required** for this development.

Screening Assessment

The EIA Regulations (the Regulations), in conjunction with the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) set out the legal framework in relation to EIA. The EIA Regulations contain two development schedules, Schedule 1 development and Schedule 2 development. Schedule 1 contains a list of development where EIA is mandatory. Schedule 2 contains a list of development types and development thresholds where the requirement for EIA should be considered.

The Local Planning Authority must screen planning applications for development of a description contained within Schedule 2, Column 1, which is within a sensitive area or meets or exceeds the relevant thresholds contained in Column 2, to determine whether it is likely to have significant effects on the environment when having regard to the selection criteria contained within Schedule 3 of the Regulations.

Schedule 1 Development

Schedule 1 developments are large scale projects for which significant effects would be expected and comprise developments such as power stations, airports etc. The development is not of a type listed in Schedule 1 of the Regulations.

Schedule 2 Development

Schedule 2 development means development, other than exempt development, of a description mentioned in Column 1 of the table in Schedule 2 where:

- (a) any part of that development is to be carried out in a sensitive area; or
- (b) the applicable threshold or criterion in the corresponding part of column 2 of that table is respectively exceeded or met in relation to that development.

Is the development Schedule 2 development?

The development proposed is of a type listed in Column 1 of the table of Schedule 2 (Category 10(b), urban development projects).

Sensitive areas

As set out in Paragraph 032 of the PPG, the more environmentally sensitive the location, the more likely it is that the effects on the environment will be significant and will require an EIA. Certain designated sites are defined in regulation 2(1) as sensitive areas, which are:

- Sites of Special Scientific Interest and European Sites;
- National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty; and
- World Heritage Sites and scheduled monuments.

The development site is not located in a sensitive area and therefore the thresholds set out in Column 2 of the table in Schedule 2 for category 10(b) developments should be applied.

Thresholds

The thresholds for “urban development projects” are:

- 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 development is for up to 155 dwellings on a site of 9.05ha. The development is, therefore, Schedule 2 development and it is necessary to consider whether the proposal is likely to have significant effects on the environment taking account of the relevant selection criteria in Schedule 3 of the EIA Regulations.

The PPG states that only a very small proportion of Schedule 2 development will require an EIA and gives indicative screening thresholds of the type of development for which an EIA is unlikely to be necessary. For “urban development projects” it states that EIA is unlikely to be necessary for the redevelopment of land unless the new development is on a significantly greater scale than the previous use, or the types of impact are of markedly different nature or there is a high level of contamination. For sites which have not previously been intensively developed it gives a suggested threshold of 5ha or development that would have significant

urbanising effects in a previously non-urbanised area (e.g. new development of more than 1,000 dwellings). The proposed number of residential units is well below the broad indicative thresholds given by the PPG for residential development.

Schedule 3: Selection Criteria for Screening Schedule 2 Developments

Schedule 3 includes three broad categories for consideration which comprise of: the characteristics of the development; the environmental sensitivity of the location; and, the types and characteristics of the potential impacts, which includes such matters as: the magnitude and spatial extent of the impact; the nature of the impact; the probability and complexity of the impact; the onset, duration, frequency and reversibility of the impact; and, the possibility of effectively reducing the impact. The relevant matters to the particular development proposed are considered below.

1. Characteristics of development

a) Size and design of the development:

The site is 9.05ha in size and the proposed development would be of a relatively low density, taking account of the rural setting and the need to protect adjacent ecologically sensitive areas. Whilst the scheme would need to be assessed in detail through an application process, based on the indicative information it is not considered to be of a size or design that would result in significant environmental impacts such as to warrant the need for an EIA to be undertaken.

b) Cumulation with other existing development and/or approved development:

The site is not directly adjacent to any proposed development sites, but is located near to a major development area known as One Horton Heath, which is a scheme for up to 2,500 dwellings located to the west of Horton Heath. This development was subject to its own Environmental Impact Assessment, where the impacts on the wider environment were assessed in detail and relevant mitigation agreed, including a package of off-site highway improvement works and air quality monitoring to mitigate impacts of increased traffic on the surrounding road network. Other nearby development has been of a smaller scale and any impacts would have been mitigated on a site specific basis. It is considered that the cumulative impact is not likely to have significant effects on the environment such as to warrant the need for an EIA to be undertaken.

c) Traffic and transport impacts:

The proposed development would result in a permanent increase in the number of vehicles travelling on the local road network and could affect existing traffic flows. The Highway Authority has confirmed that a development

of this scale would require a full Transport Assessment to be submitted with an application, to include appropriate mitigation of impacts. It is considered that without mitigation, the traffic impacts would be likely to have a negative effect on the local highway network. Appropriate mitigation in this instance would likely be in the form of improvements to pedestrian and cycle connections to nearby services and facilities, to reduce occupants dependence on the private car, along with implementation of a Travel Plan. Such mitigation could be secured by legal agreement or by condition, and subject to this, it is not considered that the traffic impacts, either alone or in combination with other permitted development, would warrant an EIA.

The proposed development would also result in additional traffic during the construction phase, which would include heavy goods vehicles. This impact would, however, be temporary in nature and is considered to be typical of a development of this type. It is not considered therefore that it would have significant effects on the environment if appropriately managed through a Construction Environmental Management Plan.

d) Use of natural resources:

The development would permanently change the use of the land, would involve potential changes to the topography of the site and the use of construction materials. It is not, however, considered that this would result in significant effects on the environment such as to warrant an EIA. Once operational, the development would require the use of certain resources including energy and water. Similar resources would also be required to be utilised during the construction phase. However, these would not be significant in scale and would not exceed the expected levels for a typical residential development proposal of this nature.

e) Production of waste:

The production of waste which would result from the construction phase would be typical for an urban development project of the nature proposed with waste levels not being considered to be significant. The provisions for the storage, collection, and disposal of rubbish from the development during the construction phase could be managed through a Construction Environmental Management Plan. It is not considered that the waste arising from the operational phase of the development would be significant and this would be appropriately managed in line with the Council's waste management and recycling provision.

f) Pollution and nuisance:

Pollution arising from the resultant increase in traffic generation and activities would need to be carefully considered with regard to the impact on the environment and human health. However it is considered that mitigation could

be secured through design, planning condition or S106 planning obligation such that the impact would not be significant enough to warrant an EIA being undertaken. An Air Quality Assessment would need to be submitted with an application and assessed through the application process.

g) Risk of major accidents and/or disasters:

The anticipated risk of accidents occurring is considered to be low if appropriately managed. The construction and operational phases of the development would not involve the use of high risk substances or technologies. There is also not considered to be a significant risk of accidents occurring as a result of the proposed end uses, including those related to transport, although this would be subject to design and layout considerations. The construction phase would be managed by the developer in accordance with a Construction Environmental Management Plan and the relevant Health and Safety Regulations and other associated statutory provisions.

h) Risk to human health:

The site is not located within an identified contaminative area and radon risk is low, but the past use as farmland has the potential to have caused ground contamination. Ground investigation would be required to establish the extent of any contamination and the need for mitigation measures. It is not, however, considered that the risk of contamination would be of a level to warrant an EIA, as any impacts could be mitigated with appropriate remediation measures. This would be fully assessed as part of the application process and remediation (if required), could be secured by condition.

The site does not lie within an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA). However, pollution arising from the increase in traffic generation would need to be carefully considered and would be assessed as part of the application process through submission and review of an Air Quality Impact Assessment, with any required mitigation secured via condition.

i) Noise and disturbance:

The development would result in an increase in noise levels during the construction process but this would not be anticipated to be unusual for a development of this type, and could be controlled through the use of a Construction Environmental Management Plan. This would incorporate a range of measures including the appropriate location of plant and on-site facilities, details of any piling, lorry routing and the control of construction and delivery hours to minimise the impact upon sensitive receptors.

During the operational phase, the development would result in an increase in noise levels relative to the existing situation on site, with this mainly arising from additional traffic movement and general residential activity, but this is

considered unlikely to result in significant effects on the environment such that an EIA would be required.

2. The Location of the Development - the environmental sensitivity of the location

(a) Existing and approved land use:

The site is an agricultural field and the online Magic Map service (DEFRA) identifies it as a mix of Grade 3b (moderate quality) and Grade 2 (very good quality) agricultural land. The Grade 2 classification covers approximately 3ha (approx. 35%) of the site. Grades 1, 2 and 3a are considered as the 'best and most versatile' (BMV) agricultural land for planning purposes. The National Planning Policy Framework requires agricultural land quality to be recognised in planning decision making, noting that areas of poorer quality should be preferred to those of higher quality (paragraph 187 and footnote 65). For any loss of BMV over 20ha for development that does not accord with an adopted development plan, there is a need to consult Natural England to assess the impacts of the loss. In this case, the proposal would not accord with Eastleigh's development plan but as the area of BMV land is less than 20ha, Natural England would not be required to be consulted on this matter. However, it would still be a material consideration for the planning decision making process. In summary, whilst the loss of BMV is a material consideration, the BMV classification in itself is not considered to warrant an EIA for this development.

The site is in a rural location, detached from major settlements, with only a small number of houses close to the site. The development would significantly alter the character of the site from a rural field to an urban development, and the landscape and character impacts of this would need to be carefully assessed through the application process. However, it is considered that the impacts on existing populations and land uses would not be significant subject to appropriate design and mitigation (e.g. layout to place housing away from site boundaries with adjacent housing and provide appropriate buffers to sensitive nature conservation areas).

(b) Natural Resources:

It is not considered that the proposals would result in an excessive use of resources that would have a significant effect on the environment.

(c) Natural Environment:

The development would have the potential to impact on European and locally protected nature conservation sites if no mitigation were achieved. Potential impacts in relation to flood risk and any impacts on the historic environment would also need to be assessed.

Impact on protected nature conservation areas

Natural England has confirmed that the site has the potential to impact on a number of designated sites, as listed below. Potential impacts would result from nutrient loading on water quality, and from increased recreational pressure.

- Lee-on-the-Solent to Itchen Estuary Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
- Lincegrove and Hackett's Marshes SSSI
- Upper Hamble Estuary and Woods SSSI
- Solent Maritime Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
- Solent and Southampton Water Special Protection Area (SPA)
- Solent and Southampton Water Ramsar
- New Forest SPA, SAC and Ramsar

The watercourse adjacent to the site is a tributary of the River Hamble and feeds into the European protected sites. Mitigation of impacts to water quality could be achieved by appropriate design of the drainage system, and incorporation of filtration measures (at least 3 forms of naturalised filtration), which could be secured by condition. It would also be necessary for the scheme to achieve nutrient neutrality to protect water quality and it would be possible for the applicant to mitigate nutrient impacts using the Council's Nutrient Mitigation Strategy or similar approved scheme. This could be secured by legal agreement or condition.

The site also lies within the catchment areas for the New Forest National Park and the Solent protected sites, where there is the potential for impacts due to increased recreational pressure. These impacts could be mitigated through the payment of contributions towards appropriate mitigation schemes, e.g. the Solent Recreation Mitigation Strategy and the Council's New Forest Mitigation Strategy, and secured by legal agreement.

In terms of locally designated sites, the site lies adjacent to two Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation. The proposal (based on indicative plans) shows buffers between the development and these nature conservation areas in order to minimise impacts, and this matter would need to be assessed in detail as part of any future application. The site is also in an area where there are records of protected species, including bats and badgers, and where there is suitable habitat for great crested newts. The provision of new footways and cycleways also has the potential to impact on wildlife through the removal of hedgerow. Potential impacts on protected species that may be present would need to be assessed in detail through submission and review of an Ecological Impact Assessment as part of the application process, with any necessary mitigation agreed and secured by condition. Other mitigation that may be required could include restrictions on lighting in certain areas, enhancements to existing habitats and provision of new habitats, all of which could be secured by condition. Subject to mitigation, the ecological impacts of the development would not be considered to be of an extent that would warrant an EIA.

Flood risk

The site lies within Flood Zone 1 and is therefore considered to be at low risk of flooding. However, the adjacent land next to the watercourse is within Flood Zones 2 and 3. Any potential food risks as a result of the proximity to the watercourse would need to be fully assessed through submission of a Flood Risk Assessment, with mitigation measures agreed and secured by condition where required.

Protected trees

There are protected trees on and adjacent to the site and the copse to the north (Scorey's Copse) is designated Ancient Woodland. Potential impacts could include damage or loss of trees, along with indirect impacts on woodland from domestic pets and recreation. These impacts could be mitigated by various measures that could be secured by condition, e.g. the provision of appropriate buffer zones and tree protection measures.

Historic environment

There are no sites or buildings of historic significance in the vicinity of the site and the site is not within a conservation area. The proposal would not be considered to result in significant effects on the historic environment.

Landscape impacts

There are no statutory landscape designations affecting the site, but the proposal would have an impact on the landscape and visual character of the area, which would need to be carefully assessed through the application process. An application would be expected to be accompanied by a suite of detailed landscape documents including a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, landscape masterplan and maintenance proposals. Whilst this would be a key consideration in the assessment of the schemes acceptability, the landscape impacts would not be considered to be of a scale to warrant an EIA.

3. Types and characteristics of the potential impact

a) Magnitude and spatial extent of the impact:

As detailed above, the potential types and spatial extent of the likely impacts are not significant in EIA terms.

b) Nature of the impact:

The nature of the potential impacts are fully considered in Sections 1 and 2 of this assessment.

c) Transboundary nature of the impact:

It is not considered that any transboundary impacts are likely.

d) Intensity and complexity of the impact:

The impacts are not complex in EIA terms, as detailed in Sections 1 and 2 of this assessment.

e) Probability of the impact:

The impacts detailed in Sections 1 and 2 above are likely to occur but can be satisfactorily mitigated.

f) Expected onset, duration, frequency and reversibility of the impact:

The impacts detailed in Sections 1 and 2 above are likely to be either temporary during the construction period or permanent during the implementation phase, but can be satisfactorily mitigated.

g) Cumulation of the impact of other existing and/or approved development:

As detailed in Section 1, the in-combination effect is not considered to result in significant effects in EIA terms.

h) Possibility of effectively reducing the impact:

As indicated in this assessment, the impacts can be reduced through design, S016 planning obligations and conditions.

Conclusion

The development has been screened against the relevant provisions of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 and the Planning Practice Guidance. This screening assessment has considered whether the proposed development is likely to give rise to significant effects on the Environment.

The development is not Schedule 1 development but falls under Schedule 2 of the EIA Regulations. The site is not located within a sensitive area as defined by the EIA Regulations but the proposals exceed the defined thresholds in Schedule 2 for urban development projects of this nature, thus requiring the proposals to be assessed against the criteria in Schedule 3. For the reasons set out above it is considered that subject to mitigation, the development would not be likely to have significant environmental effects on the application site or its immediate surroundings, nor do the characteristics and location of development indicate that the development is likely to give rise to significant environment effects that warrant an EIA being undertaken.

Mitigation measures, which are typical for a development of this type and nature, would be necessary and these are able to be appropriately provided and controlled through the planning application process, including though the use of planning conditions and S106 planning obligations.

Accordingly, the screening assessment has identified that significant effects on the environment are not considered likely either alone or in combination with other development and, therefore, it is the opinion of Eastleigh Borough Council as the Local Planning Authority that the proposed development does not constitute EIA development as defined by the Regulations.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "N Parker", written over a horizontal line.

Nick Parker
Planning Manager