

DELEGATED REPORT

PROPOSAL	REQUEST FOR SCREENING OPINION - OUTLINE RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT	
LOCATION:	Land at Causeway Farm, The Causeway, Petersfield	
REFERENCE NO:	52418	PARISH:Petersfield
APPLICANT:	Adams Integra Housing Consultants	
CONSULTATION EXPIRY DATE:	12 February 2010	
APPLICATION EXPIRY DATE:	19 February 2010	
COUNCILLOR(S):	Cllr Mrs A P Claxton	
SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION:		

Site and Development

The site is located to the south of Petersfield, to the south-east of The Causeway, outside but adjacent to the Settlement Policy Boundary. It has an area of some 11.3ha an area of 9.1ha is allocated for housing.

This is a greenfield site within the South Downs National Park. It has a number of attractive features, such as trees and streams. It is situated to the south eastern edge of the Petersfield behind a ribbon of residential properties fronting The Causeway, and bounded to the south by a pocket of industrial buildings and a mobile home park. The allocation is predominately coarse grazing land that gently falls away to the outer boundaries. There is a group of residential properties, including a converted listed building, to the rear of The Causeway opposite the entrance to the site by the Hangers Way.

The proposed development for the site would be a development of 178 dwellings together with a 30 bed nursing/sheltered accommodation, a primary school, a community building, river side walk and allotments.

This application is a request for a screening opinion from the Local Planning Authority as to whether an Environmental Impact Assessment will be required for the proposed development. The application states that the site is not subject to flood, environmental or other known constraints. The main access would be off The Causeway. The view of the applicant is that based upon the thresholds and provisions set out in the EIA Regulations there is not a requirement to prepare an EIA in support of development of the site.

Relevant Planning History

No previous applications on the site. The site is included as a Reserve Housing Allocation (Policy H2) in the Second Review of the Local Plan

Adjacent site.

36692 – Land SE of the Causeway. Request for screening opinion - residential development 100 dwellings. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT NOT REQUIRED. 25/01/2010

Development Plan Policies and Proposals

East Hampshire District Local Plan: Second Review

Planning Policy Constraints and Guidance

South Downs National Park

The application site falls within the area subject to the designation order. The two statutory purposes of the National Parks' designation are:

- To conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of their areas; and
- To promote opportunities for the public understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of their areas.

If there is a conflict between the two, conservation takes precedence.

The provisions of government policy relating to National Parks (currently including PPS7, circulars 12/96 and 125/77 and the SE Plan) applies.

Consultations and Town/Parish Council comments

Arboricultural Officer TPO (EH482)2002 and TPO (EH143) 1984 are in force on this site and part of its northern extent lies within the Petersfield Conservation Area. The effect of any proposed development on this land on the existing protected trees and other trees and landscape features is a material consideration. An accurate land and tree survey will be required, categorising the existing trees, together with a tree constraints plan which will highlight the influence trees on the site have by virtue of their root protection areas and their size and orientation. This information must inform any layout for the site.

Principal Landscape Officer - From my understanding of the Regulations an EIA is required for this proposal. Although the site has been allocated as a Housing Reserve site in the Local Plan the location and size of the proposed development site within the SDNP would warrant the preparation of an EIA.

Archaeology Section - Thank you for consulting us regarding the above proposed planning application. The site has been subject to some archaeological investigation associated with the submission of a similar planning application in 2002/3, desk based assessment, geophysical survey and limited trenched evaluation did reveal some evidence for archaeological features on

the site. However, the previous trenched evaluation was limited to only 6 trenches and it is likely that further previously unknown archaeological features are present within the site. I am pleased to see that the applicant is aware of the archaeological potential of the site at this early stage and consideration should be given to the archaeological impact of the development in any Environmental Statement/Environmental Impact Assessment that might be produced.

Although it is unlikely that there are any archaeological finds or features present that would present an overriding concern I would recommend that an archaeological condition be attached to any planning consent that might be granted. Given the unknown nature of any archaeological sites that might be present I would strongly urge that the site be subject to a trenched evaluation at an early stage, and I would recommend that the results of the evaluation be available prior to the determination of any detailed application that might be submitted.

Environment Agency Thank you for consulting us on the screening opinion for the above development. Having reviewed the details submitted, in our opinion the development does not fall under the Town & Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 1999.

We would agree with the assessment that the scheme would fall within section 10b (urban development projects) of schedule 2 and that it also exceeds the required threshold. However, there are not likely to be significant environmental effects as a result of this development.

We would like to take this opportunity to say we are encouraged to see the ecological enhancements detailed in the illustrative masterplan (drawing 05 rev A), and we are looking forward to seeing more detail of these with the submitted application.

Contamination Officer According to Environmental Services records, the development described does not overlie any potential contaminated land and as such is unlikely to create any preferential pathways causing contamination to sensitive receptors. As such, I am of the opinion that an impact assessment is not required.

It is noted from information supplied by the applicant that there is no intention to supply a desktop study (DTS) with the application. Given the nature and size of this development I would like to see a DTS supplied with the application. The DTS should be completed by a 'Competent Person', its contents in keeping with best practice as outlined in 'CLR 11 – Model procedures for the Management of Land Contamination', and the Environmental Services leaflet entitled "Development on Potentially Contaminated Land", available as a download from the following East Hampshire District Council website

Environmental Health – Pollution Control After reviewing the site plan and the proposed development. I confirm that I am satisfied in terms of the issues Environmental Protection comments upon there is no need to undertake an Environmental Impact Assessment.

HCC Ecologist Having considered the location and scope of the proposals in conjunction with the provisions set out in the *Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment)*

(England and Wales) Regulations 1999, Circular 02/99: Environmental Impact Assessment, and the content of the applicant's ecological scoping report, I do not believe that potential on-site ecological impacts associated with this development are sufficient to trigger the requirement for an EIA.

However, the proposed development is located within 5km of the following designated wildlife sites:

- East Hampshire Hangers Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Wealden Edge Hangers Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI);
- Butser Hill SAC and SSSI;
- Coulter's Dean SSSI;
- Harting Downs SSSI; and,
- West Harting Down SSSI.

Each of the above sites qualify as a 'sensitive area' as defined in Regulation 2 (1) of the *Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (England and Wales) Regulations 1999*.

Given the reasons for which the above sites have been designated, in addition to their distance from the Causeway Farm site, it is considered unlikely that these proposals *alone* would result in a significant effect. However, when considering the impacts of development at Causeway Farm *in combination* with developments (both approved and proposed) elsewhere in the area the potential for a significant impact increases, especially as a result of increased human disturbance due to recreational activities.

It is therefore advised that Natural England be consulted to confirm whether a significant impact to 'sensitive sites' is anticipated, as per paragraph 37 of *Circular 02/99: Environmental Impact Assessment*.

Finally, the views of Natural England should also be sought to confirm whether a Habitats Regulations Assessment under Regulation 48 of the *Conservation (Natural Habitats &c) Regulations 1994* (as amended) is also considered necessary.

County Highways - No objection

Natural England This site is within the area of the designated South Downs National Park. The National Park will come into effect on 31st March 2010 from which time the provisions of government policy relating to National Parks (currently including PPS7, circulars 12/96 and 125/77 and the SE Plan) will apply. Until then, these policies are material considerations, and should be given considerable weight in all planning decisions'.

Natural England is concerned that the development will have significant adverse impacts upon the South Downs National Park. **Consequently, we would recommend that an EIA is required.** Should the Council decide that an EIA is not required however, Natural England

requests that a detailed assessment of the potential impacts of this proposal upon the South Downs National Park is conducted.

We note that this is one of a number of developments in this sensitive area that we have been consulted on recently. There are likely to be cumulative impacts.

Natural England is only able to advise on environmental impacts relevant to our remit and, whilst we advise that a detailed ecological and landscape assessment of the potential impacts of this proposal needs to be carried out for this proposed development it is up to the Council to decide whether a full Environmental Impact Assessment is necessary.

If you require any further information regarding this response please do not hesitate to contact me.

South Downs Joint Committee Thank you for consulting the Joint Committee on the screening request for this site.

I consider that the site falls within Schedule 2 of the Regulations and that an EIA will be necessary. The proposal would be an urban development of a Greenfield site of over 5 hectares. It is within a sensitive area (ie it is within AONB/National Park) and development will have an effect on the landscape, including distant views from the south.

For your information, I would expect an EIA to include assessments of the impacts on the landscape, the watercourse that runs through the site, flora (including, but not limited to, trees and hedges within the site), fauna, and archaeology.

Buriton Parish Council has seen the screening request asking the District Council whether or not an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is needed to accompany a future planning application for development of the site along The Causeway, Petersfield. The Parish Council feels very strongly that a thorough EIA must be undertaken so that any future planning application can be considered properly. This land is now in a designated National Park (not just in an AONB) and we trust that the District Council will decide that a thorough EIA is required.

Representations

4 representations received:

Four letters received raising the following comments:

- Cumulative affect of three reserve sites considered for development;
- Overall master plan required for the south side of Petersfield;
- Site within the South Downs National Park any development will have an adverse impact upon the landscape;

Large urban development on the landscape.

Determining Issues

The works area exceeds 0.5ha and the proposed development has to be assessed under Section 10 of Schedule 2 of the 1999 EIA Regulations. The site is located within an AONB and the designated South Downs National Park.

There is a detailed Development Brief for the site prepared by EHDC. The submission of the screening opinion is in line with the requirements of the development brief. The development is an urban development project which falls within Schedule 2 of the Regulations and lies within a sensitive area.

The number of dwellings proposed is well under the 1,000 threshold indicated in the EIA Regulations, even if considered in conjunction with the other Reserve Sites (Land South East of the Causeway 100 dwellings, Land at Larcombe Road 100 dwellings) in the vicinity that could also come forward for development. However, with a site area of 11.3 ha, of which 9.1 ha is allocated for housing, the site area far exceeds the 5 ha threshold in the EIA regulations. The site area coupled with its location at the south eastern edge of Petersfield and within both the AONB and the South Downs National Park as designated will be a material consideration. There are far reaching implications for the landscape and the visual amenity of this end of the town.

Having taken account of the characteristics and location of the development, inclusive of potential cumulative impacts and the criteria in Schedule 3 to the Regulations it is the Council's view that the proposal could potentially have a significant effect upon the landscape and environment sufficient to consider the proposed development as EIA development under the 1999 Regulations.

There are no detailed studies submitted with this screening request. However a number of consultees have commented on the principle of development, as set out in the consultation section above.

The Principal Landscape Officer considers that the location and size of the proposed development site within the SDNP would warrant the preparation of an EIA.

South Downs Joint Committee considers that due to the size of the development and its location within a sensitive area the development will have an effect on the landscape, including distant views from the south. As a consequence an EIA is considered to be required to assess the landscape, the watercourse that runs through the site, flora (including, but not limited to, trees and hedges within the site), fauna, and archaeology.

Natural England is concerned that the development will have significant adverse impacts upon the South Downs National Park, with particular reference to the cumulative impact of a number of developments proposed. However, Natural England goes on to state that should the Council decide that an EIA is not required it requests a detailed ecological and landscape assessment of the potential environmental impacts of this proposal upon the South Downs National Park needs to be carried out for this proposed development it is up to the Council to decide whether a full Environmental Impact Assessment is necessary.

The Hampshire County Ecologist states that he does not consider the ecological impact sufficient to trigger a requirement for an EIA. He does refer to the cumulative impact of this and other development upon species protected by the European Sites and Habitat Regulations Assessment. The proposed development is located within 5km of the following designated wildlife sites:

- East Hampshire Hangers Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Wealden Edge Hangers Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI);
- Butser Hill SAC and SSSI;
- Coulter's Dean SSSI;
- Harting Downs SSSI; and,
- West Harting Down SSSI.

Each of the above sites qualify as a 'sensitive area' as defined in Regulation 2 (1) of the *Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (England and Wales) Regulations 1999*.

Given the reasons for which the above sites have been designated, in addition to their distance from the Causeway Farm site, it is considered unlikely that these proposals *alone* would result in a significant effect. However, when considering the impacts of development at Causeway Farm *in combination* with developments (both approved and proposed) elsewhere in the area the potential for a significant impact increases, especially as a result of increased human disturbance due to recreational activities. The Ecologist advises therefore that Natural England be consulted to confirm whether a significant impact to 'sensitive sites' is anticipated, as per paragraph 37 of *Circular 02/99: Environmental Impact Assessment*.

The Environment Agency does not consider that an EIA is necessary but states that any application should include a Flood Risk Assessment.

The County Archaeologist advises that some archaeological assessment of the land is undertaken before the submission of a detailed planning application.

HCC highways does not consider an EIA necessary to assess the highways implications. However, a Transport Assessment will be required.

Many of the consultee comments make recommendations that would need to be addressed as part of the submission of any planning application on this site. The site specific details can be dealt with at that stage.

Conclusion

The development proposed falls within the description at paragraph 10 of Schedule 2 to the 1999 Regulations, and exceeds the threshold in column 2 of the table in Schedule 2 to the 1999 Regulations. Therefore, the council considers that the development proposed is 'Schedule 2 development' within the meaning of the 1999 Regulations.

In the Council's opinion, having taken into account the criteria in Schedule 3 to the Regulations, the development, individually and when read in conjunction with the other reserved sites within the locality, is likely to have significant environmental affects upon the prevailing landscape character of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and confirmed or the designated South Downs National Park.

The South Downs Joint Committee and the Landscape Officer are of the opinion that an EIA is necessary to assess the landscape impact if the development.

Natural England have expressed concerns regarding the cumulative impact upon the AONB and SDNP and request detailed landscape and ecological assessments. The County Ecologist adds the cumulative impact upon areas of SSSI located within 5 km of the site. The County Archaeologist has also identified potential for archaeological interest within the site and has requested further assessment.

Accordingly, it is the Council's opinion, that the proposed development is 'EIA development' within the meaning of the 1999 Regulations.

RECOMMENDATION that an **EIA IS REQUIRED**.

The following plans and specifications were considered when making the above decision:

Any variation or departure from the approved plans will require the prior approval of the Planning Authority before works commence.

Case Officer to Confirm	
• Neighbours checked	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Plan numbers correct	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Policy numbers correct	<input type="checkbox"/>
Signed	Date

Recommendation Agreed by Area Planning Manager/Head of Planning Development Services	
Signed	Date