

OFFICER REPORT

PROPOSAL	REQUEST FOR SCREENING OPINION - RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT COMPRISING 60 DWELLINGS	
LOCATION:	Land north of, Boyneswood Lane, Medstead, Alton	
REFERENCE NO:	55258	PARISH:Medstead
APPLICANT:	Bargate Homes	
CONSULTATION EXPIRY DATE:	27 November 2013	
APPLICATION EXPIRY DATE:	28 November 2013	
COUNCILLOR(S):	Cllr M C Johnson MBE, Cllr I Thomas	
SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION:	ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT NOT REQ	

Site and Development

The submitted site area with this screening opinion includes approximately 3.3-3.6ha, but 2ha of this would form the developable area according to the submission letter. The land is located such that it adjoins the designated settlement boundary of Four Marks/Medstead on two boundaries (a very small part is actually within the SPB but this is not significant).

In terms of constraints the site is countryside (in policy terms), is fronted (southern boundary) by a PROW (bridleway) and this proceeds along Beechlands Road running ENE from the site. An area of TPO protected trees adjoins the north eastern boundary and further protected trees lie to the north. The site is within a major groundwater vulnerability area. There are no other constraints affective the site.

Relevant Planning History

55258/999 (1) (NJ) Correspondence received 21 October 2013 from Pro Vision
(2) (SG) Letter and fee received 27 November 2013 from Bargate Homes UNK
55258 REQUEST FOR SCREENING OPINION - RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT
COMPRISING 60 DWELLINGS DEN

Development Plan Policies and Proposals

N/A

East Hampshire District Local Plan: Second Review

Planning Policy Constraints and Guidance

Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2011

Circular 02/99

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Village Design Statement - Medstead - A Vision for the Future - non statutory planning guidance that has been the subject of public consultation and therefore is a material planning consideration.

Medstead Parish Plan 2008

Consultations and Town/Parish Council comments

EHDC PLANNING POLICY: No policy comment.

EHDC DRAINAGE – The site is in Flood Zone 1 (low probability of flooding) and I am not aware of any historic flooding problems affecting the site. However, the Medstead area is well known for heavy clay soils and poor drainage. Any subsequent planning application will require a detailed flood risk assessment to confirm that surface water run-off can be controlled on site and not increase flood risk elsewhere. The underlying geology is shown as chalk and a SUDS drainage scheme based on deep bore soakaways may be feasible. The design will need to be supported by a geotechnical site investigation to confirm infiltration rates and potential storage requirements.

Boyneswood Road is an unsewered area and connection to the public sewer will require a requisition to Thames Water. Both EA and EHDC are likely to resist the use of a private treatment facility for a development of this size.

EHDC LANDSCAPE OFFICER – A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment will be required to determine, in conjunction with ecological studies, which part of the site could be developed and which parts should be retained as open space.

ENVIRONMENT HEALTH SERVICES (CONTAMINATION) - According to Environmental Health records, the development described does not overlie areas of potential contaminated land and as such has minimal potential to create a preferential pathway impacting local sensitive receptors (residential, groundwater, surface water etc). As such, I am of the opinion that with regard to contaminated land issues an impact assessment is not required, but would advise a desktop study is submitted with the application to assess in detail risks from any historic land use potentially impacting the proposed development site.

ENVIRONMENT HEALTH SERVICES (POLLUTION) -

I have reviewed the information provided on the proposed development and considered the request for a screening opinion in relation to noise and air quality impacts.

The impact on the proposed development from noise is not likely to be significant. The proposed development itself should not generate significant noise.

A development of this size is unlikely to significantly impact on air quality objectives.

On the basis of likely air quality and noise impacts I do not consider that a formal Environmental Impact Assessment is required.

THAMES WATER - Unclear what the increase in demand on infrastructure may be at this stage and whether the impact may affect the network elsewhere. Concerns are also raised about

certain construction effects on existing services.

NATURAL ENGLAND - Note the location of the SDNP. Consider that EIA is unlikely to be required in respect of interest features including ecological designations. An application should include sufficient information to enable assessment of effects to wildlife however.

HCC HIGHWAYS - Boyneswood Lane is unmade and a Bridleway. As an obvious route to consider access a status check should be carried out. Beechlands Road has a 30mph speed limit and will require appropriate visibility splays. Owing to the number of SHLAA sites and the effect combined these may have on the A31 and junctions of Boynewood Road and Lymington Bottom Road an EIA should be requested.

ENVIRONMENT AGENCY - A FRA will be required owing to site size, but despite constituting a Schedule 2 project exceeding 0.5ha we do not envisage any potential significant environmental effects that would necessitate EIA. The risk of flooding (fluvial or pluvial) is likely to be low but we would expect to see a surface water drainage strategy submitted for the site.

MEDSTEAD PARISH COUNCIL – The Parish Council would expect to see an EIA as the site backs onto ancient woodland and the cumulative impact of the loss of open space and woodland to development within 500m of this site.

Representations

9 representation(s) received:

A number of third party representations have been received in addition, focussing on planning merits and raising concerns about infrastructure, the amount of housing cumulatively in the area, facilities, drainage, traffic, road capacity and ecology issues.

Some responses object to this as if a planning application. This matter can only be reviewed as an opinion on whether, in the event a planning application is submitted, it would constitute owing to its scale, type of development, effects etc the likelihood that it would cause significant environment effects. In the event it is not EIA development a planning application would need to be supported by a raft of environmental information in any event but not necessarily structured through an EIA process and Environmental Statement. That is the purpose of this assessment.

Determining Issues

A. CHECKLIST		
Questions to be considered	Yes/No Likely/Unlikely – briefly describe	Is this likely to result in a significant effect? Yes/No - why?
1 Will construction, operation or decommissioning of the Project involve actions which will cause physical changes in the locality (topography, land use, changes in water bodies, etc)?	Yes, likely, some changes to topography and ground coverage due to sloping nature of the site.	No. Major changes to landform or levels are unlikely, estate layout may include some changes to levels on plots or groups of plot or to achieve road gradients and include structural features such as retaining walls.

2	Will construction or operation of the Project use natural resources such as land, water, materials or energy, especially any resources which are non-renewable or in short supply?	Yes - Likely loss of Greenfield land , and use of materials Thames Water raise concern about water infrastructure capacity in the immediate area	No. Neither are in short supply and the land does not appear to be high DEFRA Grade land No. While capacity may be a constraint to planning permission it would not represent a significant environmental effect as well and would prevent development. This can be readily assessed as part of a planning application and does not necessitate EIA.
3	Will the Project involve use, storage, transport, handling or production of substances or materials which could be harmful to human health or the environment or raise concerns about actual or perceived risks to human health?	No , unlikely	
4	Will the Project produce solid wastes during construction or operation or decommissioning?	Yes, likely	No. Site Waste Management Plan would be created to describe, all likely to be inert and predictable
5	Will the Project release pollutants or any hazardous, toxic or noxious substances to air?	No, unlikely	
6	Will the Project cause noise and vibration or release of light, heat energy or electromagnetic radiation?	Yes, some light pollution is potentially possible from streetlighting, bollard lighting and from properties. No other particular pollution/emissions would be significant.	No (in respect of light pollution), not likely. Site, though in a semi-rural area is adjacent to settlement and not in a protected landscape.
7	Will the Project lead to risks of contamination of land or water from releases of pollutants onto the ground or into surface waters, groundwater, coastal waters or the sea?	No - if site can be connected to mains drainage...therefore non-mains systems unlikely to be relied upon. EHO confirms no existing concerns re: ground contamination Yes, though unlikely, if non-mains systems are relied upon owing to geology, potential risk from management and system failure	Unlikely - EA has raised no concerns in principle or recommendation that there are implications for significant scale effects. EHO has advised there is no known historic contamination to the ground.
8	Are there any areas on or around the location which are already subject to pollution or environmental damage e.g. where existing legal environmental standards are exceeded, which could be affected by the project?	No, unlikely and none notified of.	
9	Will there be any risk of accidents during construction or operation of the Project which could affect human health or the environment?	No. None likely by development type.	

10	Will the Project result in social changes, for example, in demography, traditional lifestyles, employment?	Yes. Development may place minor pressures on wider social infrastructure such as schools, public open space.	No, scale of scheme means that pressure / changes will not be significant. Cumulative effects are not likely to be significant with committed development which has been planned for. Contributions towards infrastructure would ameliorate and the scale of the development is not so great as to affect a change by itself. The settlement is large in scale relative to the proposal of 60 dwellings. The village has experienced rapid development pressures in the preceding short-term of 5-10 years but not on a scale likely to cause significant social issues through phasing infrastructure provision or construction levels of traffic.
11	Are there any areas on or around the location which are protected under international or national or local legislation for their ecological, landscape, cultural or other value, which could be affected by the project?	No, site is not in a sensitive area. No concerns raised in respect of archaeological value. No immediately affected heritage assets.	
12	Are there any other areas on or around the location which are important or sensitive for reasons of their ecology e.g. wetlands, watercourses or other water bodies, the coastal zone, mountains, forests or woodlands, which could be affected by the project?	No. HCC Ecologist and Natural England identify no designations affected and former confirms unlikely to be any unusual sensitivity to the site for protected species. EA advises unlikely to be significant pluvial flooding.	
13	Are there any areas on or around the location which are used by protected, important or sensitive species of fauna or flora e.g. for breeding, nesting, foraging, resting, overwintering, migration, which could be affected by the project?	No. Unlikely. The location of Ancient Woodland raised by the PC is noted but is not necessarily a constraint in principle. Other housing exists in the immediate vicinity and subject to an appropriate layout and further assessment should not be significantly affected by development.	
14	Are there any inland, coastal, marine or underground waters on or around the location which could be affected by the project?	No. Unlikely.	
15	Are there any areas or features of high landscape or scenic value on or around the location which could be affected by the project?	No. Unlikely, immediate landscape is not protected by national or local designations. Development may be visible from SDNP as shown on ZTV.	Impacts to SDNP will not be significant enough, given viewer / viewpoint distance, to have particular magnitude of effects on its setting.
16	Is the project in a location where it is likely to be highly visible to many people?	Yes, insofar as there is a public road network and a PROW adjacent but not in isolation from other development in views. Development proposed asserted to comprise a range of 2 storey development.	The site will be publicly visible from its access, views along Boyneswood lane to varying success depending on boundary retention, and places along Beechlands Road. Assessment of the impact of all potential views would not be especially complex. Further visual impact is not likely to have significant implications beyond a more local sphere of influence owing to the scale and height of development and its siting next to similar development. Visual amenity will be impacted upon in short range/ immediate views, including from the PROW and from some existing developments. The magnitude of effects, particularly noting the lack in comparative prominence of the site, would not be likely to represent significant environmental effects for the purposes of the EIA regulations.

17	Are there any routes on or around the location which are used by the public for access to recreation or other facilities, which could be affected by the project?	Yes. A PROW lies on the south and west sides of the site.	No, unlikely, access to the PROW may be interrupted for temporary periods during construction phase(s) but in fact a buffer area could be imposed or the layout could rely on a larger construction compound to ameliorate this.
18	Are there any transport routes on or around the location which are susceptible to congestion or which cause environmental problems, which could be affected by the project?	Yes, but unlikely.	<p>Effects would be localised and not have wider influences. HCC Highways confirm that the scale of likely traffic effects is not sufficient to be considered a significant likely effect in isolation, however they advise that in light of other schemes coming forward that cumulative effects necessitate EIA. A full TA will be required with any planning application, however, and crucially for the purposes of the 2011 Regulations only committed developments can be considered in screening a development; it may be that as sites do come forward through applications then EIA will become more likely to be required.</p> <p>The effect on the PROW network, particularly Boyneswood Lane, may need some form of restriction. However, as rights of access over the PROW network are controlled by the County Council there are other preventative measures available to unacceptable effects. Further the implications of use, which should be assessed, would not constitute significant environmental effect.</p>

19	Are there any areas or features of historic or cultural importance on or around the location which could be affected by the project?	No, therefore no effects likely.	
20	Is the project located in a previously undeveloped area where there will be loss of greenfield land?	Yes. The land is greenfield and would cover 3.3ha approximately	No the land is on a slight gradient and is not high DEFRA grade agricultural land.
21	Are there existing land uses on or around the location e.g. homes, gardens, other private property, industry, commerce, recreation, public open space, community facilities, agriculture, forestry, tourism, mining or quarrying which could be affected by the project?	Yes. Adjacent development is residential. Agricultural land lies to the south west. There are a number of additional SHLAA sites but no consented development in the immediate vicinity.	No. There is a mix of development, but this proposal is housing and would have insignificant operational effects
22	Are there any areas on or around the location which are densely populated or built up, which could be affected by the project?	Yes, Medstead's southern settlement area lies adjacent to Four Marks, a medium-large sized village.	No, housing development is unlikely to have significant effects on population. Construction phases are more likely to cause nuisance from dust, noise and odours but these will be localised and not high magnitude. EHO raises no concerns and significant environmental effects very unlikely. They are not considered liable to be significant environmental effects in scale, complexity or magnitude.
23	Are there any areas on, or around, the location which are occupied by sensitive land uses e.g. hospitals, schools, places of worship, community facilities, which could be affected by the project?	No, therefore no effects likely.	
24	Are there any areas on or around the location which contain important, high quality or scarce resources e.g. groundwater, surface waters, forestry, agriculture, fisheries, tourism, minerals, which could be affected by the project?	No, none reported, unlikely.	

25	Is the project location susceptible to earthquakes, subsidence, landslides, erosion, flooding or extreme or adverse climatic conditions e.g. temperature inversions, fogs, severe winds, which could cause the project to present environmental problems?	No, unlikely.	
26	Are there any plans for future land uses on or around the location which could be affected by the project?	<p>No, with the exception of the traffic / road network. The northern adjacent land is part of the same SHLAA site but not allocated for any development. No commitments are liable to cause in combination effects.</p> <p>An EIA screening opinion for land to the south east, at the rear of Friars Oak has been undertaken for 86 dwellings. No planning application has been received at this stage.</p> <p>A scheme for 38 dwellings has consent on Lymington Bottom Road (53305/001) and an application is being considered for 69 (53305/003) at present.</p>	
27	Are there any other factors which should be considered, such as consequential development which could lead to environmental effects, or the potential for cumulative impacts with other existing or planned activities in the locality?	No. Unlikely. Connection of services and offsite highway / infrastructure improvements may be required which will not have significant environmental effects.	

B. Summary and Conclusions

A	Schedule, category and relevant threshold of development	<p>Schedule: 2</p> <p>Category: 10 (b) Urban Development Projects</p> <p>Threshold: 0.5ha</p>
B	Is the site in a 'sensitive' area for the purposes of regulation 2(1)	No

C	Summary of features of project and of its location	<p>(i) <u>Characteristics of development</u> The scheme is a housing development on 3.3ha of green field land with some mildly sloping topography, and which is not especially prominent in the public realm. The site is within and adjacent to countryside, but also adjacent to settlement on two sides. To the west which comprises almost exclusively of residential uses in a loose linear pattern. The project exceeds the threshold in Schedule 2, 10(b).</p> <p>(ii) <u>Location of development</u> The site is located in the countryside but next to settlement. It is not in a protected or sensitive landscape. Its position within the landscape and gentle changes in topography would not make for development that is highly prominent in terms of the wider landscape though perceptible affects upon amenity / the countryside may derive. The land is not high grade / quality agricultural land. A PROW lies on the opposite side of the site along Boynewood Lane. The Beechlands Road highway meanwhile is a rural road but dual lane in width and of a moderate standard. There is a likelihood of necessary upgrading works to improve immediate pedestrian linkages and provide sewerage infrastructure.</p> <p>(iii) <u>Characteristics of the potential impact</u> General construction processes would include noise, dust, transport emissions and odours generated during construction phase. The project would have a long term / permanent duration once built. During operation key effects will be transport, inter-relationships between development, social-side pressures and requirements of new population, and visual amenity / landscape impact based.</p>
D	Is an ES required?	<p>No. While it is recognised the scope for significant effects upon visual amenity exist and other material planning considerations there are not effects that would combine with to become, or be significant in magnitude or complexity in themselves, such that the project would constitute EIA development. Therefore the effects are not unusually complex, nor are they of a magnitude that there would be more than local effects.</p> <p>Circular 2/99 advises developments of this type that exceed 5 hectares or would have significant urbanising effects in a previously non, urbanised area (e.g. a new development of more than 1,000 dwellings). Schedule 3 has been applied.</p>

C. Screening Decision			
	Action	Response due	Date sent
Further information is required	EIA response 1		
Sch 1 development	EIA response 2		
Sch 2 development - threshold exceeded/criterion met/sensitive area. (Sch 3) likely to have significant effects on the environment	EIA response 3		
Sch 2 development, and thresholds exceeded/criterion met/sensitive area. (Sch 3) not likely to have significant effects on the environment	EIA response 4	Y	
Sch 2 development – thresholds not exceeded, criterion not met and not in a sensitive area	EIA response 5		

In coming to my decision on the screening direction, I have considered the proposal in its submitted version as set out in the details submitted including:

- Letter received 07 November from Pro Vision Planning and Design
- Site location / area plan (scale not stated)
- Further information including site desk study report and ZTV plan

and considering received consultation responses.

I am satisfied that the proposal does not constitute EIA development for which an Environmental Statement is required.

Conclusion

The development does not fall within Schedule 1 of the 2011 Regulations. The development falls within part 10(b) of Schedule 2 of the Regulations as considered an 'infrastructure project' and exceeds the indicative threshold in column 2 of the table in Schedule 2 (a site which has not been intensively developed previously and the area of development exceeds 0.5 hectares), and is not located within or in proximity to sensitive areas (as set out in Schedule 3 selection criteria).

Having regard to the concerns raised about the transport network and infrastructure capacities at this stage no other significant development proposals can be considered to be cumulative development. Few are commitments, with the baseline site and reserve housing site at Brislands Lane planned for in the 2006 local plan. Other sites which have consent are relatively small. In future as sites come forward to the stage at which they become simultaneous proposals or commitments in their own right then as per the 2011 regulations EIA may become necessary.

Having regard to the characteristics and location of the development as set out in this report, the Authority has adopted the screening opinion that the development is not likely to have significant effects on the environment within the meaning of the 2011 Regulations and will not require an Environmental Impact Assessment

RECOMMENDATION

EIA is not required.

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

Covering letter
Location plan

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