

DJPS/21-00146

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Dear Caroline

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT) REGULATIONS 2017: REQUEST FOR SCREENING OPINION

I write on behalf of my client, Crest Nicholson Operations Limited, in respect of an application for full planning permission that is being submitted to replan part of the Phase 4 Area of the North West Bicester Eco Town Exemplar Site (Plots 1 to 54). This letter constitutes a request to Cherwell District Council ("CDC") for a formal Environmental Impact Assessment ("EIA") Screening Opinion.

Background

- A2 Dominion Group / P3Eco (Bicester) Ltd obtained hybrid planning permission for the North West Bicester Eco Town Exemplar Site on 10 July 2012 (Ref: 10/01780/HYBRID). The permission is for a residential-led mixed-use development of 393 dwellings. The proposals were subject to EIA.
- Crest Nicholson Regeneration was selected to deliver Phases 3 and 4 of the Exemplar Site and submitted a non-material amendment ("NMA") application for those areas in October 2017 (Ref: 17/00116/NMA). The NMA application sought changes to the dwelling types and proposed materials; it was approved on 23 November 2017.
- Following an internal restructure within Crest Nicholson responsibility for delivering the site has transferred to Crest Nicholson Chiltern ("CNC"). CNC has reviewed the consent and identified several amendments to the scheme; because the amendments involve a minor increase in the quantum of development (3 dwellings) the submission of an application for full planning permission is required.

Proposals

The approved Site Layout for Phases 3 and 4 is included at **Appendix 1**. CNC is seeking to make amendments to the north-western area of Phase 4, specifically Plots 1 to 54. The amended proposal is included at **Appendix 2** and comprises the following changes:

- The number of house types proposed within the area has increased from 7 to 10.
- The quantum of development within the area has increased from 54 dwellings to 57 dwellings (393 dwellings to 396 dwellings across the site as a whole).

- The house types and mix have been revised to reflect current market conditions and customer feedback. The changes to the mix are as follows:

Size	Approved Layout (Appendix 1)	Proposed Layout (Appendix 2)
2 Bed	12	6 (-6)
3 Bed	8	11 (+3)
4 Bed	27	29 (+2)
5 Bed	7	11 (+4)
Total	54	57 (+3)

In respect of the above changes it is important to note that:

- As can be seen from the amended layout at **Appendix 2** the proposals, with the exception of the minor increase to the quantum of development, fully accord with the key parameters established by the extant permission. For example:
 - The extent of the development blocks remains unchanged.
 - The configuration of the road layout remains unchanged.
 - The height of the proposed buildings remains broadly unchanged. Four 2.5 storey dwellings have been added (Plots 47, 49 50 and 52). However, they are located within the development, away from the development edge. Furthermore, as can be seen from the Street Elevation included at **Appendix 3**, the difference in height to the adjacent 2 storey dwellings is minimal.
- The proposals will accord with the energy and sustainability requirements established by the hybrid permission. The methods for achieving these standards will be set out in the application documentation and / or secured through planning conditions.

Environmental Impact Assessment Screening Opinion Request

The proposed development, in isolation, does not meet the thresholds¹ for ‘Schedule 2’ development as set out in the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (“the Regulations”). However, it is acknowledged that the proposals form part of a larger scheme that does meet those thresholds, and which was subject to EIA. As such, it is considered appropriate to screen the proposals to establish whether the proposed amendments would be likely to cause any significant environmental effects not accounted for previously and therefore trigger the need for this application to be subject to EIA.

The requirements for a Screening Opinion Request in respect of an application for full planning permission are set out in regulation 6 (2) of the Regulations. These requirements and the information provided to address them are set out in the table below.

¹ More than 150 dwellings or a development area of over 5 hectares.

Requirement	Information
(a) a plan sufficient to identify the land	A Site Location Plan is included at Appendix 4 .
<p>(b) a description of the development, including in particular—</p> <p>(i) a description of the physical characteristics of the development and, where relevant, of demolition works;</p> <p>(ii) a description of the location of the development, with particular regard to the environmental sensitivity of geographical areas likely to be affected;</p>	<p>The proposals are for a development of 57 dwellings, comprising:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 x 2 bedroom houses • 11 x 3 bedroom houses • 29 x 4 bedroom houses • 11 x 5 bedroom houses <p>The site currently comprises agricultural land to the north-west of Bicester. However, as set out above the site falls within Phase 4 of the consented North West Bicester Eco Town Exemplar Site (Ref: 10/01780/HYBRID), a residential-led mixed-use development for 393 dwellings. Phases 1 and 2 of the Exemplar Site have already been completed, while the construction of Phases 3 and 4 are underway.</p>
(c) a description of the aspects of the environment likely to be significantly affected by the development;	<p>The site falls within Phase 4 of the consented North West Bicester Eco Town Exemplar Site (Ref: 10/01780/HYBRID), a residential-led mixed-use development for 393 dwellings. As such it is appropriate to determine that the baseline position against which any screening exercise should take place is the implemented planning permission pursuant to the hybrid scheme and not a ‘no development’ scenario.</p> <p>On this basis the purpose of the screening exercise should be to consider whether the addition of 3 dwellings to the approved scheme would result in significant environmental effects that were not anticipated when the EIA was undertaken. In this respect it is important to reiterate that, with the exception of the minor increase to the quantum of development (3 dwellings), the proposals accord with the key parameters established by the extant permission. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The extent of the development blocks remains unchanged. • The configuration of the road layout remains unchanged. • The height of the proposed buildings remains broadly unchanged. Four 2.5 storey dwellings have been added (Plots 47, 49 50 and 52). However, they are located within the development, away from the development edge. Furthermore, as can be seen from the Street Elevation included at Appendix 3 the difference in height to the adjacent 2 storey dwellings is minimal. <p>In this context it should be noted that the screening exercise</p>

Requirement	Information
	<p>undertaken in respect of the extant hybrid permission identified 12 areas where these proposals had the potential to cause significant environmental effects, namely:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landscape and Visual Impact • Ecology • Flood Risk and Hydrology • Air Quality • Noise • Built Heritage and Archaeology • Contaminated Land • Agriculture and Land Use • Human Health • Socio-Economics and Community • Waste • Traffic and Transport <p>For the majority of the topics listed above the fact that the size and configuration of the development blocks remains unchanged means that the amended proposals would not give rise to any additional environmental effects, over and above those identified and mitigated for through the hybrid planning permission (Ref: 10/01780/HYBRID). For the topic areas where the quantum of development, rather than land take, is a key consideration (e.g. traffic) the scale of the proposed change (3 dwellings) would have no material effect. As such the proposals will not result in any additional significant effects on the environment.</p>
<p>(d) to the extent the information is available, a description of any likely significant effects of the proposed development on the environment resulting from—</p> <p>(i) the expected residues and emissions and the production of waste, where relevant; and</p> <p>(ii) the use of natural resources, in particular soil, land, water and biodiversity; and</p>	<p>Not applicable. The proposals will not result in any significant environmental effects that were not previously identified and considered in the ES that supported the hybrid planning permission (Ref: 10/01780/HYBRID)</p>
<p>(e) such other information or representations as the person making the request may wish to provide or make, including any features of the proposed development or any measures envisaged</p>	<p>No additional information is considered necessary.</p>

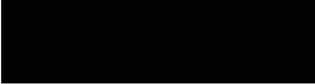
Requirement	Information
to avoid or prevent what might otherwise have been significant adverse effects on the environment.	

The information provided above demonstrates that the proposals will not result in any significant environmental effects that were not previously identified and considered in the ES that supported the hybrid planning permission (Ref: 10/01780/HYBRID). On this basis we consider that the full planning application does not warrant the need for an updated EIA.

You will be aware of the Council’s requirement under Regulation 6 (6) (a) to adopt a Screening Opinion within three weeks of receipt of this letter.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any questions.

Yours sincerely,



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Appendix 1
Approved Site Layout

Appendix 2
Proposed Site Layout

Appendix 3
Proposed Street Elevations

Appendix 4
Site Location Plan