

Planning and Development

David Peckford, Assistant Director – Planning and Development



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Please ask for: **Caroline Ford**

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Your Ref: **DJPS/21-00146**

20th April 2021

Dear Sir/ Madam,

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990

Application No.: 21/01200/SO

Applicant's Name: Crest Nicholson Operations Limited

Proposal: Screening opinion to 10/01780/HYBRID - request for a formal Environmental Impact Assessment ("EIA") Screening Opinion in respect of an application to replan part of the Phase 4 Area of the North West Bicester Eco Town Exemplar Site (Plots 1 to 54)

Location: Bicester Eco Town Exemplar Site
Banbury Road
Bicester

Parish(es): Bicester

I write with regard to the above screening opinion request, received on 2nd April 2021, which represents a formal request for a Screening Opinion under Regulation 6 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 as to whether the proposal set out in your submission requires an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). This letter constitutes a Screening Opinion by the Local Planning Authority of the proposed development under Regulation 6 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017.

Summary of Determination

Based upon the information submitted, the Local Planning Authority considers that the proposals, which comprise a re-plan of and amendments to part of Phase 4 of the North West Bicester Eco Town Exemplar site to include an additional 3 dwellings is of a type listed in Schedule 2 of the Regulations (10b Urban Development Projects). Whilst the scale of development on its own would not exceed the thresholds set out in Column 2 of Schedule 2, the proposed development is an integral part of the Exemplar site and cannot be considered standalone. In this context, the development overall would exceed 5ha in area and would include more than 150 dwellings. In addition, the Exemplar site was subject to EIA. As such, it is considered suitable to further screen the proposal.

For development to be considered an EIA development, it would likely have to have significant effects on the environment by virtue of factors such as its nature, size or location. The Local Planning Authority considers that this proposal is unlikely to have significant environmental effects for the purposes of the EIA Regulations and that the proposal **is not** EIA Development. An Environmental Statement is not therefore required to be submitted for the reasons set out.

Reasons for Determination

In determining whether the proposals are likely to constitute EIA development, regard has been had to the criteria set out in Schedule 3 of the EIA Regulations 2017. Government guidance relating to EIA as set out in the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) is also material and has been taken into account. The Annex to the PPG sets out indicative screening thresholds as guidance for when a proposed development would be likely to result in significant environmental effects such that it amounts to EIA development.

In this case, the proposed development seeks to make amendments to and introduce 3 additional dwellings in a contained parcel forming part of Phase 4 at the North West of the site. The amendments include changes to house types (including the number of detached dwellings), size of dwellings (with more larger dwellings proposed) and layout to accommodate these amendments. Your covering letter confirms that the extent of the development blocks remains unchanged, the configuration of the road layout remains unchanged and that whilst 2.5 storey dwellings have been introduced, the height of the buildings remains broadly similar to the original plan. It is also confirmed that all the energy and sustainability requirements will be complied with.

Only 3 additional dwellings are proposed, and the amendments otherwise are unlikely to raise significant environmental effects beyond those already considered, approved and mitigated for through the extant and implemented development. This is particularly the case given the development parameters originally approved continue to be broadly complied with by the proposed development. Category 13b of Schedule 2 also applies in that the proposal is a change or extension of development listed in paragraph 1 to 12 of column 1 of the table and the development is already authorised and is in the process of being executed. The development would not exceed the thresholds in column 2 of Schedule 2 for 13b development as the development as changed or extended would not have significant adverse effects on the environment (as above) and the relevant thresholds of column 2 of Schedule 2 for 10b development would not be exceeded when applied to the change proposed.

Taking into account the characteristics of the proposed development, the types of potential impact and the extent of the change compared to what has previously been approved and supported by an EIA, it is considered that the development is unlikely to raise any significantly greater environmental effects beyond those already considered. The proposal is therefore not considered to be EIA development and no EIA is required to be submitted. There may be some requirement for mitigation measures to be imposed via condition on any planning application in the same way as was imposed for the original permission for the site (where relevant to this proposal).

This opinion has been made by an appropriately authorised officer at the Local Planning Authority. In accordance with the 2017 Regulations, a copy of this screening opinion has been placed on the Planning Register.

If you have any questions or queries regarding the above advice, please contact the Case Officer using the details provided above.

Yours faithfully



David Peckford
Assistant Director – Planning and Development

Checked by: Andy Bateson