

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Firethorn Developments Limited (the Applicant) is applying for outline planning permission for up to 530 residential dwellings, open space, landscaping and associated infrastructure (the Development) on land north west of Bicester (the Site). The Site, located in the administrative area of Cherwell District Council (CDC), is shown on Figure 1.1.

Requirement for Environmental Impact Assessment

1.2 Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is a process by which development proposals deemed likely to have significant environmental effects are appraised. EIA is described as a means of drawing together, in a systematic way, an assessment of a development's likely significant environmental effects. This helps to ensure that the importance of the predicted significant environmental effects, and the scope for reducing them, are properly understood before a decision is made. Information on the likely significant effects of the Development has been gathered and is presented in this document, the ES. The ES will inform the decision-maker (in this case CDC) of the likely significant environmental effects of the Development both during construction and operation, proposes mitigation measures to prevent, reduce or offset any significant adverse effects on the environment, and sets out the residual environmental effects of the Development following the implementation of the identified mitigation.

1.3 The Development falls within the category 'Urban Development Projects' (Schedule 2, 10, (b)) of the *Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017*, as amended (the 'EIA Regulations'), and the Development exceeds the 150-dwelling threshold for EIA Development. The site is not located in a 'sensitive area' as defined by the EIA Regulations. Due to the scale of the Development and the location of the Site in an area allocated for development and with surrounding construction works ongoing, the Applicant did not submit a request for a Screening Opinion from CDC, and instead decided to proceed to the preparation and submission of this ES voluntarily, in support of the planning application.

Organisation of the Environmental Statement

1.4 Regulation 18 of the EIA Regulations sets out the information an ES should include. Table 1.1 below shows where the Regulation 18 information has been provided in this ES. Appendix 1.1 sets out where the information required by Schedule 4 has been provided in this ES.

Table 1.1: Location of Information Required by Regulation 18 of the EIA Regulations

Specified Information		Location within ES
Reg 18 (3) An environmental statement is a statement which includes at least—		
(a)	a description of the proposed development comprising information on the site, design, size and other relevant features of the development;	Chapter 3
(b)	a description of the likely significant effects of the proposed development on the environment;	Technical Chapters 6-14
(c)	a description of any features of the proposed development, or measures envisaged in order to avoid, prevent or reduce and, if possible, offset likely significant adverse effects on the environment	Chapter 3 and Technical Chapters 6-14
(d)	a description of the reasonable alternatives studied by the developer, which are relevant to the proposed development and its specific characteristics, and an indication of the main reasons for the option chosen, taking into account the effects of the development on the environment;	Chapter 4
(e)	a non-technical summary of the information referred to in sub-paragraphs (a) to (d);	Separate standalone NTS
(f)	any additional information specified in Schedule 4 relevant to the specific characteristics of the particular development or type of development and to the environmental features likely to be significantly affected	Technical Chapters 6-14
Reg 18 (4) An environmental statement must—		
(a)	where a scoping opinion or direction has been issued in accordance with regulation 15 or 16, be based on the most recent scoping opinion or direction issued (so far as the proposed development remains materially the same as the proposed development which was subject to that opinion or direction);	Chapter 2
(b)	include the information reasonably required for reaching a reasoned conclusion on the significant effects of the development on the environment, taking into account current knowledge and methods of assessment; and	Technical Chapters 6-14
(c)	be prepared, taking into account the results of any relevant UK environmental assessment, which are reasonably available to the person preparing the environmental statement, with a view to avoiding duplication of assessment.	No other European assessments have been prepared to accompany this application and no duplicate reports of any assessments contained in the ES have been provide as part of the planning application.
Reg 18 (5) In order to ensure the completeness and quality of the environmental statement—		
(a)	the developer must ensure that the environmental statement is prepared by competent experts;	Each of contributors to the ES has set out their credentials in the introductory section of their technical assessment chapter.

Specified Information		Location within ES
(b)	the environmental statement must be accompanied by a statement from the developer outlining the relevant expertise or qualifications of such experts.	See statement attached to the ES Main Text Contents Page.

ES Structure

- 1.5 This ES comprises 15 chapters and is supported by figures (located at the back of each chapter within Volume 1) and technical appendices (within a separate Volume 2). A Non-technical Summary (NTS) of the full ES is provided as a separate standalone document. Table 1.2 sets out the structure of the ES.

Table 1.2: ES Structure

Volume 1 – Main Text & Figures		
Chapter No.	Chapter Title	Description
1	Introduction	Introduction to the ES, EIA requirements, details of project team, ES organisation and availability.
2	EIA Methodology	Methods used to prepare each chapter, description of ES structure and content, generic significance criteria, scoping and consultation.
3	Site and Development Description	Site description and details of the Development.
4	Alternatives and Design Evolution	Outline of the main alternatives considered by the Applicant.
5	Construction Methodology and Phasing	Details of anticipated programme for Development and construction methodology.
6	Transport and Access	Assessment of effects of the Development on transport and access.
7	Air Quality	Assessment of effects of the Development on air quality, including as a result of traffic generated by the Development.
8	Noise & Vibration	Assessment of the noise and vibration effects of the Development.
9	Landscape and Views	Assessment of effects of the Development on landscape and views.
10	Biodiversity	Assessment of the ecology and nature conservation effects of the Development.
11	Built Heritage	Assessment of effects of the Development relating to built heritage.
12	Population and Human Health	Assessment of effects of the Development relating to population and human health.
13	Water Resources and Flood Risk	Assessment of effects of the Development on water resources and flood risk.
14	Climate Change	Assessment of effects of the Development on climate change.
15	Summary and Residual Effects	Summary of the residual and interactive effects of the Development.
Volume 2	Technical Appendices	Technical data and reports to support the chapters in Volume 1.
Standalone Document	Non-Technical Summary	Summary of the ES in non-technical language.

Project Team

- 1.6 The ES has been coordinated by Barton Willmore on behalf of the Applicant and presents the results of technical studies carried out in conjunction with a number of specialist consultants appointed by the Applicant. The project team is listed in Table 1.3 along with their respective disciplines and contributions to the ES. A 'statement of expertise' as required by Regulation 18 (5)(b) of the EIA Regulations 2017 is provided in Appendix 1.2.

Table 1.3: Project Team

Organisation	Expertise / Competence
Firethorn Developments Limited	Applicant
Mosaic Ltd	Masterplanner
Barton Willmore	Planning, EIA Coordination, Population and Human Health Assessments
Velocity Transport Planning	Transport and Access Assessment
TetraTech	Air Quality and Noise and Vibration Assessments
LDA Design	Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment
Aspect Ecology Ltd	Biodiversity Assessment
Cotswold Archaeology	Built Heritage Assessment
Vectos and Stantec	Water Resources and Flood Risk Assessments
Stantec	Climate Change Assessment

Other Documents

- 1.7 A number of other documents have been submitted to CDC in support of the planning application. These include:
- Planning Statement;
 - Statement of Community Involvement;
 - Transport Assessment; and
 - Design and Access Statement.

Environmental Statement Availability

- 1.8 Given the current social distancing restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and in accordance with the amended 2017 EIA Regulationsⁱⁱ, the ES is not available for review in hard copy in a public place at this time. The ES is available to view online at: <https://planningregister.cherwell.gov.uk/>
- 1.9 Comments on the planning application can either be made via the Council's website at the link above or can be forwarded to the Planning Department during normal office hours at the following address:

Cherwell District Council
Bodicote House
Bodicote
Banbury
Oxfordshire, OX15 4AA

Tel: 01295 227006

Email: customer.service@cherwell-dc.gov.uk

1.10 Copies of the ES can be purchased from the Environmental Planning Team at Barton Willmore:

Tel: 020 7446 6888 / Email: IEPenquiries@bartonwillmore.co.uk

1.11 The ES may be purchased as a whole document or in separate volumes, the costs for which are as follows:

- Non-Technical Summary (NTS) - £15
- Volume 1: ES Main Text & Figures - £250
- Volume 2: ES Appendices - £350
- Full copy (with NTS) of the ES on memory stick - £20.

REFERENCES

ⁱ SI 571 as amended by 2018/659 and 2020/505

ⁱⁱ Amended Regulation 23A, SI 2020/505