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16 July 2021

Planning Department
Cherwell District Council
Bodicote House
Bodicote
Banbury
OX15 4AA

Dear Sir/Madam

**Residential led development on Land South East of Kidlington.
Request for Screening Opinion under Town and Country Planning Act
(Environmental Impact Assessment) (England and Wales) Regulations 2017 (as
amended 2018), Regulation 6.**

We write on behalf of Barwood Development Securities Ltd (Barwood) and Hill Residential Ltd (together the 'Applicants') to request a Screening Opinion to determine whether there is a requirement for an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) to accompany a planning application(s) for development covering c.32.12 ha of land at the above location. This request is made under Regulation 6 of the Town and Country Planning (EIA) Regulations 2017.

Cherwell District Council (CDC/the Council) will be aware that Barwood Development Securities Ltd submitted a screening opinion request in April 2021 in relation to 27.75 ha of land at the above location, which forms the majority of the PR7a allocation in Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 (Part 1) Partial Review. CDC's resultant screening opinion determined that that proposed development was considered to be EIA development due to the potential significant "*cumulative impact of this proposal in combination with other development proposed to be allocated by policy PR7a, together with other sites in close proximity*". The applicants disagree with this view for reasons discussed in this letter, and now seek a formal Screening Opinion under Regulation 6 of the EIA Regulations, jointly with Hill Residential Ltd, in relation to the full extent of the site allocated under Policy PR7a.

The 'Proposed Development' for the purpose of this screening request is likely to include up to 500 residential dwellings, large areas of open space containing formal sports facilities, including changing facilities and community meeting room, potential for an

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extension to Kidlington cemetery and allotments, vehicular access and associated infrastructure, engineering works and landscaping.

The remainder of this letter seeks to demonstrate that the Proposed Development being put forward will not give rise to significant effects in EIA terms and therefore an Environmental Statement (ES) is not required to accompany any outline planning application. A suite of technical assessments has been and will continue to be prepared for the forthcoming planning application and have been used to inform this Screening Request. The Council will already be aware of many of these having formed part of the technical evidence both to support the allocation of the Site during the Local Plan process, and the emerging Development Brief being prepared by the Council.

The Application Site is located on the south eastern edge of the settlement of Kidlington and is positioned between the A34, which defines the southern part of the eastern boundary, and Bicester Road which marks its extent to the west except where the boundary wraps around the existing Kidlington cemetery and allotments. The northern part of the eastern boundary lies adjacent to Water Eaton Lane and the properties along it, with the northern boundary forming the rear gardens of dwellings along Beagles Close. The Site's southern edge lies adjacent to Oxford Road (A4165), which meets a roundabout on the Site's south west corner. The Application Site extends to approximately c.32.12ha and comprises two irregular shaped pastoral fields and, two arable fields, with established hedgerows and occasional trees along the field boundaries.

As noted earlier in this letter, the Application Site covers the extent of the allocated site under Policy PR7a of the Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 (Part 1) Partial Review – Oxford's Unmet Needs. The allocated site extends to c.32.12ha and is shown on the plan contained within **Appendix A**.

In summary, key delivery requirements under Policy PR7a are:

- 430 homes on 21 hectares of land;
- 0.7 hectares of land for an extension to Kidlington Cemetery;
- 11 hectares of land for green infrastructure including formal sports facilities;
- Land for play areas and allotments within the developable area.

In accordance with the EIA Regulations we provide the following information:

- (a) A plan sufficient to identify the land (**Appendix A**);
- (b) A description of the development, including in particular-
 - i. A description of the physical characteristics of the development and, where relevant, of demolition works;
 - ii. A description of the location of the development, with particular regard to the environmental sensitivity of the geographic areas likely to be affected;
- (c) A description of the aspects of the environment likely to be significantly affected by

- the development;
- (d) To the extent the information is available, a description of any likely significant effects of the proposed development on the environment resulting from-
- i. The expected residues and emissions and the production of waste, where relevant; and
 - ii. The use of natural resources, in particular soil, land water and biodiversity; and;
- (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 to avoid or prevent what might otherwise have been significant adverse effects on the environment.

This information is set out within this letter.

The Proposed Development

The proposals are continuing to develop as preparation for the outline application progresses, however the Proposed Development subject to this screening request, is likely to include up to 500 residential dwellings, large areas of open space containing formal sports facilities, including changing facilities and community meeting room, an extension to Kidlington cemetery and allotments, vehicular access and associated infrastructure, engineering works and landscaping. The council will be aware of the Vision Document for the Site which was prepared as part of the evidence base in its allocation through the Local Plan. The Council will also be aware of their own emerging draft Development Brief for the site. The illustrative Urban Design principles from the Council's emerging Development Brief is included at **Appendix B**, as indicative of how the site might be developed.

Vehicular access will be provided via two new access points along Bicester Road, one access point being located south of Kidlington Cemetery, and the second access point being provided within the northern field parcel. An emergency access point from Bicester Road is proposed which would also facilitate a pedestrian and cycle access, in addition to the other pedestrian/cycle routes throughout the development and linking with the surroundings. The existing public footpath that runs along the eastern boundary of the Application Site will be incorporated into Site's proposals predominantly along its existing route.

The proposals for the entire allocation have been structured around the creation of a central Spine Street that runs through the heart of the development and the provision of an extensive green infrastructure network, specifically in the south of the Application Site which offers the opportunity for formal sports facilities (including changing facilities and meeting room) along with informal public open space. The green corridors, which form an integral part of Kidlington South East's green infrastructure, will contain the existing landscape features and link to the development's wider open spaces facilitating the movement of people and wildlife. A pedestrian and cycle route, currently referred to as 'The Greenway' is proposed which would run through the proposed large area of public

open space in the southern part of the Site, connecting Oxford Parkway Railway Station to the existing facilities and services on Oxford Road to the east.

SuDS features are also proposed along the eastern areas of the Application Site to correspond with its lowest points. The SuDS features will be shallow vegetated basins for the attenuation and retention of flows. They will condition the quality of the water and provide landscape, amenity and ecological benefits. The attenuation basins will be landscaped with native submerged, emergent and marginal vegetation. Existing ditches will seek to be retained and buffered by public open space, whilst being integrated into the Application Site drainage scheme.

EIA Requirement

The Proposed Development can technically be categorised as a Schedule 2 development within the EIA Regulations, specifically falling within section 10 'Infrastructure Projects', (b) 'Urban Development projects'.

The Application Site is not considered to lie within a sensitive area as defined by the EIA Regulations, (i.e. within a Site of Special Scientific Interest or European Site, National Park, Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, World Heritage Site or Scheduled Monument) and therefore the applicable thresholds/criteria for defining a development as Schedule 2, in this instance section 10b, should be referred to.

It is recognised the applicable threshold/criteria for defining section 10b (Urban Development projects) are:

- i) "the development includes more than 1ha of urban development which is not dwelling house development; or
- ii) the development includes more than 150 dwellings; or
- iii) the overall area of the development exceeds 5 hectares".

In this instance, the proposals exceed the thresholds identified above so it is therefore appropriate to request a Screening Opinion from the Local Planning Authority to determine whether it is considered that there are any significant effects likely to arise from the Proposed Development.

It is clear that the proposals exceed thresholds ii) and iii) as up to 500 dwellings are proposed, and the overall area of the development is c32ha. However, it should be recognised that large areas of the Application Site have been set aside for green infrastructure, including a new woodland area and zone to contain formal sports facilities. In addition to this, areas for new allotments, play provision, and sustainable drainage ponds are included within the development proposals.

Schedule 2 developments only require an EIA to be completed if it is considered that they are 'likely to have significant effects on the environment by virtue of factors such as its nature, size or location' (Part 1- Regulation 2). It is considered the Proposed Development does not constitute 'likely significant effects on the environment' for the reasons set out throughout this letter.

Schedule 3 (Regulation 4(6)) of the EIA Regulations identifies the 'selection criteria for screening Schedule 2 development', which are categorised under three general headings: characteristics of development; location of development; and types and characteristics of the potential impact. The relevant criteria within each of these headings (and subsequent subheadings) is discussed below.

Characteristics of development

Size and design of the development: As discussed above the design of the Proposed Development is continuing to evolve but is likely to exceed the thresholds within section 10(b) which assist in determining whether a development is Schedule 2. However, the EIA Regulations are also supported by the NPPG which includes a table accompanying paragraph 4-057-2070720 entitled 'Thresholds and Criteria for the identification of Schedule 2 development requiring EIA and indicative values for determining significant effects'.

This table provides guidance on the issues important to consider in determining whether significant effects are likely in a given proposal. For section 10(b), the Schedule 2 screening threshold guidance contained in the NPPG states EIA is more likely to be required for sites which have not previously been intensively developed if:

- 1) "area of the scheme is more than 5 hectares; or
- 2) it would provide a total of more than 10,000m² of new commercial floorspace; or
- 3) the development would have significant urbanising effects in a previously non-urbanised area (e.g. a new development of more than 1,000 dwellings)"

Firstly, it is clear that the Proposed Development does not provide more than 10,000m² of new commercial floorspace. Secondly, as set out above, whilst the Application Site is over 5ha in size, not all of the Application Site is proposed for built development, with large areas set aside for green infrastructure and public open space.

The Application Site forms the allocated site 'Land South East of Kidlington' under Policy PR7a of the adopted Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 (Part 1) Partial Review – Oxford's Unmet Needs and is located on the boundary of Kidlington's urban area to support a significant amount of Oxford's unmet housing need and associated community facilities. Given the Site's location along the existing urban edge of Kidlington, adjacent to the A34 and Oxford Parkway Railway Station, it is considered that the development would not have significant urbanising effects in a previously non-urbanised area. It is relevant to note that

the Application Site is currently influenced by a number of urbanising features including the adjacent Sainsbury's superstore, Thames Valley Police mast and the adjacent main roads. The Application Site is also generally well contained by established boundary vegetation which limits views of the Site from its surroundings, which assist in reducing any significant urbanising effects. Furthermore, the inclusion of the proposed large area of open space in the south of the Site and other areas throughout, ensures the development sympathetically assimilates into the surrounding context. It is relevant to acknowledge that the proposed 500 dwellings is far lower than the suggested development threshold of 1,000 dwellings in NPPG guidance.

Cumulation with other developments and/or approved developments: With regards the previous screening opinion which considered the smaller area (27.75ha) of the allocation, it was CDC's view that there was the potential for significant cumulative effects in EIA terms in relation to two matters. Firstly the '27.75ha site' with the rest of the allocation (which collectively now forms the subject of this screening request); and secondly with the surrounding allocated sites.

In relation to the first matter, the Site subject to this screening request now extends to the whole allocation and therefore any effects in this manner are no longer considered 'cumulative' as they are addressed as part of the Proposed Development. Any potential effects as a result of the development of the whole allocation are discussed throughout this letter (and are considered not to be significant in EIA terms), and therefore are not repeated in this 'cumulative' section.

It is however still relevant to consider CDC's second matter in relation to potential significant effects with the surrounding allocated sites. To properly address this matter, it is relevant to refer to the EIA Regulations and guidance.

According to Schedule 3 (the Selection Criteria for Schedule 2 Development), it is noted that consideration should be given to "*cumulation with other existing development and/or approved development*". This is further noted in the PPG at Paragraph 024, reference 4-024-20170728 (as also noted in CDC's previous screening opinion), which states "*Each application (or request for a screening opinion) should be considered on its own merits. There are occasions, however, when other existing or approved development may be relevant in determining whether significant effects are likely as a consequence of a proposed development. The local planning authorities should always have regard to the possible cumulative effects arising from any existing or approved development.*"

The three allocated residential sites which lie to the south east and south of Kidlington and were noted in CDC's previous screening opinion, include those covered under Policy 6a (690 dwellings), 6b (670 dwellings) and 7b (120 dwellings). As clearly noted however, none of these are 'existing' or 'approved' developments, as per Paragraph 024, reference 4-024-20170728 in the NPPG, nor are any currently the subject of planning applications. There is no reason to believe these other allocated sites are 'highly likely' to go to committee before the subject site, nor would they clearly be operational prior to the

Proposed Development subject of this screening opinion request. Furthermore, there is limited information regarding the proposals to make an informed assessment; all these factors are material considerations, as set out in case law, to whether it is reasonable or not to consider these developments as part of potential cumulative effects for the purposes of screening. It is not the role of a planning application for a development to assess the strategic allocations in a Local Authority's Plan. Such matters are the consideration of the strategic planning process. It is for the above reasons when assessed lawfully against the Regulations, that we conclude there are not likely to be significant cumulative effects which would warrant the submission of EIA.

There are no further sites that we are aware of that would be relevant to consider in relation to cumulative impacts, nor were any further sites raised in the LPA's previous screening opinion.

It is also relevant to clarify that, whilst it is recognised that an application should not be considered in isolation if, in reality, it is an integral part of a more substantial development, the Proposed Development is clearly a separate scheme from the other allocations. The allocations are not so inter-connected that together they could be considered a 'single project'. Each allocated site can proceed independently and are not functionally dependent on one another. In this manner, the Proposed Development subject to this screening, cannot be seen as an integral part of a more substantial development.

Use of natural resources/production of waste/pollution and nuisances/risk of accidents/risk to human health: The nature of the Proposed Development is not unusually complex and it is considered unlikely it will pose potentially hazardous environmental effects, high risk of accidents or risk to human health. It is acknowledged that the size of the Proposed Development and the likely length of time that the Proposed Development would be under construction will inevitably and unavoidably result in the use of natural resources, and the production of waste and/or pollution compared to the existing baseline, however it is considered that standard mitigation measures and construction best practice would assist in reducing these potential effects and they are not considered significant. A Phase 1 Assessment, including Conceptual Model, undertaken on part of the Site in 2017 considered that there were negligible risks associated with land quality and groundwater and any contamination is likely to be localised and easily addressed during development through the use of cover soils. Given the negligible contaminated land risk identified within the Conceptual Model it is considered that any further investigations could be undertaken post planning under a suitably worded condition.

Location of the development

Sensitivity of existing areas likely to be affected/ existing and approved land use and absorption capacity of the natural environment: In terms of landscape quality, sensitivity and value, the Application Site and its immediate context are not subject to any national, local or other landscape designations such as AONB or Special Landscape Area. None of the trees lying within or immediately adjacent to the Application Site are covered by Tree

Preservation Orders. The Application Site is not publicly accessible except for the south eastern edge which is crossed by a public footpath.

Vegetation is contained to the Application Site boundaries and internal field boundaries and comprises established hedgerows and tree belts. A Landscape Statement prepared by CSA Environmental (previously submitted as part of the Local Plan review evidence base) established that the Application Site has an overall medium landscape quality, sensitivity and value and is influenced by a number of urbanising features including the adjacent Sainsbury's superstore, Thames Valley Police mast and the adjacent main roads all of which are detracting features in the landscape.

The Application Site is generally well contained by established boundary vegetation which limits views of the Site from its surroundings, although open views of the Site are possible from the public footpath along the eastern boundary and within the south east of the Site and from the existing Kidlington allotment gardens and cemetery along the western boundary of the Site, although new planted vegetation provides filtering of views from this location.

Views from the north are possible from the rear of properties on Beagles Close, which look out across the Site's northern field, with the central and southern fields screened from view by internal field boundary vegetation. Views from properties on Water Eaton Lane to the immediate east of the Application Site are predominantly screened by the established trees. Views from the south are screened by the established tree belts along the south eastern and south western Site boundaries, which screen the Site from the A34 and A4165 respectively. Views from Bicester Road to the west are screened by the established tree belt along the Application Site's eastern boundary.

The Landscape Statement concludes that residential development could be accommodated on the Application Site without significant impacts on the Site's landscape features or on the surrounding landscape character. Existing field boundary trees and hedgerows would be retained and enhanced within the development proposals where possible, creating a strong, established and defensible boundary to the settlement edge. Sensitively designed development of the Application Site would contribute to delivering housing numbers within the local plan period, without resulting in any significant landscape and visual effects.

Preliminary Ecological Appraisals have been carried out over the entire site over a number of years from 2017 until 2021, along with protected species surveys and updated ecological records from the local records centre (Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre). They identify that there are no statutory designated wildlife sites covering the Site or within 2km. The Oxford Meadows SAC is located just over c.2.1km south-west of the Site. Six national statutory designated wildlife sites were identified within 3km of the Site:

- Pixey and Yarnton Meads SSSI (c.2.1km south-west)
- Rushy Meadows SSSI (c.2.1km north-west)
- Port Meadow with Wolvercote Common and Green SSSI (c.2.1km south-

west)

- Wolvercote Meadows SSSI (c.2.4km south-west)
- Hook Meadow and The Trap Grounds SSSI (c.2.4km south west)
- Woodeaton Quarry SSSI (2.8km east)

No other national statutory designations are located within 2km of the site, albeit six non-statutory designations were identified within 2km of the Site, the closest of which is Stratfield Brake Woodland Trust Reserve, a small area of mature woodland located c.180m south-west, separated from the Application Site by the highway network. Given the distance between these designated sites and the Application Site, and the nature of the non-designated sites, it is considered no significant effects will arise as a result of the Proposed Development.

The work undertaken to date has identified the following:

- The on-site habitats are dominated by species-poor, semi-improved grassland although there are some small areas of bare ground containing the notable plant mousetail. All fields at the Application Site are bounded by hedgerows. These are all mature with some containing mature trees, ditches or banks, and one which contains a shallow pond.
- A small number of trees showed high and moderate potential for bat roosts in 2107. Bat activity surveys revealed moderate activity which was largely limited to the hedgerows, particularly the Site's central western boundary. Update survey work for bats was undertaken during 2019/2020, where results were not significantly different. Further surveys of trees with high bat roosting potential are scheduled for spring/summer 2021.
- No evidence of badger was confirmed. Dormouse, water vole and otter are considered unlikely to be present at the Application Site and opportunities for reptiles are deemed to be limited.
- An Environmental DNA (eDNA) sample was due to be taken from the on-site pond to determine the presence/absence of great crested newt, although the pond was dry in 2017 and therefore not suitable to support amphibians. Repeat eDNA surveys were undertaken in 2018 and 2020 both of which were negative for great crested newts.
- The hedgerows, mature trees and scrub are likely to provide opportunities for nesting and foraging birds at the Site. The associated pond and ditches add to the habitat diversity on-site and increase its value for birds although overall, there it is considered unlikely that a significant assemblage of birds, or particularly uncommon species are supported.

The design of the Concept Masterplan provides the opportunity for ecological enhancement across the Application Site, retaining a large part of the Site as green infrastructure and creating a number of key green infrastructure routes. The majority of trees and hedgerows within the Application Site can be integrated into the development proposals. Where

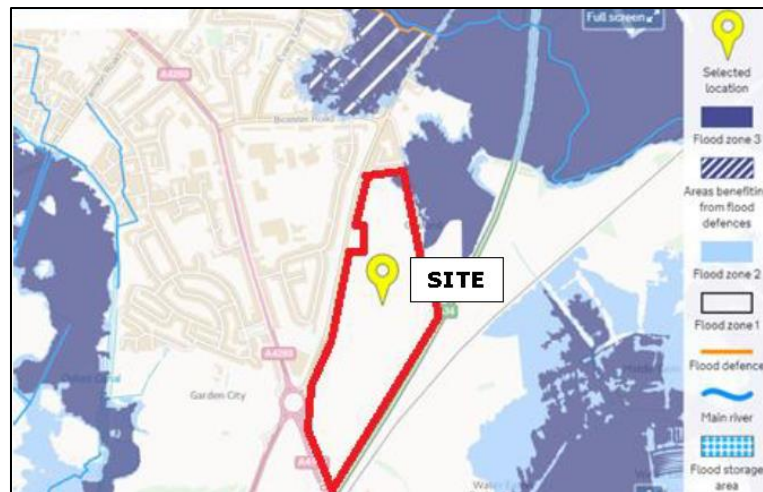
breaks in the hedgerows are needed to facilitate access, mitigation measures will be put in place, such as replacement planting or enhancing existing linear habitat features. Aquatic opportunities will be retained and enhanced on-site for the benefit of local wildlife. Whilst the development will result in changes to the existing habitats, there is the opportunity to create a net biodiversity gain. Therefore, is it consider the Proposed Development is not likely to result in significant effects on ecology. Any application will be accompanied by relevant up to date ecology surveys and consideration to biodiversity net gain as appropriate.

Heritage Appraisals prepared in April 2017 (previously submitted as part of evidence for the Site's allocation) identified potential effects on heritage assets within the vicinity of the Application Site. Four Grade II Listed Buildings are located near to the Application Site, the closest of which is Stratfield Farmhouse c.360m west of the Application Site, across the highway infrastructure. Given the distance between the Site and these Listed Buildings, combined with the presence of modern built development and the surrounding road network, development of the Application Site (or considering the entire allocation) is unlikely to affect their settings or significance as heritage assets.

The hedgerows along the field boundaries within the central area of the Application Site date back to 1884 forming an enclosed field to the east of the now demolished Gosford Hill Farm. Ridge and furrow earthworks are also evident within the Application Site dating back to the medieval period, however, these are considered to be of low archaeological significance and therefore will not affect the development proposals.

Further archaeological investigations and updated appraisal would be undertaken as part of the submission of any planning application submitted in respect of the Site. It is clear that consideration of potential heritage effects can be effectively dealt with through further investigation as is normal practice in the context of the preparation of a planning application. Any effects could be readily mitigated through careful scheme design and are therefore judged as not likely to be significant.

The Environment Agency flood maps shows the vast majority of the Application Site sits within Flood Zone 1 (low probability of flooding), with the exception of a small area within the north-east corner of the Site which is defined as being in a Flood Zone 2 and 3 area.



The Environment Agency surface water flood map shows that there are several patches which are at moderate to high risk for pluvial flooding in the east of the Application Site, however these areas will be managed and mitigated as part of the development proposals. The Cherwell and West Oxfordshire Strategic Flood Risk Assessment indicate that Kidlington is affected by groundwater flooding. Risks associated with groundwater and surface water will be managed through the provision of suitable finished floor levels to manage overland flows and attenuation basins will be designed to be shallow to avoid groundwater levels. With the inclusion of SuDS features, the effects of the Proposed Development are considered to be not significant and has the advantage of providing landscape, amenity and ecological benefits. Furthermore, it is noted that the LLFA have confirmed that the surface water drainage requirements and flood risk of the development both on and off site can be met.

CDC will recall the Transport Appraisal that was submitted in 2019 which considered how residential development could be accommodated on the Application Site. Specifically Automatic Traffic Counts were undertaken in 2019, and along with a calculation of proposed trip generation this enabled an assessment of traffic impact through the use of TEMPRO and PICADY. The appraisal considered 450 dwellings and concluded that two junctions from Bicester Road would serve the development with only minor carriageway widening being required. The junctions were seen to have ample capacity to accommodate predicted weekday peak hour traffic flows in a future year of 2031, allowing for projected background growth. The Appraisal also identified the potential to improve surrounding pedestrian and cycle access, along with improving existing bus stops. As part of the application a Transport Assessment and Travel Plan will be undertaken to consider these issues further, however from the work undertaken to date it is not considered impacts would be significant to warrant EIA in relation to traffic and transport, specifically the receptors which are relevant to EIA (i.e. severance, driver and pedestrian delay and amenity).

A noise survey was undertaken in 2019 at the Application Site boundaries adjacent to the A34, Oxford Road and Bicester Road. This survey has previously been submitted to the Council as part of the evidence to support the allocation of the Site. Existing sound levels at the Application Site have been considered with reference to BS8233:2014 Guidance on Sound Insulation and Noise Reduction for Buildings' (BS8233:2014), and with the World Health Organisation's Guidelines for Community Noise' 1999 (WHO Guidelines).

Survey results show that sound levels are highest adjacent to the A34 on the Site's eastern boundary and up to approximately 15dB sound attenuation will be required for gardens located nearest to this road. Initial work indicates that sufficient attenuation can be achieved through the installation of an acoustic sound barrier (to take the form of a 3m high bund with 3m high acoustic fence) along part of the eastern boundary, around which is proposed to be landscaped with new tree planting to create an attractive backdrop to the new development. With this mitigation, it is not considered there would be significant effects which would require an ES. The predicted increase in traffic flow as a result of the development corresponds to a change in sound level that is considered acoustically insignificant.

Types and characteristics of potential impact

Consideration as to potential impacts have been noted in the above commentary, and it is acknowledged that the magnitude, spatial extent, nature, intensity, complexity, duration, frequency or reversibility of impacts need to be given consideration in the determination of whether the Proposed Development is likely to have significant effects to require an EIA.

As identified throughout this letter, a comprehensive approach has been taken in relation to the design of the Proposed Development. The careful consideration of the design of the development, specifically the retention of large areas of open space and green infrastructure, in addition to the careful siting of built form parcels, has resulted in a number of integral mitigation measures being included, which have sought to reduce impacts and effects of the Proposed Development as far as possible, and to non-significant levels. These include, but are not restricted to:

- Retention as far as practicable of the existing established tree lined field boundaries including the internal field boundaries, ensuring the proposals are well integrated into the existing landscape framework;
- Creation of public open space in the southern part of the Site, with proposed built form aligned with the existing southern edge of Kidlington within a clearly defined and robust field boundary, maintaining a physical separation between the extended built up area of Kidlington and any future growth in the north of Oxford;
- Creation of a linear open space along the south eastern edge of the Site, retaining the public footpath along its current alignment;

- Potential to create a pedestrian route linking the existing public footpath to the south of Water Eaton Lane, with Bicester Road and the adjacent Sainsbury's superstore to the west;
- Creation of recreation opportunities within the Proposed Development area, including pedestrian routes and a new children's play area;
- Potential for the provision of new bat roosting and bird nesting opportunities within new buildings and retained mature trees;
- The siting of dwellings, set back from the eastern boundary, to accommodate an acoustic bund which will form part of the acoustic mitigation measures to address noise from the A34. The acoustic bund will sit within a green corridor and will contain significant new landscaping providing an attractive backdrop to the new development and will also provide biodiversity benefits;
- 'The Greenway' will form a new attractively landscaped route which will become an important focal point for the sustainable movement of people wishing to walk and cycle to Oxford Park railway station from both Kidlington South East and the existing areas of Kidlington. On its route through the development, the Greenway will pass by the proposed new allotments, the new playing fields and the proposed new woodland park.
- The inclusion of an extensive area of public open space will maintain a physical separation between the extended built up area of Kidlington and the future northerly growth of Oxford to the east of the A34. This area will deliver a range of recreational and ecological benefits and provide an important new area of public open space for the benefits of both existing and future residents of the settlement.
- The utilisation of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) to deal with the surface water network, which will improve water quality of run-off; and
- Best practice construction measures and strategies will be adopted which can be secured by condition where it is deemed necessary.

Accompanying documentation

In the context of the above, it is our view that the Proposed Development is not likely to have significant effects on the environment by virtue of factors such as its nature, size or location (Part 1 Regulation 2), and consequently does not require an EIA.

As with all development however, it is acknowledged that there is the potential for less than significant impacts or changes to affect the environment. The project team have

sought and will continue to seek to minimise these through careful design and the detailed masterplanning process.

These supporting statements, with reference to requirements of Policy PR7a, would likely include a Design and Access Statement; Planning Statement; Transport Assessment and Travel Plan; Flood Risk Assessment and Outline Drainage Strategy; Ecological Assessment; Landscape and Visual Assessment, Heritage Assessment, Tree Survey, Noise Assessment, Air Quality Assessment and Ground Investigation Report.

We believe these supporting documents will provide Cherwell District Council with all the necessary information concerning the effects of the Proposed Development, without the need for an EIA, so to enable them to make an informed decision concerning the proposals.

Summary

Under Regulation 6 of the Town and Country Planning Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) (England and Wales) Regulations 2017, my clients Barwood Development Securities Ltd (Barwood) and Hill Residential Ltd request a Screening Opinion in relation to land south east of Kidlington, as shown in the enclosed plan.

Cherwell District Council (CDC) will be aware that Barwood Development Securities Ltd submitted a screening opinion request in April 2021 in relation to 27.75 ha of land at the same location, which forms the majority of the PR7a allocation in Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 (Part 1) Partial Review. CDC's resultant screening opinion determined that that proposed development was considered to be EIA development due to the potential significant cumulative impact with other development proposed to be allocated by policy PR7a, together with other sites in close proximity. The applicants disagree with this view for reasons discussed in this letter, and now seek a formal screening opinion under Regulation 6 of the EIA Regulations, jointly with Hill Residential Ltd, in relation to the full extent of the site allocated under Policy PR7a.

The Application Site is located on the south eastern edge of the settlement of Kidlington and is positioned between the A34, which defines the eastern boundary, and Bicester Road which marks its extend to the west. The Application Site extends to approximately 32.12ha and comprises two irregular shaped pastoral fields and, two arable fields, with established hedgerows and occasional trees along the field boundaries.

The proposals are continuing to develop, however the Proposed Development is likely to include up to 500 residential dwellings, large areas of open space containing formal sports facilities, including changing facilities and community meeting room, potential for an extension to Kidlington cemetery and allotments, vehicular access and associated infrastructure, engineering works and landscaping.

It is recognised that the Application Site subject to this Screening Request can technically be categorised as a Schedule 2 development within the EIA Regulations, specifically falling

within section 10 'Infrastructure Projects', (b) 'Urban Development projects'. The proposal exceeds the thresholds identified in relation to section 10b and it is therefore appropriate to request a Screening Opinion from the Local Planning Authority.

As the Council will be aware, Schedule 2 developments only require an EIA to be completed if it is considered that they are 'likely to have significant effects on the environment by virtue of factors such as its nature, size or location'. As set out in the letter, it is our view that with relevant mitigation measures as noted, the Proposed Development is not likely to have significant effects on the environment, (including consideration to any cumulative effects with the northern section of the allocation), by virtue of factors such as its nature, size or location, and consequently does not require an EIA.

With regards to potential cumulative impacts, it is relevant to note that with reference to the EIA Regulations, it is not considered reasonable to assess the other allocated sites within the Local Plan. The site subject to this screening request is clearly an independent scheme which is not reliant on the surrounding allocated sites. Furthermore, none of the allocated sites are 'existing' and/or 'approved' development as per the EIA Regulations, nor are they even subject to planning applications. It is for these reasons why we do not believe there are likely to be significant cumulative effects which would warrant the submission of EIA.

We look forward to receiving the Screening Opinion within three weeks of receipt of this request as specified in the Regulations and confirmation that the Screening Opinion will be placed on the Public Register.

Yours faithfully



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Enc.
Appendix A – Site Location Plan
Appendix B – Illustrative Masterplan