

4 Alternatives

4.1 Introduction

- 4.1.1 In accordance with the EIA Regulations, this chapter describes the *'reasonable alternatives'* to the Development considered by the Applicant, prior to the selection of the final design and provides a description of the main reasons for the choice made, including a comparison of the environmental effects.
- 4.1.2 Information on the need for the Development is provided in the Planning Statement, dated September 2021, which accompanies the planning application and is not provided within the ES Chapter.
- 4.1.3 The alternatives that are considered in this chapter include:
- Alternative sites / Site boundaries;
 - The 'No Development' alternative;
 - Extant Permission Alternative; and
 - Alternative designs (e.g. layout, heights, massing and other aspects).
- 4.1.4 This chapter was prepared by Quod in conjunction with the Applicant, Cornish Architects and the wider design team.

4.2 Alternative Sites / Site Boundaries

- 4.2.1 No alternative sites have been considered by the Applicant due to the Applicant's ownership of the Site. Alternative sites have therefore not been considered further in this ES.
- 4.2.2 The initial boundary plan for the Site (as shown in the EIA Scoping Report, Appendix 3.2) has undergone minor alterations to incorporate the access road from between Phases 1 and 2.

4.3 The 'No Development' Alternative

- 4.3.1 The 'No Development' alternative refers to the option of leaving the Site in its current state. The 'No Development' alternative is considered in line with best practice for EIA and relates to the Applicant not developing the Site and in remaining as agricultural land. Chapters 7 to 11 and ES Volume II set out the baseline conditions for the Site together with the future baseline conditions which are likely to arise in the absence of the Development. These are not repeated here.
- 4.3.2 The Site lies within an area allocated for mixed employment and housing development under the CDC Local Plan (Policy Bicester 1). In the absence of redevelopment, the Site would become an isolated agricultural plot surrounded by development and its functional value as an agricultural plot would be marginal.

- 4.3.3 Inevitably, adverse environmental effects related to construction would not occur, for example temporary construction traffic, noise and landscape and visual effects. Temporary beneficial socio-economic effects, such as construction employment, economic benefits through supply chain effects and local spending by construction workers would also not arise. However, these effects have been found by the EIA process to be not significant.
- 4.3.4 ES Chapter 7: Socio-economics concludes that the Development would result in significant beneficial effects, including the creation of circa 255 and 715 FTE jobs. The worst case employment scenario 255 FTE net new employees would be expected to generate approximately £705,000 local spending per year through operation of the completed Development. These effects could not be realised without redevelopment of the Site.
- 4.3.5 In the absence of the Development, the Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy would not be implemented, which will provide new habitat planting and will create a network of foraging and commuting habitat across the Site. New artificial roosting features will be provided which will increase the extent of habitat for bats resulting in a positive effect on this species. This would not be realised in the absence of the Development.
- 4.3.6 In the absence of the Development, a Biodiversity Net Gain would not be achieved across the Site.
- 4.3.7 The 'No Development' scenario is not considered a realistic prospect given the Site's allocation for redevelopment as part of the Eco-Town. In addition, it can reasonably be expected that the Site could be re-developed in the short-term, even in the absence of the current Development proposals, given that the Site benefits from two extant planning permissions for residential development (See Section 4.4).

4.4 Extant Permissions – Consented Schemes

- 4.4.1 The Site benefits from two extant planning permissions for residential development, as detailed in Chapter 1: Introduction. These are the '2017 Residential Application' and the '2017 Appeal Application'. Both granted outline permission for 150 residential units within the Site. This section will provide a comparison of the key aspects of the Development (i.e. 17,808sqm of employment floorspace) with that of the Consented Schemes (i.e. 150 residential units).
- 4.4.2 Table 4.1 provides a comparison of the likely environmental effects between the Consented Schemes and the Development.

Table 4.1: Comparison of the Development and the Consented Schemes

Issue	Comparison of Effects
Construction	
All technical topics	Given that the Development would be constructed on the Site and within the same development plots as the residential units of the Consented Schemes, it is considered that there would be no material difference in identified effects between the Development and the Consented Schemes as reported within the technical chapters of this ES (i.e. Chapters 7 to 11 and ES Volume II). It is reasonable to assume that the same mitigation measures as identified within this ES

Issue	Comparison of Effects
	<p>would be relevant, i.e. Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP), Construction Travel Management Plan (CTMP), Landscape and Ecology Management Plan (LEMP) and therefore the likely significance of construction effects would be as reported within this ES.</p>
Completed Development	
Socio-Economics	<p>There are some differences between likely socio-economic effects of the Development compared to the Consented Schemes, this is mainly as a result of the type of development planning permission is be requested for (i.e. employment vs. residential) and therefore not all effects are directly comparable.</p> <p>Socio-economic effects in relation to housing delivery, education, healthcare and open space for the 150 residential units are not directly comparable with the Development, but beneficial effects for housing delivery would not be realised if the Development was implemented. However, there would be beneficial effects in relation to employment accommodated within the completed Development with an additional 255 to 715 jobs being provided at local level by the Development.</p> <p>In relation to additional spending, additional spending by the employees within the Development would range between £705,000 to £1,980,500 a year depending on the final job numbers. The additional spending figure of £1,980,500 is comparable to spending figure provided within the 2017 Appeal Application ES for the 150 residential units (i.e. £2,000,000), whilst the £705,000 figure would result in a reduced beneficial effect when compared to the 2017 Appeal Application ES. However, both schemes would result in a beneficial effect at local level in relation to additional spending which would be of minor significance (not significant).</p>
Transport	<p>The Development will generate fewer trips compared to the Consented Schemes, but the differences are not material and no additional mitigation measures are considered necessary. Both the Development and the Consented Schemes would therefore not give rise to significant effects in terms of transport and access.</p>
Noise and vibration	<p>There is no material difference between the likely significant effects of the Development compared to the Consented Schemes. Both the Development and the Consented Schemes would not give rise to significant effects in terms of noise and vibration.</p>
Biodiversity	<p>There is no material difference between the likely significant effects of the Development compared to the Consented Schemes. Both the Development and the Consented Schemes would not give rise to significant effects on biodiversity.</p> <p>A Biodiversity Net Gain metric calculation has also been undertaken which demonstrates that on the basis of the approved plans for Phase 1 and 2 and the planting strategy for Phase 3, overall the Development will achieve a linear mitigation score of 10.85 resulting in a net gain of +1.41 biodiversity units.</p>

Issue	Comparison of Effects
Climate Change and Greenhouse Gases	An assessment of Climate Change was not scoped into either the 2017 Residential ES nor the 2017 Appeal Application ES and as such no direct comparison of effects can be made with the Development.
Landscape and Visual	While layouts, massing and view locations have changed, these have not been considered significant enough to materially alter the conclusions of the LVIA for the Development and the likely landscape and visual effects of the Development are comparable to the Consented Schemes. The 2017 Residential ES reported 'negligible to moderate adverse' landscape effects and 'moderate to substantial adverse' visual effects for the completed development. Volume II of this ES reports a range of landscape effects from minor to moderate/major adverse (for LCA4 - agricultural land within the Site) and negligible (Views 1-7) to moderate/major adverse (Views 8 and 9) visual effects for the completed development.

4.5 Alternative Designs

- 4.5.1 The project has undergone minor alterations since June 2020 through consultation with CDC and OCC. In addition, environmental testing of scheme designs has been undertaken to inform the design such as transport, biodiversity and landscape and visual.
- 4.5.2 The overall quantum of floorspace has remained unchanged from the initial design. No alternative designs have been considered than the design and development described in Chapter 5: Description of Development.
- 4.5.3 Following the noise assessment, two 2.5m high acoustic barriers were recommended, and these have been incorporated into the design and plans, as shown on Figure 9.4 of ES Chapter 9: Noise and Vibration.