

CONTENTS

1.1	INTRODUCTION.....	2
1.2	BACKGROUND	3
	Outline Planning Application	3
	Summary Policy Context	4
	Timing of this Application	4
1.3	NEED FOR AN EIA, METHODOLOGY AND SCOPE	6
	Rationale for the EIA	6
	Competence	11
	Approach to Impact Assessment	11
	Scoping	12
	Pre-Application.....	12
	Consultation and Engagement	12
	Information as Required by the EIA Regulations	13
	<i>Vulnerability to risks of major accidents or disasters</i>	13
	Format of the Assessment.....	13
	EIA Methodology and Terminology	14
	Study Area.....	14
	Assumptions, Uncertainties and Limitations	14
	<i>Assumptions</i>	14
	<i>Uncertainties and Limitations</i>	14
	Parameter Plans	15
1.4	STRUCTURE OF THE ES.....	17
1.5	AVAILABILITY OF THE DOCUMENT	19

1.1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1.1 L&Q Estates (the "Applicants"), Charles Brown & Simon Digby and London & Metropolitan International are submitting an Outline Planning Application (OPA) for residential development (the "Proposed Development") on land north of Gavray Dive, Bicester (the "Application Site" or "Site").
- 1.1.2 The formal description of the Proposed Development is set out in Chapter 2.
- 1.1.3 The Application Site lies within the administrative boundary of Cherwell District Council (CDC). The location of the Site and alignment of the OPA boundary is shown in **Appendix 1.1**.
- 1.1.4 This Environmental Statement (ES) reports the findings of an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) of the Proposed Development. EIA is a process whereby the likely significant environmental effects of a proposed development are rigorously assessed. It enables potentially "significant" environmental effects to be identified and appropriate mitigation measures to be proposed, removing or minimising potential adverse effects.
- 1.1.5 This Environmental Statement (ES) has been prepared by David Lock Associates Ltd with input from Markides Associates, Environmental Dimension Partnership, Hydrock and Turley.
- 1.1.6 The purpose of this opening chapter of the ES is to outline the background to the proposals, explain the scope of the ES and set out its structure.

1.2 BACKGROUND

Outline Planning Application

1.2.1 This ES forms part of the OPA for the Proposed Development, which includes the following items:

- Covering letter (DLA)

Formal Documents

- application form and ownership certificates (DLA);
- Formal Drawings:
 - Site Location Plan (Edge)
 - Site Plan (Edge)
 - Parameter Plans (Edge):
 - Land Use Parameter Plan
 - Access and Movement Parameter Plan
 - Open Spaces Parameter Plan
 - Density Parameter Plan; and
 - Building Heights Parameter Plan
 - Detailed Access Drawings (Markides):
 - Proposed Site Access 1
 - Proposed Site Access 2

Supporting Documents

- Covering letter (DLA)
- Illustrative masterplans are included (one for the whole site, and separate West and East of Langford Brook). It is not intended that these will be listed as part of any planning permissions (Edge)
- Design and Access Statement (Edge);
- Planning Statement (DLA);
- Sustainability Appraisal (Turleys);
- Environmental Statement and Non-Technical Summary (All);
- Transport Assessment (Markides);
- Travel Plan Framework (Markides);

- Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Statements (Hydrock);
- Arboricultural Assessment (EDP);
- Noise Assessment and;
- Air Quality Assessment.

Summary Policy Context

- 1.2.2 The OPA is submitted in the context of the Government's commitment to growth and development, contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2021). The NPPF contains a presumption in favour of sustainable development at the heart of the Framework (paragraph 11).
- 1.2.3 A fundamental element of sustainable development is the Government's objective to significantly boost the supply of housing (section 5). It is a *overarching objective* "...ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations." (Paragraph 8). The NPPF also sets out the need to deliver a wide choice of new homes including homes to meet affordable housing needs.
- 1.2.4 Paragraph 11 provides guidance on how the presumption in favour of sustainable development should apply to decision making on planning applications. Proposals should be approved that accord with the development plan without delay or where policies are out-of-date which includes where a 5-year supply of deliverable housing sites cannot be demonstrated or where the Housing Delivery Test indicates delivery substantially below the requirement over the previous three years.
- 1.2.5 The Cherwell Local Plan Part 1 2011-2031 was re-adopted in 2016 which includes an allocation of the land north of Gavray Drive for residential-led development of up to 300 dwellings by Policy Bicester 13. The housing numbers allocated would contribute to the District's housing requirements that are set out at Policy BSC1 and its housing land supply. The Council's 2020 AMR shows a 4.7-year supply for the period 2021-2026, against the requirement for a 5-year housing supply and therefore Paragraph 11 of the NPPF is relevant.
- 1.2.6 Further details of the planning policy context for the Proposed Development are set out in Chapter 3.

Timing of this Application

- 1.2.7 The submission of the outline application is made at this time for the following reasons:
- The Proposed Development reflects a period of stakeholder and public consultation, the outcomes of which are embedded in the Parameter Plans and application details;

- The site is allocated in the adopted Local Plan and the proposals seek to deliver homes to meet the Council's identified housing needs over the Plan period.
- Submission of an outline application will enable approval of details, discharge of pre-commencement conditions and a start on site within a timescale to meet the Council's 5-year housing land supply of which the site is part (April 2020).

1.3 NEED FOR AN EIA, METHODOLOGY AND SCOPE

Rationale for the EIA

- 1.3.1 The *Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017* (the “EIA Regulations”) require that any proposed development falling within the description of a “Schedule 2 development” within the meaning of the Regulations will be required to be subject to EIA where such development is likely to have “significant” effects on the environment, by virtue of factors such as its nature, size or location (as screened under Schedule 3).
- 1.3.2 Projects listed in Schedule 2 are deemed to be EIA development under part 10(b) of Schedule 2 of the EIA Regulations and falls within the “urban development projects” category. Projects listed in Schedule 2 which exceed the thresholds in the supporting column may be screened to determine if EIA is required. This OPA exceeds the threshold set out in Schedule 2 of the EIA Regulations. The applicants have determined that the OPA should be the subject of an EIA process. This ES has therefore been prepared and is submitted on a voluntary basis with the planning application.

Table 1.1 ES Information as Required by the 2017 EIA Regulations Schedule 4

Specified Information	Location within this ES
1. Description of the development, including in particular –	
(a) a description of the location of the development;	Chapter 2 (Site and Proposed Development)
(b) a description of the physical characteristics of the whole development, including, where relevant, requisite demolition works, and the land-use requirements during the construction and operational phases;	Chapter 2 (Site and Proposed Development) All topic chapters (4-11) where applicable

Specified Information	Location within this ES
(c) a description of the main characteristics of the operational phase of the development (in particular any production process), for instance, energy demand and energy used, nature and quantity of the materials and natural resources (including water, land, soil and biodiversity) used:	Chapter 2 (Site and Proposed Development) All topic chapters (4-11) where applicable
(d) an estimate, by type and quantity, of expected residues and emissions (such as water, air, soil and subsoil pollution, noise vibration light heat, radiation and quantities and types of waste produced during the construction and operation phases.	All topic chapters (4 – 11) where applicable
2. A description of the reasonable alternatives (for example in terms of development, design, technology, location, size and scale) studied by the applicant which are relevant to the proposed development and its specific characteristics, and an indication of the main reasons for selecting the chosen option, including a comparison of the environmental effects.	Chapter 2 (Site and Proposed Development)
3. A description of the relevant aspects of the current state of the environment (baseline scenario) and an outline of the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the development as far as natural changes from the baseline scenario can be assessed without reasonable effort on the basis of the availability of environmental information and scientific knowledge.	Chapter 2 (Site and Proposed Development) All topic chapters (4-11)

Specified Information	Location within this ES
4. A description of the factors specified in regulation 4(2) likely to be significantly affected by the development: population, human health, biodiversity (for example fauna and flora), land (for example land take), soil (for example organic matter, erosion, compaction, sealing), water (for example hydromorphological changes, quantity and quality), air, climate (for example greenhouse gas emissions, impacts relevant to adaptation), material assets, cultural heritage, including architectural and archaeological aspects, and landscape.	All topic chapters (4 – 11)
5. A description of the likely significant effect of the development on the environment, which should cover the direct effects, and any indirect, secondary, cumulative, transboundary, short-term, medium-term and long-term, permanent and temporary, positive and negative effects resulting from inter alia:	All topic chapters (4-11)
(a) the construction and existence of the development, including where relevant, demolition works;	All topic chapters (4-11)
(b) the use of natural resources, in particular land, soil, water and biodiversity, considering as far as possible the sustainable availability of these resources;	Chapter 5 (Ecology and Biodiversity), 7 (Water Resources and 8 (Landscape and Visual),
(c) the emission of pollutants, noise, vibration, light, heat and radiation, the creation of nuisances, and the disposal and recovery of waste;	Chapter 4 (Transport), Chapter 9 (Air Quality), Chapter 10 (Noise and Vibration), Chapter 8 (Landscape and Visual), 7 (Water Resources), 11 (Climate Change)

Specified Information	Location within this ES
(d) the risks to human health, cultural heritage or the environment (for example due to accidents or disasters);	Chapter 9 (Air Quality), Chapter 10 (Noise and Vibration), Chapter 6 (Cultural Heritage), and Chapter 12 (Conclusion)
(e) the cumulation of effects with other existing and/or approved projects, taking into account any existing environmental problems relating to areas of particular environmental importance likely to be affected or the use of natural resources;	Chapters 2 (The Site and the Proposed Development) and all topic chapters (4-11). Chapter 12 (Conclusion)
(f) the impact of the project on climate (for example the nature and magnitude of greenhouse gas emissions) and the vulnerability of the project to climate change;	Chapter 9 (Air Quality) Chapter 7 (Water Resources), Chapter 11 (Climate Change) and Chapter 16 (Conclusion)
(g) the technologies and the substances used.	All topic chapters (4-11)
6. A description of the forecasting methods or evidence, used to identify and assess the significant effects on the environment including details of difficulties (for example the technical deficiencies or lack of knowledge) encountered compiling the required information and the main uncertainties involved.	Chapter 2 (The Site and the Proposed Development) and all topic chapters (4-11). Chapter 12 (Conclusion)

Specified Information	Location within this ES
7. A description of the measures envisaged to avoid, prevent, reduce or, if possible, offset any identified significant effects on the environment, and where appropriate of any proposed monitoring arrangements (for example the preparation of a post - project analysis). That description should explain the extent to which significant adverse effects on the environment are avoided, prevented, reduced or offset, and should cover both the construction and operational phases.	Chapter 2 (The Site and the Proposed Development) and all topic chapters (4-11)
8. A description of the expect significant adverse effects of the development on the environment deriving from the vulnerability of the development to risks of major accidents and/or disasters which are relevant to the project concerned.	Paragraph 1.3.12
9. A non-technical summary of the information provided under points 1-8 above.	ES – Non-Technical Summary
10. A reference list detailing the sources used for the descriptions and assessments included in the environmental statement.	All chapters where applicable.
11. A statement outlining the relevant expertise or qualification of such experts.	Chapter 1 (Introduction) and all topic chapters (4-11)

Competence

1.3.3 David Lock Associates (DLA) is the editor-in-chief of this document and authors of specific chapters, as identified below. DLA are accredited members of The Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA) and hold IEMA's EIA Quality Mark; this is a not-for-profit membership organisation established to promote best practice standards in environmental management, auditing and assessment. As the premier body in this field, the Institute offers unrivalled ongoing support to environmental professionals and aims to promote sustainability through improved environmental practice and performance. The relevant technical competencies of the authors of each technical assessment are set out in the introduction to the chapter in question.

Approach to Impact Assessment

1.3.4 In line with IEMA best practice, the EIA has been an integral part of the design of the Proposed Development, with the principal aim to reduce the severity of significant adverse environmental effects or even, wherever possible, to remove them through the design process. Such mitigation is referred to as 'embedded' or 'design mitigation'. In assessing the environmental impacts of the Proposed Development, full account has been taken of both the construction and operational/post completion stages.

1.3.5 The outline application and EIA process has included:

- an initial data trawl for site designations;
- environmental work conducted during the selection process of the land uses within the proposal;
- discussions with the landowners;
- study of the relevant Ordnance Survey mapping;
- baseline identification of sensitive receptors and resources;
- liaison with utility providers;
- liaison with the Environment Agency;
- liaison with statutory consultees;
- site visits;
- impact identification;
- liaison with County Council;
- liaison with District Council;
- scoping of the issues to be assessed with the District Council and their advisors;

- liaison with non statutory consultees;
- liaison with stakeholders as defined by the Statement of Community Involvement that forms part of this application
- liaison with Councillors representing residents in Bicester;
- revising mitigation proposals; and
- the identification and reporting of any residual significant effects.

Scoping

1.3.6 An Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Scoping Report was sent to Cherwell District Council (CDC) in September 2020 setting out the proposed approach to EIA. In response, CDC provided a scoping opinion on 11 November 2020 (application number 20/02469/SCOP). These detailed comments have been considered and used to guide the approach of the Environmental Statement.

1.3.7 Where each technical consultant has undertaken consultation specific to their discipline this is included within the relevant technical chapter of the ES.

Pre-Application

1.3.8 A pre-application submission was made to Cherwell District Council in May 2020. (application number 20/01309/PREAPP). This included the submission of an indicative masterplan and early technical information. A number of constructive meetings were held with planning officers and other technical officers as part of the pre-app process (including drainage with OCC and CDC's ecologist). This helped shape the evolution of the proposals and allow discussion of issues arising. CDC's formal written pre-app response was issued on 28 April 2021.

Consultation and Engagement

1.3.9 L&Q Estates have undertaken community consultation and engagement with local stakeholders in parallel to the pre-app process to ensure that all community views were considered in developing the Gavray Drive proposals.

1.3.10 The consultation process began on 15 October 2020 with a meeting of ecology groups and experts. This ecology stakeholder group met three times between October 2020 and February 2021.

1.3.11 Wider public consultation was undertaken at the end of 2020 and continued in early 2021, with a consultation leaflet sent in January 2021 to addresses in Bicester to inform local stakeholders of the Gavray Drive proposals and invite feedback. Further details are set out in the SCI.

Information as Required by the EIA Regulations

Vulnerability to risks of major accidents or disasters

1.3.12 Consideration has been given to any adverse effects of the development arising from its vulnerability to risks of major accidents and or disasters. No such major risks have been identified that are considered likely to cause any significant adverse effects for the topics considered in this ES. No significant adverse effects of the development on the environment deriving from the vulnerability of the development to risks of major accidents and/or disasters which are relevant to the proposed development concerned are anticipated.

Risks to Human Health

1.3.13 No major risks have been identified by the consultant team nor statutory consultees which are considered likely to cause significant adverse effects on human health. Nevertheless, potential effects in relation to health have been considered through the technical disciplines as an integral part of the assessment, and where relevant is reported within individual topic chapters.

Format of the Assessment

1.3.14 The format of the Environmental Statement is set out below:

- a) *Non-Technical Summary*: published separately and free of charge, providing a concise non-technical explanation of the contents and conclusions of the Environmental Statement;
- b) *Environmental Statement Volume 1: Main Text* (this document): setting out the assessment methodology and likely impacts for each topic and setting out proposed mitigation for any impacts identified;
- c) *Environmental Statement Volume 2: Figures and Appendices*: comprising the plans and technical appendices comprising baseline material and technical data that are associated with the relevant chapters and specialist information detailed in Volume 1.

1.3.15 Due to the size of the plans and documents included within the ES, limited paper copies have been submitted to the Council, with the remainder provided in electronic format.

EIA Methodology and Terminology

1.3.16 The significance of particular effects of the Proposed Development is determined by the interaction between the magnitude of those effects and the sensitivity of the receptors affected. Four levels of significance are identified across the ES: "major", "moderate", "minor" and "negligible". Any beneficial effects are noted, as well as adverse ones. Where any temporary, short or medium-term, indirect, secondary or interactive effects are predicted, these too are recorded. All assessments of the significance of effects take account of proposed mitigation measures, although any significant potential effects in the absence of such measures are also identified. The terms "effect" and "impact" are used interchangeably.

Study Area

1.3.17 Study Areas for EIA testing purposes are bespoke to the geographical coverage required for each technical discipline and for most EIA topics are wider than the application site. The extent and nature of study areas is set out in the relevant technical chapter.

Assumptions, Uncertainties and Limitations

Assumptions

1.3.18 There are a number of elements which form part of - or are related to - the Proposed Development where certain assumptions have been made for environmental assessment purposes. These are set out in each topic chapter where relevant.

Uncertainties and Limitations

1.3.19 The EIA considers the likely effects of the Proposed Development using a combination of current knowledge of the Site and its context; and desktop and survey investigations. Requests for information have been made to other parties who may hold relevant data pertinent to the assessment. Appropriate regard has been had to relevant national and local planning policy; and relevant legislation, guidance and best practice.

1.3.20 Every reasonable effort has been made to obtain data concerning the existing baseline conditions and to accurately predict the effects of the Proposed Development. Known deficiencies, or where it has been necessary to make assumptions, are documented within individual topic chapters. For some topics, there are no commonly accepted methodologies for assessing impacts. In these cases, professional judgement and experience have been applied to inform the EIA.

1.3.21 Assumptions adopted are often of importance to environmental assessments. Typically, these assumptions are implicit, being largely dependent upon expert judgement. The approach adopted in the EIA is one of making assumptions explicit wherever possible in order that they may be understood and critically evaluated by external parties. This is particularly true of construction impacts, where assessments are based on broad assumptions made in advance of agreement and approval of specific construction programmes and methods. In such cases, the worst-case scenario has generally been tested.

Parameter Plans

1.3.22 Appendix 1.1 identifies the location of the Application Site. The Site is some 22.49 hectares in extent. References to the Site area within topic chapters and appendices, as well as depictions of the Site on appended plans, may reflect a slight variation from the actual application area. However, the assessments within this EIA are not affected by the slight revisions to the Site boundary that have been made during the pre-application stage.

1.3.23 The spatial elements of the Proposed Development are set out in the Parameter Plans along with detailed access drawings which are the formal plans submitted for approval as part of the OPA. The purpose of the drawings is to provide sufficient spatial information to fix key 'parameters' for an outline application and to provide sufficient detail to allow full consideration of the proposals in their context and is the basis upon which the environmental assessment work has been undertaken.

1.3.24 The plans have evolved over the preparatory period of the application as a result of the following:

- (i) Design evolution in response to more detailed technical knowledge of the site and its surroundings;
- (ii) Results, feedback and suggested mitigation measures arising from the environmental assessments undertaken by the consultant team; and
- (iii) Results and feedback from local stakeholder and public engagement activity.

1.3.25 The environmental assessment has been undertaken based on:

- Land Use Parameter Plan
- Access and Movement Parameter Plan
- Open Spaces Parameter Plan
- Density Parameter Plan; and
- Building Heights Parameter Plan

- Proposed Site Access 1
- Proposed Site Access 2

1.3.26 These plans are reproduced at **Appendix 1.2.**

1.4 STRUCTURE OF THE ES

1.4.1 As noted above, this ES has been compiled by David Lock Associates, drawing together contributions from a number of specialist consultancies as relevant to each topic chapter.

1.4.2 Volume 1 of the ES (this document) is structured as set out below:

Chapter	Topic	Author
Chapter 1	Introduction	David Lock Associates
Chapter 2	The Site and the Proposed Development	David Lock Associates
Chapter 3	Planning Policy Overview	David Lock Associates
Chapter 4	Transport	Markides
Chapter 5	Ecology	EDP
Chapter 6	Cultural Heritage	EDP
Chapter 7	Water Resources	Hydrock
Chapter 8	Landscape and Visual Impact	EDP
Chapter 9	Air Quality	Hydrock
Chapter 10	Noise	Hydrock
Chapter 11	Climate Change	Turleys
Chapter 12	Conclusion	David Lock Associates

1.4.3 The individual topic chapters in Volume 1 (chapters 4 to 11 specifically) are structured as follows:

- **Introduction** – identifying the topic under consideration and setting out the competency of the assessor/author;
- **Relevant Policy** – summarising policy, legislation and guidance relating specifically to the topic under consideration;
- **Assessment Methodology** – description of the scope and method of the assessment with reference to best practice. Description of the extent of the Study Area and data sources. Explanation of the significance criteria including how these have been derived with reference to the interaction between “magnitude” of “impacts” and the “sensitivity” of “receptors” for the purposes of assessing the significance of the effects of the Proposed Development. Including **Assumptions, Uncertainties and Limitations** - records these for each topic and state how they have been addressed within the assessment;
- **Baseline Conditions** – providing a description of the baseline conditions pertinent to that topic for both the current baseline and projected future baseline conditions;
- **Potential Effects** – identifying likely significant effects in the absence of mitigation measures, during both the construction and post-completion stages of the Proposed Development;

- **Mitigation Measures** – proposing any measures which are necessary beyond the measures inherent within the Proposed Development - either 'inbuilt' during the design process, during construction or post-completion - to avoid or reduce any significant potential adverse effects; and
- **Residual Effects** – identifying any residual effects of the Proposed Development either during construction or post-completion, taking account of the mitigation measures proposed and assessing the significance of those residual effects. This section includes a table summarising the assessed effects;
- **Cumulative Effects** – identification of any likely significant cumulative effects arising from the Proposed Development in combination with other defined development proposals.

1.5 AVAILABILITY OF THE DOCUMENT

- 1.5.1 The timetable for consultation on the OPA including the ES will be determined by CDC. Further information on that consultation can be obtained from CDC.
- 1.5.2 The ES will be available to view on the Planning section of the CDC website (www.cherwell.gov.uk).
- 1.5.3 Copies of the ES can be purchased from David Lock Associates at the address below:
- David Lock Associates
50 North Thirteenth Street
Central Milton Keynes
MK9 3BP
Email: mail@davidlock.com
Tel: 01908 649200
- 1.5.4 The ES is priced as follows:
- CD of the full ES: free of charge
 - Hard copy of the Non-Technical Summary: free of charge (downloadable from CDC's website)
 - Hard Copy of ES: £250 (downloadable from CDC's website).
- 1.5.5 Written comment on the Environmental Statement should be made direct to Cherwell District Council in order that comments can be formally lodged and considered as part of CDC's consultation on the outline planning application.