1.0 Introduction

1.1.1 The Environmental Statement (ES) and its associated Non-Technical Summary have been prepared by WYG and a range of other technical specialists on behalf of **Welbeck Strategic Land, C G Fry & Son Ltd and Taylor Wimpey** (hereafter termed the Consortium).

1.1.2 The individual developers will prepare and submit their respective outline planning applications to North Dorset District Council (NDDC) for the proposed development of Gillingham Strategic Site Allocation (SSA). It is envisaged that this ES will be submitted in connection with all outline planning applications. It will act as a co-ordinating document, with the technical evidence that has informed the ES being common to all sites and with the ES considering the environmental effects of the Proposed Development as a whole.

1.1.3 This ES assesses the potential for significant environmental effects arising from the Proposed Development, as described in detail in the Masterplan Framework, November 2017 (MPF). The MPF has been prepared by the Consortium and has been submitted to NDDC for ratification.

1.2 Introduction to the Site

Site Location

1.2.1 The Proposed Development Site covers an area of approximately 95.25 hectares (Ha) and is located to the south of Gillingham. It forms part of a wider development site that is allocated for development, as shown on Figure 1.1, that extends to some 129 Ha.

1.2.2 The Proposed Development Site is controlled by a Consortium of three developers. Figure 1.2 defines the extent of the Proposed Development Site and identifies which developer controls each of the three land parcels.

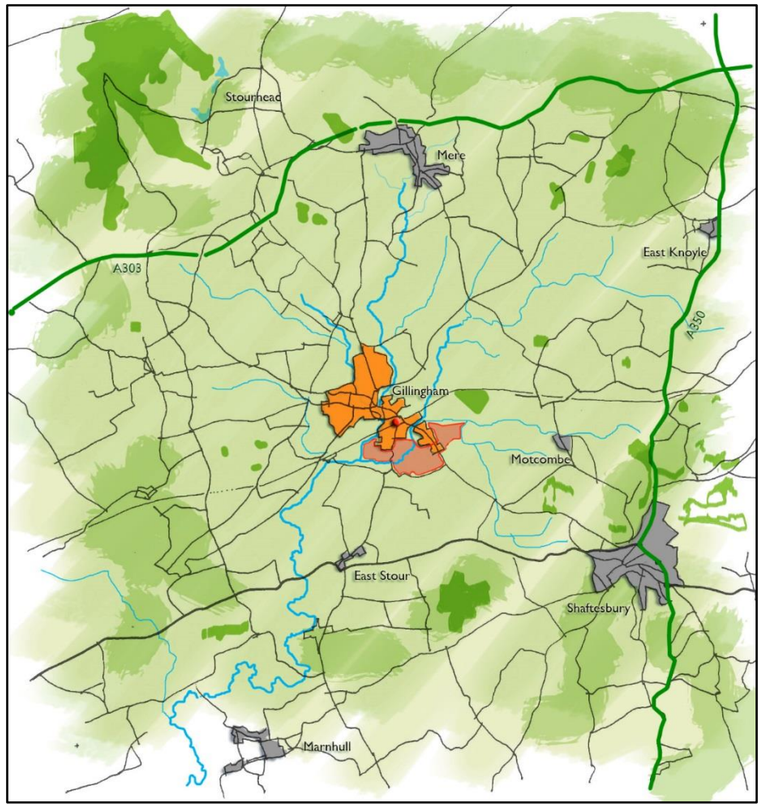


Figure 1.1 - Site location plan

1.2.3 The UK grid reference for the centre of the Site is ST819488.

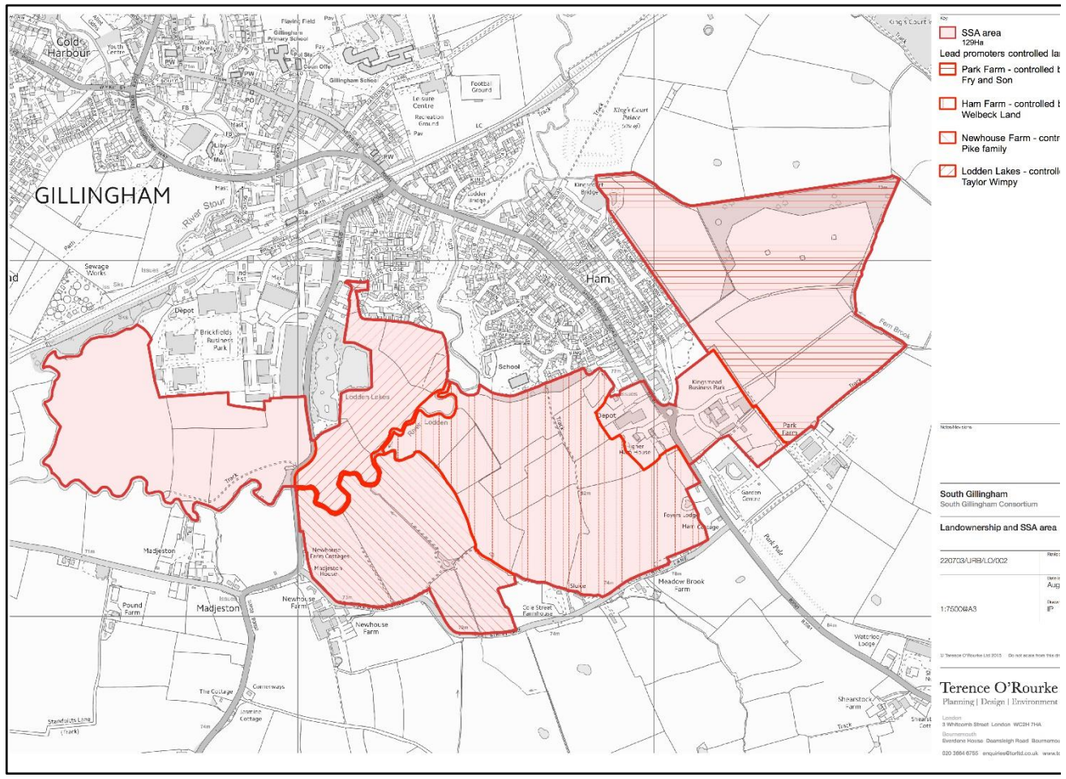


Figure 1.2 - Consortium controlled land

Site Description

1.2.4 As noted above, the entire Strategic Site Allocation (all areas outlined in red on Figure 1.2) covers an area of approximately 129 ha. Of this, the Consortium controls some 95.25 ha of land, which is divided into three areas – these areas are hatched on Figure 1.2. Park Farm, the eastern area is located to the east of Shaftesbury Road. West of Shaftesbury Road lies Ham Farm, the central area. West of Ham Farm lies Newhouse Farm, the western area. To the north of Ham Farm lies the residential area of Ham Common. West of Ham Common runs the River Lodden, with the Lodden Lakes beyond, which form the northern boundary of Newhouse Farm. To the south and west of the site lie agricultural areas including both pasture and arable fields, with hedgerow networks. The northern and eastern boundary of Park Farm comprises Fern Brook, with further agricultural areas beyond.

Site History

1.2.5 The principle of the Southern Extension of Gillingham formed part of the Draft North Dorset Core Strategy that was produced for consultation in March 2010. This was based on the comprehensive report "Assessing the Growth Potential of Gillingham" that had been prepared on behalf of NDDC and Dorset County Council (DCC). The study assessed a number of future growth scenarios for the town, with these informed by the consideration of factors which influence the extent to which growth may be accommodated sustainably in environmental, social and economic terms. The supporting infrastructure required to accommodate growth was also considered along with an assessment of viability and deliverability issues. The availability and delivery of appropriate transport infrastructure was found to be a key determinant of the level of growth that which may be accommodated sustainably.

1.2.6 The study identified the Site as the most suitable option for a sustainable mixed-use extension to Gillingham, with the capacity to sufficiently mitigate any negative effects associated with growth. Concentrating growth to the south of the town was considered to offer the greatest potential for:

- Housing development to be sustainably located;
- Economic development to create employment opportunities for the southern extension and the town as a whole; and
- The provision of supporting infrastructure, including sustainable transport measures, to increase self-containment by integrating the new development into the existing town.

1.2.7 NDDC's vision for Gillingham is set out in the North Dorset Local Plan Part 1 2011-2031 (NDLP). This, along with other relevant planning policies, is outlined in Chapter 5 of this ES.

Overview of the Proposed Development

1.2.8 Outline planning permission is to be sought for a mixed-use sustainable urban extension. The proposed development will include the following elements:

<u>Ham Farm and Newhouse Farm</u>

- 961 market and affordable dwellings;
- A "Principal Street" linking B3081 Shaftesbury Road to New Road;
- Access and a hierarchy of streets;
- A network of pedestrian and cycle connections;
- Formal and informal public open space including recreation facilities;
- Allotments;
- A local centre and other service facilities;
- Extension to St Mary the Virgin Primary School to create a two form entry school;
- Sustainable Urban Drainage System (SuDS);
- Landscaping; and
- Utility and other infrastructure works.

<u>Park Farm</u>

- Up to 634 market and affordable dwellings;
- New 2 form entry primary school;
- Access and a hierarchy of streets;

- A network of pedestrian and cycle connections;
- Formal and informal public open space including recreation facilities
- Allotments;
- Landscaping;
- SuDS; and
- Utility and other infrastructure works associated with the proposed development.

Land east of Lodden Lakes

- 180 market and affordable dwellings;
- Access;
- Landscaping;
- SuDS; and
- Infrastructure.

1.2.9 Further details of the Proposed Development can be found in Chapter 3 of this ES.

1.3 The Applicants

- The applicants for the Proposed Development are Welbeck Strategic Land LLP, C G Fry & Son Ltd and Taylor Wimpey. Their respective contact details are as follows:
- Welbeck Strategic Land, 13 Woodstock Street, London W1C 2AG.
- C G Fry & Son Ltd, Litton Cheney, Dorchester, Dorset, DT2 9AS.
- Taylor Wimpey, 730 Waterside Drive, Aztec West, Almondsbury, Bristol, BS32 4UE.

1.4 Legal Framework for the Environmental Statement

1.4.1 The applicants and WYG determined that the characteristics of the development fall under the following development types within the EIA Regulations:

- Section 10 (b) of Schedule 2 of the EIA Regulations; 'Infrastructure Projects'.

1.4.2 This ES was scoped under The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2011 (hereafter termed the 'EIA Regulations'). The EIA Regulations require that, before consent is granted for certain types of development an EIA must be undertaken. The EIA Regulations set out the types of development which must always be subject to an EIA (Schedule 1 development) and other developments, which will only require assessment if they give rise to significant environmental effects (Schedule 2 developments).

1.4.3 As noted above, this ES was scoped under the 2011 Regulations and has therefore been prepared under the transitional arrangements set out in paragraph 76 (2) (b) of the 2017 Regulations, which came into force on 16 May 2017.

1.4.4 A scoping opinion (to determine the scope of the EIA in respect of Proposed Development) was requested from NDDC on 20th October 2014. The Scoping Report prepared by WYG is contained within Appendix 1.1.

1.4.5 The threshold set out in the Schedule 2 that indicates whether a development is likely to require an EIA is where 'the area of the development exceeds 0.5 hectares'. In this case, the development has an area of approximately 95.25 Ha and it has been determined that the Proposed Development has the potential to give rise to potentially significant environmental effects, so therefore the project is defined as a Schedule 2 development. NDDC's Screening Opinion dated 12 December 2014 is contained within Appendix 1.2.

1.4.6 In order to determine the breadth of the assessment, a scoping process was undertaken by NDDC. This was an informal, collaborative process undertaken in conjunction with the statutory consultees, with the aim of identifying the key topics that needed to be considered as part of the assessment and any particular surveys or investigations that were required as part of the EIA process at an early stage in order to influence the EIA from the outset.

1.4.7 Further information on the informal scoping process undertaken for the EIA is included in Section 2 of this ES. The overall process that has been followed in undertaking this EIA is detailed below:

- Collating existing baseline data for the Site and the surrounding area;
- Identifying features of the existing environment likely to be affected by the Proposed Development;
- Liaison with consultees;
- Undertaking environmental surveys to supplement existing baseline data;
- Identifying the environmental impacts of the Proposed Development;
- Substantiation of the environmental impacts and effects arising from the Proposed Development;
- Providing feedback into the design process;
- Identifying mitigation and enhancement measures; and,
- Reporting the process and assessment findings in an ES report to support the planning submission.

1.5 Structure of the Environmental Statement

1.5.1 In undertaking the EIA, current best practice has been referred to, and in particular the guidance set out in Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR) Environmental Impact Assessment: A Guide to the Procedures (DETR, 2000) and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA), Guidelines for Environmental Impact Assessment, IEMA Perspectives (IEMA, 2004).

1.5.2 The structure of this ES follows the provisions of Schedule 4 of the EIA Regulations:

- A description of the development;
- An outline of the main alternatives studied and reasons for the choice of the Site, taking into account environmental effects;
- A description of the aspects of the environment likely to be significantly affected by the development;
- A description of the likely significant effects of the proposed development on the environment;
- A description of the measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and where possible offset any significant effects on the environment;
- A non-technical summary of the information provided above; and

- An indication of any difficulties encountered by the applicant in making the assessment of environmental effects.

1.5.3 This ES contains the findings and the information of the full EIA, together with the information and data collected during the assessment. The ES comprises the following, as described below:

Non-Technical Summary

1.5.4 This is a summary of the ES in a non-technical language; it presents the existing Site conditions, provides a description of the scheme and details the predicted environmental effects of the proposals.

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.5.5 Presents the background to the proposed development and provides an overview of the assessment process.

Chapter 2: Environmental Impact Assessment Approach

1.5.6 Describes the approach followed in undertaking the EIA, including an outline of the approach followed in undertaking the assessments and details of the consultation process.

Chapter 3: Description of Proposed Development

1.5.7 Outlines the main characteristics of the Proposed Development that have been assessed as part of the EIA, covering both the construction and operational phases of the development.

Chapter 4: Scheme Development and Alternatives Considered

1.5.8 Outline of the main alternatives studied and reasons for the choice of the development Site, taking into account environmental effects.

Chapter 5: Planning Policy Context

1.5.9 Outline of the main planning policy drivers and context for the proposed development.

Chapters 6-15: Impact Assessment and Mitigation

1.5.10 Describes the baseline conditions for various environmental topics and provides an assessment of significant environmental effects taking into account mitigation measures to be implemented. The following topics have been assessed:

- Landscape and Visual Impact;
- Ecology;
- Transport and Access;
- Flood Risk and Drainage;
- Noise and Vibration;
- Air Quality;
- Cultural Heritage;
- Ground Conditions;
- Socio-Economics; and
- Energy.

1.5.11 Each environmental topic listed above is reported in the same format for ease of comparison (outlined below), except in cases where topics have been scoped out of the assessment and this is explained in the relevant chapters where appropriate.

- Introduction;
- Methodology and Scope;
- Baseline Environment;
- Mitigation Within the Submitted Design;
- Potential Environmental Effects of the Scheme;
- Additional Mitigation, Compensation and Enhancement Measures;
- Assessment Summary and Residual Environmental Effects; and
- References.

Chapter 16: Conclusion

1.5.12 Outline of the main conclusions drawn by the assessment including identification of any residual significant effects and a consideration of the potential for secondary, cumulative and synergistic effects. The chapter will also set out all mitigation commitments, including the roles and responsibilities for their delivery and implementation and means by which their effectiveness can be monitored.

1.6 Project Team

1.6.1 The EIA project team has been led by consultants WYG with input from specialists within WYG and other external consultants, the input into the ES from the project team is set out in Table 1.1 below:

Role / Topic	Author
EIA Management and Co-ordination	WYG
Chapters 1 to 5	WYG
Landscape and Visual Impact	Terence O'Rourke
Ecology	WYG
Transport and Access	i-Transport
Flood Risk and Drainage	Awcock Ward Partnership
Utilities	WYG
Foul Drainage	WYG
Noise and Vibration	WYG

Role / Topic	Author
Air Quality	WYG
Cultural Heritage	WYG
Ground Conditions	Ruddlesden Geotechnical
Socio-Economics	WYG
Energy	WYG
Conclusions and Cumulative Assessment	WYG
Non-Technical Summary	WYG

Table 1.1 Project Team

1.7 References

Department of the Environment Transport and the Regions (DETR), 2000. Environmental Impact Assessment: A Guide to the Procedures (DETR).

Her Majesty's Stationery Office (HMSO), 2011. The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2011 (SI 1824).