



Our Ref: SC/lr
Email: simon.coles@wyg.com

Date: 20 October 2014

Mr R Lennis
North Dorset District Council
Salisbury Road
Blandford Forum
Dorset
DT11 7LL

Dear Mr Lennis

**LAND SOUTH OF GILLINGHAM: PROPOSED MIXED-USE SUSTAINABLE URBAN EXTENSION
REGULATION 13 OF THE TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT
ASSESSMENT) (ENGLAND AND WALES) REGULATIONS 2011 AS AMENDED (S.I. 2011/1824)
("THE REGULATIONS")
REQUEST FOR SCOPING OPINION**

This letter is submitted on behalf of the following landowners and site promoters in connection with the above who are referred to hereafter as "the consortium":

- Wellbeck Land on behalf of Ham Farm owners
- Taylor Wimpey on behalf of land to the east of Lodden Lakes owners
- C. G. Fry & Son Ltd on behalf of Park Farm owners
- Nigel Jones on behalf of Newhouse Farm owners.

The purpose of this letter is to request the Council's formal opinion on the scope of an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) to be submitted in connection with a single outline planning application for the comprehensive development of land to the south of Gillingham, in accordance with Policy 21 of the draft North Dorset Local Plan (draft LP).

The land to which this scoping opinion request relates is identified by the red line on the attached plan (Scoping Red Line SSARL/003), which is referred to in this letter as "the site". This scoping opinion request excludes land outside the control of the above parties, including the southern extension to Brickfields Business Park and land currently identified in the draft LP for a local centre.

Part of the site to the east of Lodden Lakes is allocated in Policy 2.4 (Settlement Allocations) of the adopted North Dorset District-Wide Local Plan (2003) and is subject to a current planning application by Taylor Wimpey (ref no 2/2014/0968/OUT). It is anticipated that this part of the site will come forward in advance of the wider Gillingham Strategic Site Allocation (SSA) in the draft LP, in which case it will be taken into account in the EIA as part of the assessment of cumulative effects.





Proposed Development

The proposed development will include the following elements, in accordance with Policy 21 of the draft LP:

- Approximately 1,800 market and affordable dwellings
- A local centre and other facilities
- A "Principal Street" linking B3081 Shaftesbury Road and 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
- Landscaping
- Sustainable Urban Drainage System (SUDS)
- On/off-site utility and other infrastructure works associated with the proposed development.

The local centre together with the facilities referred to by Policy 21 (z) of the draft LP (where these can be justified by objective evidence) will be delivered on land controlled by the consortium.

The proposed development is considered to fall within part 10(b) Infrastructure Projects of Schedule 2 of the Regulations. Part 10 (b) refers to "urban development projects" where sites are over 0.5 ha. For Schedule 2 developments, the Regulations require that an EIA be undertaken where the development is *"likely to have significant effects on the environment by virtue of its nature, size or location."*

The consortium is preparing to submit an outline planning application for the proposed development. The consortium considers that it is likely that the proposed development would be screened positively by the Council under the Regulations by virtue of the characteristics of the site and its surrounding area and the scale and nature of the proposed development. Accordingly, the consortium has decided to proceed straight to formal scoping of the Environmental Statement (ES) under the Regulations.

The ES would include consideration of other planning permissions and Development Plan allocations for major development as part of an assessment of cumulative effects. These will be agreed in advance with the Council.

ES Scoping

In terms of scoping the Environmental Statement (ES), we request that the following is taken into account:

Landscape & Visual

The site is varied in terms of its self-containment and visibility in terms of short views from the immediately surrounding urban/rural area and long views. Where long views of the site are possible, the layout will be able to mitigate environmental effects through the location and design of





development. However, it is considered that the landscape and visual effects of the development are likely to require assessment as part of the ES.

Bio-diversity

Phase 1 bio-diversity surveys completed to date indicate that protected species occur within the site. It is considered that the favourable conservation status of any species or its habitat will not be adversely affected by development and that where required, appropriate mitigation can be delivered within the site. Furthermore, the proposal will not affect any nationally designated geological or ecological sites or have significant impacts on the protection of soils. However, it is considered that ecological impacts (and appropriate mitigation to address any significant impacts) should be appropriately assessed in the ES by virtue of the scale of the proposed development and the potential effect on protected species.

Flood Risk and Drainage

Development will be confined to areas of lower flood risk (Flood Zone 1). SUDS will be incorporated within the scheme. It is envisaged that the sequential and exception tests would be satisfied. However, it is considered that the associated environmental effects of development on flood risk and drainage should be assessed through the ES.

Transportation

The transportation effects of the proposed development have been the subject of detailed survey, assessment and modelling. Discussions have also been held with Dorset County Council as highway authority. The traffic flow data would form the basis for assessing the air/noise and light effects of the development if required.

However, it is considered appropriate to assess the transportation-related effects of proposed development in the ES given its scale and nature.

Air/Noise

It is considered that an ES chapter would be required to assess the effects of the development on air/noise in conjunction with the transportation chapter. This would include construction and development scenarios.

Socio-Economic

It is considered that the socio-economic effects of the proposed development justify consideration in the ES by virtue of the scale and nature of Gillingham and the proposed development. The following matters could potentially be included in the assessment:

- Construction phasing
- Affordable housing
- Education
- Public open space
- Secure by design
- Job creation
- Economic impacts on the town.





Trees and Hedgerows

All trees and hedgerows will be retained where possible together with appropriate development buffers. Any loss of hedgerows for example to create linkages, can be mitigated within the development site. Significant tree planting is proposed to mitigate significant environmental effects associated with the landscape and visual impact of development. However, in view of the scale and nature of the proposed development, it is considered that the potential for significant effects on hedgerows and trees should be assessed in the ES.

Agricultural Land Quality

The majority of the development parcels within the site comprise semi-improved grass land used for agricultural purposes. It is understood that the majority of the agricultural land is Grade 4 - poor quality agricultural land. It is considered that the effect on poor quality agricultural land would not be so significant as to justify consideration in an ES chapter but could be addressed within the Planning Statement.

Heritage

There are no designated or non-designated cultural heritage assets within the site. Environmental effects on the Kings Court Palace Scheduled Ancient Monument can be mitigated by through an appropriate development layout and buffer incorporating landscaping. Heritage effects should not therefore require assessment through an ES chapter and will be addressed in a standalone desk-based assessment.

Scope of Application Bundle

In providing the opinion, we should be grateful if the Council would take into account the following list of documents that, subject to confirmation by the Council, could be submitted in connection with an outline planning application:

- Planning application forms/certificates etc
- Site Location Plan
- Masterplan Framework (that would have been subject to public consultation and considered by the Council prior to submission)
- Design & Access Statement, including a co-ordinated framework for the layout and design treatment of relevant development parcels
- Planning Statement
- ES including the following chapters:
 - Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment
 - Bio-diversity including Habitat Management Plan
 - Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Assessment/Strategy
 - Transportation Assessment
 - Air/noise
 - Socio-economic Assessment
 - Trees and hedgerows
- Lighting assessment





- Draft Travel Plan
- Utilities and sewerage assessment
- Ground Investigation Survey including land contamination assessment
- Heritage and archaeological desk-based assessment
- Agricultural land assessment (forming part of the Planning Statement)
- Statement of Community Involvement
- Draft S106 Agreement.

We should welcome an opportunity to discuss this with officers prior to issuing a formal scoping opinion and we look forward to receiving the opinion within five weeks of the date of this letter, in accordance with paragraph 13 (4) of the Regulations.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'S. Coles', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Simon Coles
Director
For and on behalf of **WYG**

