

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

1.1.1 This Environmental Statement (ES) and Non-Technical Summary (NTS) accompanies an outline planning application ('the Application') by Barwood Development Securities Ltd ('Barwood Land') and the North West Thornbury Landowners Consortium (jointly 'the Applicants') submitted to South Gloucestershire Council ('SGC') for a residential-led development at Thornbury.

1.1.2 A Site Boundary Plan has been submitted with this statement (Figure 1.1) showing the extent of the 'Project Site'. This area extends to 35.97 hectares (ha).

1.1.3 The application proposals are for outline planning permission with all matters except vehicular access reserved, for:

- Erection of up to ~~630~~595 dwellings (Use Classes C3);
- A primary school (Use Class D1);
- Up to 700m² for a Retail and Community Hub (Use Classes A1, A2, D1);
- A network of open spaces including parkland, footpaths, allotments, landscaping and areas for informal recreation;
- New roads, a sustainable travel link (including a bus link), parking areas, accesses and paths; and
- ~~and~~ the installation of services and drainage infrastructure.

1.1.4 The above description constitutes the 'project' which has been the subject of the EIA; and is referred to hereon after as 'the Proposed Development'.

1.1.5 This ES reports the findings of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (the 'EIA Regulations').

1.2 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA)

1.2.1 EIA is governed by the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations. The latest EIA Regulations, the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 came into force on 16th May 2017 (the "2017 EIA Regulations").

- 1.2.2 EIA is a systematic and objective process through which the likely significant environmental effects of a project can be identified, assessed and, wherever possible, avoided or mitigated. EIA aims to improve the environmental design of a development scheme and provide decision-makers with sufficient information about the environmental impacts of a proposal.
- 1.2.3 An ES accompanies an application for planning permission, providing environmental information about the scheme, including a description of the development, its predicted environmental impacts and the measures intended to mitigate any adverse impacts. It is provided to allow a wider public understanding of the environmental effects of the project.
- 1.2.4 EIA follows an iterative process that has the following stages:
- Screening is the first stage of the EIA process where the relevant authority (local planning authority or the Secretary of State) decides if EIA is required.
 - Once it has been agreed that EIA is required for the project, scoping is undertaken to define what should be assessed and how. This is done in partnership between the applicant, the local planning authority and statutory consultees (including the Environment Agency, Heritage England, Natural England and Highways England).
 - With the scope of the EIA set, relevant information on the environmental baseline conditions is collected. This information is then used initially to understand the dynamics of the likely environmental effects and to influence the design of the project in order to avoid and/or minimise potentially significant adverse environmental effects. It is also at this stage that potential environmental enhancements are identified.
 - The formal assessment stage is then undertaken of the design parameters (as set out in Chapter 3 of this ES) to define the likely significant environmental effects of the project.
 - Any potential significant adverse effects that are identified during the formal assessment stage are then reviewed against the design to consider whether alterations could be made to avoid or reduce the effect. Should this occur the stage is repeated.
 - Where potential significant adverse effects cannot be avoided or reduced through alterations to the design itself, mitigation measures are considered. Monitoring may also be considered to measure the actual significance of the effect during and after construction, and allow management of mitigation where appropriate.
- 1.2.5 The ES reports on the outcome of the EIA process and details the assessment that has been undertaken. Once the EIA is completed, the ES is submitted to the local planning authority with the planning application.

1.3 EIA SCREENING

- 1.3.1 The 2017 EIA Regulations set out the types of development which must always be subject to an EIA (Schedule 1 development) and other developments that will only require assessment if they could potentially give rise to significant environmental effects (Schedule 2 developments).
- 1.3.2 Schedule 3 of the 2017 EIA Regulations provides guidance and thresholds to help to decide whether EIA is required for a Schedule 2 development. Schedule 2 developments require EIA if they are likely to have significant effects on the environment by virtue of their nature, location and the characteristics of the potential impacts.
- 1.3.3 Due to the size of the Project Site (35.97ha) and the nature of the Proposed Development, the proposal falls within Schedule 2 Section 10(b) of the 2017 EIA Regulations as an *"Urban development project"* in which *"the development includes more than 150 dwellings"* and *"the overall area of the development exceeds 5 hectares"*. It also has the potential to give rise to significant environmental effects. A formal EIA Screening Request was therefore not requested, and the Applicants elected to proceed directly to Scoping.

1.4 STRUCTURE OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT

- 1.4.1 This ES comprises a series of studies on those aspects of the environment which have been identified as likely to be 'significantly' affected by the Proposed Development (the 'technical chapters'). These technical chapters are supported with figures and technical appendices.
- 1.4.2 This ES is structured as follows:
- **Volume 1: Main Document (this document)** – provides the full text of the ES along with associated figures and tables of relevance;
 - **Volume 2: Technical Appendices** – contains all technical surveys, reports and supporting documents referred to in the main text of Volume 1; and
 - **Non-Technical Summary** – a summary of the EIA, the likely significant effects of the proposed development, appropriate mitigation measures and any anticipated residual effects.
- 1.4.3 This document is Volume 1 of the ES and comprises a total of 15 Chapters. For ease of reference, those figures and tables of relevance to interpretation of the ES are provided within the text where possible, or at the end of chapters. Where this is not possible, supporting material is provided within Volume 2 'Technical Appendices'. Table 1.1 below sets out the structure of this Volume in further detail.

Table 1.1 Structure of the ES Main Report

Chapter Number	Chapter Name	Consultant Author
1	Introduction	Savills
2	The Project Site and its Setting	Savills
3	The Project to be Assessed	Savills
4	Alternatives	Savills
5	EIA Approach	Savills
6	Socio-Economics	Savills
7	Archaeology and Built Heritage	BSA Heritage
8	Water Environment	PBA
9	Traffic and Transport	PBA
10	Noise and Vibration	PBA
11	Air Quality	PBA
12	Ecology	EAD Ecology
13	Landscape and Visual	Richards Partnership
14	Agricultural Land	Kernon Countryside Consultants
15	Summary of Proposed Mitigation and Monitoring	Savills

- 1.4.4 Chapter 2 provides an overview of the Project Site, its location and physical characteristics, and Chapter 3 goes on to provide a detailed description of the Proposed Development.
- 1.4.5 Chapter 4 identifies the alternative development options considered by the Applicants and the environmental considerations that influenced the design of the scheme. Chapter 5 provides a review of the EIA process and a description of the scope and methodology employed in the EIA.
- 1.4.6 Chapters 6 to 14 comprise the main element of EIA work with a series of environmental studies undertaken by specialists engaged by the Applicants.
- 1.4.7 Chapter 15 draws together the residual impacts of the proposal after taking mitigation into account. This chapter will not provide a summary of the ES, as this is presented in the NTS.
- 1.4.8 Where appropriate, detailed information or baseline studies are presented in the Technical Appendices of the Environmental Statement (Volume 2).

1.4.9 The NTS provides a summary in plain English of the ES, identifying sensitive receptors, describing the proposal, mitigation measures, and the predicted environmental impacts.

1.5 THE PROJECT TEAM

1.5.1 The ES has been prepared by Savills in conjunction with the wider project team. Those working on the project design, the EIA of the scheme and the wider planning application submission, together with the tasks and specialist issues for which each is responsible, are set out below:

- Savills is the planning consultant preparing the application and has provided planning advice and technical assessment of baseline conditions and environmental effects with regards to Society and Economic Impacts. Savills has co-ordinated and prepared the EIA;
- Barton Willmore is the consultancy undertaking the masterplanning and urban design approach to the proposals.
- Peter Brett Associates (PBA) has provided technical assessment of baseline conditions and environmental effects with regard to Traffic and Transport, Water Environment, Ground Conditions, Climate Change, Noise and Vibration and Air Quality; and
- Richards Partnership has provided technical assessment of baseline conditions and environmental effects with regard to Landscape and Visual Amenity;
- BSA Heritage has provided technical assessment of baseline conditions and environmental effects with regard to Archaeology and Built Heritage;
- EAD has provided technical assessment of baseline conditions and environmental effects with regard to Ecology; and
- Kernon Countryside Consultants has provided technical assessment and environmental effects with regard to Agricultural Land.

1.5.2 A Statement of Expertise/Competence is provided at Technical Appendix 1.1.

1.6 THE PLANNING SUBMISSION

1.6.1 A number of documents, drawings and plans have been prepared to accompany the planning application and inform the EIA. Key elements of this material are incorporated within the Appendices of this ES and reference is made within the relevant ES Chapter where applicable.

1.6.2 In conjunction with this ES, the following documents have been submitted in support of the planning application:

- Planning Statement;
- Design and Access Statement;
- Affordable Housing Statement;
- Energy Statement;
- Transport Assessment;

- Framework Travel Plan;
- Sustainability Statement;
- Draft Heads of Terms;
- Statement of Community Engagement; and
- Combined Phase 1 and 2 Ground Conditions Assessment.

1.7 CONSULTATION

1.7.1 This ES should be made available by SGC for public viewing during normal office hours. For details of where it can be viewed and the times that it is available, SGC's Development Management Department can be contacted by:

- Telephone: 01454 868004
- Email: planningsupport@southglos.gov.uk

1.7.2 The ES and planning application documents may also be available via SGC's website once the planning application has been registered.

<http://www.southglos.gov.uk/environment-and-planning/search-planning-applications/>

1.7.3 Hard copies of the complete ES can be purchased from Savills at a cost of £400.00, or individual sections can be supplied by arrangement. The ES may also be purchased on CD at a cost of £5.00. The NTS can be obtained free of cost.

1.7.4 For copies of any of the above, please contact Savills at the following address:

Savills
Embassy House
Queens Avenue
Bristol
BS8 1SB
0117 910 2200

1.7.5 Comments on the planning application should be forwarded to SGC's Development Management Department located at:

South Gloucestershire Council
Council Offices
Badminton Road
Yate
Bristol
BS37 5AF