

EIA Screening Opinion: Hawke Ridge Business Park, Westbury BA13 4LD

Proposal: Erection of: (i) 1 No. retail convenience store (Class E), 3 No. flexible retail units (Class E), and roadside drive through unit (sui generis); (ii) a 64-bed care home (Class C2); and (iii) approximately 275 No. residential dwellings (Class C3) with associated access, green and blue infrastructure works.

Full statement of reasons as required by 5(5)(a) of the 2017 EIA Regulations including conclusions on likelihood of significant environmental effects.**1.0 The Project**

The Project is for the following: (i) 1 No. retail convenience store (Class E), 3 No. flexible retail units (Class E), and roadside drive through unit (sui generis); (ii) a 64-bed care home (Class C2); and (iii) approximately 275 No. residential dwellings (Class C3) with associated access, green and blue infrastructure works.

The proposed non-residential floor space is as follows:

- Total retail (Class E): approximately: 750 sqm (GIA)
- Total nursing home (Class C2): approximately 3,000 sqm (GIA)

2.0 Regulations and Baseline

This screening has considered the criteria set out in Schedule 3 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (the 2017 Regulations). The proposed development falls within paragraph 10(b) *Urban Development Projects* of Schedule 2 to the 2017 Regulations. The baseline for the purposes of the EIA Screening Direction is that the site is a strategic employment allocation in the adopted Wiltshire Core Strategy (WCS) for a mix of B class employment uses under Core Policies 2 and 32. However, the site remains vacant.

3.0 Main Issues**(i) Natural Resources**

The nature of the proposals would not result in any changes to the physical topography of the area, would not involve the extraction of any minerals or other scarce natural resources from the site nor would they impact on any other nearby resources. Whilst the project is adjacent to the Bitham Brook the scale and nature of the project would not have a negative impact on the watercourse. Given this, there will not be likely significant effects that indicate that the Project is EIA development in terms of natural resources.

(ii) Waste

Whilst the project will generate solid waste during both its construction and operation, the project will minimise and manage any construction waste through an established Construction Environmental Management Plan and an agreed Waste Management Plan for the construction phase of the project. In addition, soils excavated during the development of the site and the

remediation process will be managed through the implementation of a soils/materials management strategy to ensure treatment and re use as required to minimise offsite disposal and ensure appropriate disposal if required. The scale and nature of the waste generated by the project would therefore mean a significant environmental effect would not be likely.

(iii) Pollution and Nuisances

Air Quality

The designated Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) in Westbury is noted. However, based on experience of other sites in Westbury, this is not considered to be high risk planning issue. Predicated Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) data will be provided to inform an Air Quality Assessment (AQA) that will be included in the application submission. Based on work previously undertaken for the application site, and a review of recently determined planning applications in the vicinity of the application site, a significant environmental effect would not be likely.

Noise and Vibration

There is some potential for noise and vibration effects to take place during the construction period, but these can be avoided and reduced through best practice and set out in an agreed Construction Environmental Management Plan. There would be minimal noise and vibration impacts on receptors during the operational life of the development given its predominate residential use combined with measures proposed to minimise noise emissions associated with ventilation and extract plant associated with the proposed non-residential development. Therefore, a significant environmental effect would not be likely.

Contamination

There is no evidence of contamination present within the soil and groundwater. A significant environmental effect would not be likely through adherence to and development of appropriate remedial measures.

(iv) Population and Human Health

See above comments with respect to pollution and nuisances. The project would not increase the risk of accidents, nor would there be any risk to human health during the construction and operational phases of the project. Given this, no significant environmental effects on population and human health would be likely.

(v) Water Resources

In terms of flooding, the majority of The Site falls within Flood Zone 1 on the Environment Agency's Flood Map for Planning with only the areas immediately adjacent to the Bitham Brook in Flood Zones 2 and 3. The Wiltshire Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) viewer shows the site to be at negligible groundwater flood risk, The Wiltshire SFRA viewer also shows most of the site to be at low risk of being inundated in the event of reservoir failure.

Areas of the site are subject to medium - high surface water flood risk, particularly around Bitham

Brook and its surroundings to the east. However, the majority of the areas at risk of flooding are at risk of flooding from the surface water flows generated within the site due to rainfall on the site itself. With the implementation of a new sustainable surface water drainage system, which attenuates the flows and discharges at a limited rate, the generated surface water flooding will be reduced. In limited instances, flows arise from off-site sources. In this case, these flows will be re-routed around the development, utilising swales/ditches/bunds to ensure no flood risk is posed to the development.

Product 4 data received from the Environment Agency has been analysed providing definitive site information on fluvial and surface water constraints to factor into the proposed design. A Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) will be submitted to accompany the application.

On site attenuation will be designed and integrated into the scheme's green and blue infrastructure to comply with the National SuDs Guidance (2025) and will make explicit provision for climate change allowances. The capacity of the existing foul drainage system will also be assessed in consultation with Wessex Water.

In accordance with Paragraph 27 of the Flood Risk and Coastal Change Planning Practice Guidance, a flood risk sequential test is unlikely to be necessary, as the site is at low risk of flooding from all other sources apart from surface water. Mitigation measures will be detailed in the FRA to ensure that occupiers and users remain safe from current and future surface water flood risks.

Given the above there will not be likely significant effects that indicate that the Project is EIA development in terms of all types of flood risk both on site and elsewhere within the catchment.

(vi) Biodiversity (species and habitats)

The Site is located within the Bath and Bradford on Avon Bats Special Area of Conservation ('SAC') consultation zone. The Trowbridge and Westbury Bat Mitigation Strategy (TWBMS) SPD is applicable to the site. Part of the site is located in the 'red' consultation zone due to the proximity of the Clanger Wood SSSI to the east.

A pre-application enquiry with Natural England has confirmed that advance planted buffers that were installed pursuant to the implemented outline planning permission can be included as 'proposed mitigation', and that an onsite Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) will be required as part of a strategic mitigation strategy to be considered alongside the residential proposals planned for the Glenmore Farm and Land off Storridge Road sites to mitigate the potential for recreational pressure on the Clanger Wood SSSI that will include significant lighting and vegetation buffers to the existing and advanced planting vegetation across the site has already been identified as key commuting and foraging habitat for bats across the site and wider landscape through seasonal bat static monitoring and nighttime walkover survey effort.

Seasonal bat surveys will be finalised by the end of July 2026. The application will be supported

by: a Landscape and Ecology Parameter Plan; an Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA); a Lighting Assessment; a shadow Habitat Regulation Assessment (sHRA); and a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Report and Metric.

In the event that planning permission is granted it is expected that pre-commencement planning conditions secure the following: a Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP); a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP); and a Landscape Ecological Management Plan (LEMP).

It is anticipated that BNG will be met on site but that it may be necessary to purchase BNG water credits.

On that basis potential impacts to the protected bat population would be avoided by the provision of dark perimeter buffers, and the provision of an onsite SANG designed to specification that has been agreed with Natural England, it is concluded that proposal will not result in significant effects that would indicate that the Project is EIA development in terms of biodiversity.

(vii) Landscape and Visual

The site is not subject to any national or local landscape designations. The site has been partially developed through the installation of access and drainage infrastructure. It also benefits from a planning fallback position for large footprint employment units established under the allocation and extant outline planning permission. There are also two unimplemented reserved matters approvals for new employment buildings on part of the site, as documented in the planning history in the planning covering letter.

A Landscape and Visual Appraisal has been undertaken to inform a landscape-led masterplan. The LVA has identified likely landscape and visual receptors. Receptor sensitivities note the values associated with the various designations with moderation relating to the site's planning policy status for a strategic employment allocation as a detracting element.

Given the semi-rural location of the site, a landscape-led design approach will be proposed and informed by the LVA and acknowledgement of site-specific constraints. The DAS will demonstrate compliance with the Council's Design Guide SPD (2023) and ensure the creation of a distinctive sense of place.

The emerging design proposals development have iterated through the pre-application processes with the Council, statutory consultees and Natural England and respond to the planning policy and guidance context. Potential adverse landscape and visual impacts can be minimised by the application of best-practice place-making in respect of: building heights; roofscape; and the sensitive use of high-quality materials. Opportunities for enhancement are being maximised through the formulation of a high-quality landscape strategy including: new tree planting; onsite SANG provision; Public Open Space provision; and integrated green and blue infrastructure.

On this basis there are not likely to be significant effects that indicate that the Project is EIA development in terms of landscape or visual matters.

(viii) Cultural Heritage / Archaeology

A baseline Heritage and Archaeology Statement and preliminary impact assessment has been undertaken to inform development of the masterplan. This has identified all designated and non-designated heritage assets which are potentially receptors of effects from the proposed development, including built heritage and buried archaeological remains, the likely level of effects and potential mitigation measures.

The grade II listed Hawkeridge Farmhouse and its associated ancillary outbuildings, Hawkeridge Barn, is located on Mill Lane between Parcels A and B. Controlling the impact of the proposal upon the setting of the grade II listed farmhouse is an acknowledged constraint has been factored into the design development process, which makes explicit provision of perimeter buffer and landscape planting around the curtilage of the farmhouse. It is also noted that the employment development plan allocation and associated planning history constitutes a planning fallback position in respect of the impact upon the setting of the grade II listed farmhouse.

The Heritage and Archaeology Statement found that a scheme of landscape planting proposed for the previously approved business park has been implemented which will considerably mitigate the effects of future development upon the setting of the farmhouse, but there would be residual adverse effects to significance at the lower end of the scale of less than substantial harm. In EIA terms, these effects are considered to represent a minor adverse impact to an asset of medium sensitivity and therefore likely to result in slight adverse significance of effects. Further mitigation measures, including retaining and/or increasing the buffer zones between built form and the listed building previously agreed for the business park consent and provision of suitable material and colour palettes and designs for the buildings in the proximate setting of the farmhouse would reduce the effects still further. The development is therefore considered unlikely to have significant effects upon built heritage.

In terms of Archaeology, a review of the previous archaeological work within the application site and more recent work within its environs is included in the baseline Heritage and Archaeology Statement. This confirms that the results of the previous site investigations remain valid, and that there is an area of recognised potential for buried remains of the medieval period in the northeast of the site. These remains which are considered to represent a low sensitivity receptor, have previously been identified for further investigation by archaeological watching brief as a condition attached to the extant business park consent. Slight adjustments to the previously agreed area of the watching brief have been proposed based upon examination of cartographic sources, and this investigation could be secured through the imposition of a planning condition mirroring that attached to the 2014 business park consent. After recording of the archaeological remains, which are of low sensitivity, the effects are considered likely to be neutral, with the physical loss of low sensitivity remains offset by the increased knowledge and understanding of the archaeological

resource. The development is therefore considered unlikely to have significant effects upon archaeological heritage assets.

The application will be supported by a Heritage and Archaeology Statement that will provide a baseline assessment of the cultural heritage within the site and its environs, and a heritage and archaeological impact assessment.

It is considered that there will not be likely significant effects that indicate that the Project is EIA development in terms of heritage or archaeology.

(ix) Transport and Access

The Council and Highway Authority have highlighted non-car accessibility in pre-application advice commenting that the active travel mitigation strategy is reliant upon the future delivery of the Glenmore Farm masterplan, which provides an active travel link to Westbury that the proposal can connect into (NB. it is understood that a reserved matters application in preparation and will be submitted in Q2/Q3 2026).

Further off-site mitigation to enhance the walking route to the Westbury town centre via Slag Lane will also form part of the proposals. It should also be noted that there is regular hourly bus service to Warminster and Bath with potential funding that may extend its hours of operation to the evening. The bus stops in both directions are within the recommended 400m distance from the site.

It is noted that the traffic generation impact of the proposals would have less transport impact than the extant employment permission, which constitutes a highways fallback position. The applicant's transport consultant has opined that the proposal would not have a significant impact on recreation routes, and the accessibility of facilities and services nor are any of those routes particularly susceptible to congestion or other environmental issues.

Whilst there is the possibility of some short-term, localised disruption to routes during the construction phase, including due to the presence of construction traffic, this could be mitigated through the implementation of a Construction Traffic Management Plan.

The application proposal will be supported by Transport Assessment and a Framework Travel Plan to promote non-car travel.

Given this, the scale and nature of the project, transport and access proposals would not lead to significant effects that would indicate that the Project is EIA development.

(x) Land Stability and Climate

No issues have been identified with respect to land stability and the site is not susceptible to any extreme climatic or geological conditions. The scheme is being designed with a commitment to a fabric first approach that utilises sustainable construction methods to reduce energy consumption

and operational carbon emissions for all plots. This will be achieved through maximising the use of sustainable materials and cutting embodied emissions, minimising waste and increasing recycling, conserving water resources, incorporating green and blue infrastructure and sustainable drainage, factoring in climate change and sustainable travel opportunities. Given this we consider there will not be likely significant effects that indicate that the Project is EIA development in terms of and stability and climate change.

(xi) Socio-economic Impacts

The provision of new housing in the context of the Council's persistent inability to demonstrate a 5-year housing land supply, the provision of affordable housing and a care home to meet local needs, the provision new convenience retail space that will need local needs existing and proposed households, and local businesses at the West Wilts Trading Estate, will deliver significant social and economic benefits its operational phase. There will also be local economic benefits during the construction phase in terms direct employment and training opportunities, and support for the local supply chain

The Project will mitigate the impact upon social infrastructure in terms of s.106 payments in respect of education (subject to need being demonstrated) and CIL payments for reinvestment in local infrastructure.

The project will be supported by an Economic Development Benefits Report that will quantify the potential economic development benefits during construction and operational phases of the Project.

There will not be likely significant effects that indicate that the Project is EIA development in terms of socio-economic impacts.

(xii) Cumulative Effects

The potential for cumulative impacts, in association with the permitted residential proposals at Glenmore Farm, and future proposed development at Land off Storridge Road, upon the Clanger Wood SSI have been discussed with Natural England. This in turn has informed the provision of an on site SANG.

Cumulative impacts relating to other disciplines including transport and landscape have also been taken into consideration in the formation of the application proposals.

There will not be likely significant effects that indicate that the Project is EIA development in terms of cumulative impact.

(xiii) Transboundary Effects

The scale and location of the Project wholly within Wiltshire Council's administrative boundary is such that there will not be any significant effects that indicate that the Project is EIA development in terms of transboundary effects.

4.0 Conclusions

For the reasons set out above, we conclude that in the circumstances of this case, there are unlikely to be significant effects. As such, the Project is not considered to be EIA Development for the purposes of regulation 5(2)(b) of the EIA Regulations. On this basis we respectfully request that this opinion is confirmed by the Council.

Is an Environmental Statement required? No.