

Our ref: SMD/2021/0584
Your ref: STMQ3056

12 October 2021

Chloe Patel
Turley
8th Floor
Lacon House
84 Theobald's Road
London
WC1X 8NL

Dear Chloe,

Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 – Screening Opinion

Residential Development on Land West of Woodlands Lane, Blythe Bridge

A formal screening opinion has now been undertaken in accordance with your application received on 1 September 2021 which requested a formal screening opinion under regulation 5 of S.I 2017 No.571 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 for the following development:

Construction of up to 230 residential homes on land west of Woodlands Lane, Blythe Bridge

Having considered the details of the proposed development, Staffordshire Moorlands District Council is of the opinion that it comprises development that falls within Schedule 2 10(b) – urban development projects, as the number of dwellings (up to 230) will exceed the threshold of 150 dwellings listed under 10(b)(ii) and the site area of 11.4ha exceeds the 5ha threshold listed under 10(b)(iii).

The screening opinion involves an amendment to a recently issued screening opinion (SMD/2021/0353) for the same development that, the Local Planning Authority concluded, did not require an Environmental Impact Assessment. The amended screening opinion now includes an additional 20m² of land that links the proposed development (Phase 2) to the adjacent development currently being constructed (Phase1).

The additional land is required to enable the existing spine road to connect to Phase 1 of the Blythe Bridge development. This land had previously been assumed to have been included as part of the Phase 1 works.

The site area has increased by approximately 0.02 hectares to include additional land to the northwest however, there is no change to the characteristics of the proposed scheme, including anticipated construction activities or access arrangements. There are also no additional receptors identified within or adjacent to this additional area of land, which have

not been previously appraised as part of the original EIA Screening Report (SMD/2021/0353).

Having had regard to the characteristics of the development, its location and potential impact, the Local Planning Authority **does not** consider that the proposal requires an Environmental Impact Assessment for the following reasons:

Physical changes in the locality (topography, land use, changes in water bodies, etc)

The development will result in the loss of a large area of greenfield land that is currently used for agricultural purposes. However, the site is an allocated housing site in the Local Plan and is required to meet the housing needs of the District.

The site will involve some cut and fill, but major cut-and-fill operations will not be required. The field hedges and trees will be largely incorporated into the scheme layout.

The development will form an extension to an existing housing development that is currently under construction and together, they will be viewed as part of Blythe Bridge.

It is acknowledged that the development will result in physical and permanent changes to the locality. However the impacts are not considered to be so significant that they necessitate EIA.

Any changes in waterbodies would be addressed through normal drainage scheme design, assessment and conditions, and replacement ponds are proposed as part of ecological compensatory/mitigation measures.

Traffic related impacts – Movements and Safety, Noise and Air Quality.

The housing development will be a traffic generator and the A50 and A521 are both busy trunk roads. The adjacent housing development that is currently under construction created a new junction onto the A521 which will be utilised by the proposed development. It is likely that the new junction will be able to accommodate the additional traffic generated by the proposed housing development. In addition, a Transport Assessment will be submitted with the application and Highways England will be consulted as part of the application process. Therefore any impact on the existing road network will be adequately addressed and conditioned.

The housing development will be sited adjacent to the A50 and an electricity sub-station will be placed on the land. Occupants of the development will therefore be subject to a degree of noise and air quality issues. A landscape bund is proposed to be implemented as part of the development along the boundary shared with the A50 and all relevant surveys will be submitted as part of the application. Any mitigation measures can be addressed by conditions.

For these reasons traffic, noise and air quality issues do not necessitate EIA.

Infrastructure

Given the scale of the development, particularly when considered together with the adjacent housing development that is currently under construction, it is likely that there will be some impacts on schools, hospitals, transport links and other community infrastructure due to the

number of people living in Blythe Bridge increasing. However, the development will be subject to Section 106 financial contributions and on-site play areas, which will mitigate any impact on the existing infrastructure.

Ecology and Nature Conservation

There is a likelihood of some impacts on habitats and protected species in and around the site but it is considered that these can be adequately addressed through normal protected species surveys and any recommended mitigation.

Flood Risk

The site is not within an area at risk of flooding. It is considered that the potential impacts of the development can be appropriately considered through the submission of drainage schemes and statements and addressed through conditions. It is not considered that EIA is warranted on these grounds.

Conclusion

On the basis of the above, it is considered that the proposal is unlikely to have significant effects and an Environmental Impact Assessment **will not** be required.

The Council has considered other possible impacts and effects of the development including, heritage assets, contamination, ground and water quality, loss of agricultural land, harmful substances and waste generation, risk of accidents, social changes, and the visual impact of the proposal. The Council does not consider that these are of such significance as to warrant Environmental Impact Assessment.

I have enclosed, for reference, a copy of a screening checklist document which has helped formulate this decision.

I trust that the above is of assistance

Yours sincerely

X *B.J. Haywood*

Signed by: Ben Haywood

Head of Development Services