

28th October 2020

Kevin Hunt
JLL
31 Great George Street
Bristol
BS1 5QD

Our Ref: 20/01973/SCREEN

Dear Kevin

Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 - Local Development Order (LDO) for proposed Somer Valley Enterprise Zone (SVEZ),

The Local Planning Authority (LPA) has assessed whether there are likely to be significant environmental impacts as a result of this proposal. You will be aware that in cases where significant effects are likely to occur, the subsequent planning application will need to be accompanied by an Environmental Statement.

The LPA is of the opinion that the proposed development does not fall within Schedule 1 of the above Regulations. The proposed development is however 'Industrial Estate Development Project' which falls under category 10(a) of first column of Schedule 2 to the EIA Regulations and exceeds the threshold of 0.5 hectares.

The development has therefore been screened for EIA, using the selection criteria set out in Schedule 3 as a guide. The fundamental test to be applied in each case is whether the development and its specific impacts are likely in that location to result in direct or indirect significant effects on the environment.

The existing site comprises nine arable fields spread across five landholdings bound by hedgerows. It is located adjacent to the A362, on the north western edge of Midsomer Norton located approximately 1.25 miles from the town centre.

The submission explains the nature and composition of the proposed development is yet to be explicitly defined and will depend on the LDO design process. The indicative mix demonstrates primarily B1b, B1c, B2 and B8 (E/B2), with complimentary A1 (E), A4 (Sui generis), A3 (E), C1 (C1) B1a (E) and B1/B1c (E).

Population and Human Health

The site is on the edge of an urban area which is relatively densely populated. However, the site is separated from the main areas of nearby residential development and the risk of accidents, having regards to substances or technologies used, will be low. The risk to human health associated with contaminated land are not considered to be significant and remedial works can be carried out where necessary.

Waste

The proposed development will result in construction and demolition waste produced for

a limited period. The operation of the completed development will not give rise to any unusual production of waste beyond that typically associated with a small-scale industrial/commercial use. Given the scale and nature of the proposed development, significant environmental effects in respect of the production of waste are not considered likely.

Pollution and Nuisance

The uses proposed are typically considered to be those which could result in noise emissions and nuisance. A planning noise assessment would accompany any submission and there is no reason to conclude that the noise from fixed external plant and break out noise associated with the commercial units could be mitigated via scheme design and control through the imposition of planning conditions.

The site is relatively close to the of the Farrington Gurney Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) designated for mean annual Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂) levels. The submission confirms that the diffusion tube monitoring in Farrington Gurney reduced in 2018 and results were just below the objective of 40 µg/m³ at the residential façade at 39.6 µg/m³ along the A37.

The screening report has identified that the proposed development may have an impact on air quality. The baseline conditions have been considered close to the development site. As part of the proposal junction improvements have been proposed at the A362 and A37 junction which is within the AQMA.

The report highlights that an air quality assessment will be submitted with the LDO to consider the impact of the proposed development and junction improvements on air quality. Increasing capacity and traffic flows at the junction of A37/A362 could lead to increasing nitrogen dioxide concentrations in an area where concentrations are currently close to the Government's air quality objective.

The submission anticipates that there would be no receptors where NO₂ and PM₁₀ objectives would be exceeded. The scheme will be considered to have a significant impact if the predicted concentrations of nitrogen dioxide with the development/junction improvements are above 40 µg/m³ at any location. However, this impact would be localised and would not have a significant impact on the environment in EIA terms. Overall the impact on pollution and noise will not be significant in EIA terms.

Natural Resources

The principal natural resource expended by the development will be the land itself, which is previously undeveloped in nature. Other natural resources used are likely to be limited to those used in the construction process. There will not be any unusual use of natural resources in the construction and future operation of the site. The impact on natural resources will not be significant in EIA terms.

Biodiversity

The site comprises predominately arable habitats with semi-improved grassland, improved grassland, ruderal and scattered scrub. There are also boundary hedgerows, some of which are species-rich and all native hedgerows are likely to be of some ecological value. There are also occasional buildings and hardstanding. The site is approximately 3.5km from the nearest Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and 7.8km from the closest SSSI component unit of the Mells Valley Special Area of Conservation (SAC). The proposals do not meet Natural England's SSSI Impact Risk Zone criteria.

The site is immediately adjacent to the Old Mills Mine Tip Site of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI) which is designated due to the occurrence of mosaic habitats including semi-natural woodland and grassland which support notable plant species. There are other SNCIs in close proximity. The site may also support protected and notable species.

The proposals are not likely to impact on an ecologically-sensitive area. There will not be significant ecological impacts which would trigger inclusion in an Environmental Impact Assessment. This does

not negate the need for comprehensive ecological surveys to be completed and an ecological avoidance, mitigation, compensation and enhancement scheme to be developed.

Landscape/Cultural Heritage and Archaeology

The landscape and visual impacts would be permanent and would result in a marked change to the character of the immediate area. However, the direct impacts of the proposed development are likely to be limited to the site itself and its immediate surroundings.

A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) can be used to inform the creation of a landscape framework that incorporates, retains and augments existing hedgerows, trees and Public Rights of Way and integrates these features with a SuDs network to form a landscape framework within which future development takes place and by which the landscape and visual impact of development is avoided or adequately mitigated.

The Site is at a sufficient distance from designated heritage assets such that there is no potential for significant adverse effects on their setting. Any works to enable the development such as road improvements, is not considered to have any significant impact upon the setting of designated heritage assets. Overall, any impacts upon the above areas, is not considered to be significant in EIA terms.

Transport and Access

Traffic levels on the surrounding road network are high and the route is congested and peak times. The proposed development will create a change in the highway network. This site is allocated, and as part of the evidence base it was recognised that some mitigation may be required.

The submission explains that the vehicular access will be gained from the A362 via the site access which is currently proposed to be located immediately west of the two residential properties at the southern boundary of the site. A number of highways improvements are required to enable delivery of the proposed development. These improvements are along the A362 corridor between the A37 junction and Midsomer Norton

Whilst the development may give rise to localised traffic impacts, there is no reason to conclude that the development and the change itself will have a significant environmental impact. The submission of a Transport Statement and Travel Plan is anticipated, and this will limit the impact of the development further. Overall, any impact is not considered to be significant in EIA terms.

Land Stability and Climate

The site is not known to suffer from land stability issues nor be susceptible to significant impacts from climate effects. Full details of sustainable construction methods and design would be considered at detailed design stage.

Due to the size of the site, the proposed development has the potential to alter and affect drainage patterns, with the possibility of increased run-off rates and levels of overland flow. However, these effects would be localised and would be likely to be able to be mitigated within the site itself. The site falls within Flood Zone 1 and therefore any drainage problems are unlikely to be critical.

Land Use

The proposed land uses are considered compatible with those uses surrounding the site and vice versa. Whilst there is some potential for noise and disturbance, this can be controlled through mitigation and conditions. It is not considered any conflict will amount to significant environmental effects.

Socio/economic impacts

In terms of potential socio-economic effects, the development will result in a change in the local economy and a change in the characteristics of level of the employment in the local area. In addition the site is close to the local centres of Midsomer Norton and Paulton, and, if not correctly managed, any non-industrial employment uses (including retail, hotel etc.) have the potential to have social and economic impacts upon these areas and the local population using these centres. They are not however considered to result in any impacts on the environment that are significant in EIA terms.

Transboundary Effects

There will be limited transboundary effects. Impacts will most likely be limited to (but not exclusively) the site's immediate surroundings.

Cumulative Effects

The area to the south of the site which forms part of the planning application must be considered as part of this EIA screening. It is not however considered that the cumulative impacts of these developments will be significant in EIA terms. Notwithstanding the above considerations, the total areas of the sites is approximately 13.5 hectares, which falls below the Indicative criteria and threshold which is more than 20 hectares. Indicative criteria and threshold. Potential increase in traffic, emissions and noise.

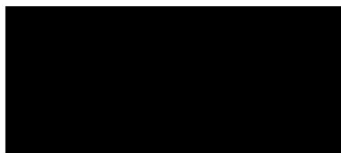
Conclusion

It is considered that the development is unlikely to have any significant environmental effects in EIA terms. Whilst there are a number of important issues and potential impacts to consider, none of these are likely to be significant as defined by the EIA Regulations. All noticeable impacts are likely to be localised to the site itself or the local vicinity. These issues are not of more than local importance. The developments' expected impacts will not be unusually complex nor potentially hazardous.

It is concluded, for the reasons set out above, that the development does not constitute EIA development. It is not necessary therefore for a future planning application (for the development described) to be accompanied by an Environmental Statement.

Please note that the adoption of a negative screening opinion is **not** an assessment of the planning merits of your proposal rather it is purely an assessment of whether significant environmental impacts, under the terms of the EIA regulations, would be likely to occur.

Yours sincerely



**Tessa Hampden
Senior Planning Officer**