



Halsnead Farm, Halsnead Garden Village

Non-Technical Summary

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1.0 Introduction

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1.1 Introduction

This Environmental Statement Non-Technical Summary (NTS) accompanies an application by Onward Homes and Starship Starship Build for planning permission at Halsnead Farm for the “Demolition of existing buildings and construction of up to 95 affordable homes, creation of access from Fox’s Bank Lane, construction of internal roads and footways, landscaping, works to trees and associated works.”

The local planning authority is Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council (KMBC).

Plans to show the location of the Site and the Site layout are shown at Figure 2 and Figure 3 respectively.

The Environmental Statement (ES) reports the findings of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process that has been undertaken to inform the determination of the planning application. The ES identifies and evaluates the likely significant environmental effects (whether beneficial or adverse) that may occur as a result of the Proposed Development. Where appropriate, it identifies measures to avoid, reduce, and compensate for predicted significant adverse effects on the environment and maximise the potential beneficial effects.

It has been determined that the proposed development represents Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Development for which an Environment Statement (ES) is required under the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 ('EIA Regulations').

Technical assessments have been undertaken in accordance with best practice guidance published by relevant professional bodies.

The technical reports assessed within the Environmental Statement cover the following topic areas:

- *Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment*
- *Air Quality*
- *Transport and Access*
- *Noise*
- *Biodiversity*
- *Heritage*
- *Socio-Economics*

This document is a Non-Technical Summary of the findings of the ES presented in non-technical language.

1.2 Document Structure

Chapter 2 provides a summary of the EIA approach undertaken.

Chapter 3 provides a description of the Application Site and the Proposed Development.

Chapter 4 considers the main alternatives of the Proposed Development.

Chapter 5 provides a summary of the potential environmental impacts and proposed mitigation measures where relevant.

Chapter 6 provides information on the availability of this NTS and the ES.

1.3 Limitations and Assumptions

The following key assumptions have been made in preparing the ES:

- *This ES assumes that the Proposed Development would be constructed in accordance with industry standard techniques according to acceptable standards, assuming that suitable experienced contractors will be appointed to construct the Proposed Development*
- *A Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) would be prepared prior to commencement and would contain all the design and additional mitigation as identified and reported within this ES.*

2.0 Approach to EIA

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2.1 Screening

Regulation 6 of the EIA Regulations makes provision for a developer to request a 'Screening Opinion' from the relevant planning authority to ascertain whether an EIA is required if a development is classed as a Schedule 2 development. This decision is based on the likelihood of significant environmental effects arising in relation to the development proposals.

The Proposed Development falls within Category 10 (b) 'Urban development projects' of Schedule 2 of the EIA Regulations.

Found in Town and Country Planning Act (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017, the proposed development falls below the thresholds for the screening development of EIA. The relevant thresholds for this development type are that the development includes more than 150 dwellings, and the overall area of the development exceeds 5 hectares.

However, the Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) for Halsnead Garden Village, states that "Each applicant will need to prepare a detailed EIA for their red line boundary", therefore an EIA must be produced to comply with the SPD's regulations.

An EIA Screening Opinion from the Local Authority has therefore not been sought as set out under Regulation 6 of the EIA Regulations. Instead the requirements are taken from the Halsnead Garden Village SPD.

2.2 Scoping

EIA scoping is considered good practice within EIA; however, it is not mandatory.

The purpose of scoping is to ensure that environmental studies undertaken during the preparation of the ES provide all the relevant information on the likely significant environmental effects of the project and the potentially significant impacts are 'scoped in' for consideration.

The scope of the Environmental Statement (ES) has been informed by the following:

- *Discussion with the Local Planning Authority;*
- *Schedule 4 of the EIA Regulations;*
- *Further consultation undertaken as part of the EIA; and*
- *Previous technical assessments of the Site*

Due to the size of the development, there have been discussions with Knowsley Council regarding the general scope of EIA and therefore concluded that EIA scoping is not necessary for this development. However, technical assessments and a concise Environmental Statement will be produced.

2.3 Significance of Environmental Impacts

The purpose of the Environmental Statement is to identify and evaluate the environmental effects associated with the Proposed Development. These effects are then assessed based on the predicted magnitude of each effect (following mitigation) and the associated sensitivity of the receiving environment. This determines the significance of their impact.

There is no statutory definition of significance. In the ES the following descriptive terms are used to aid the reader in understanding the level of impact, and these are accepted as good practice.

- *Substantial;*
- *Moderate;*
- *Minor;*
- *Negligible*

2.4 Mitigation of Environmental Impacts

The development of mitigation measures is an integral part of EIA. Mitigation measures seek to avoid, reduce or compensate adverse effects and reduce the magnitude of potential impacts. These may include design changes, alteration of proposed methods, or other activities in addition to the core activities.

The level of effect significance is often used to determine the use and level of mitigation measures. Where a potential impact is assessed as 'moderate' or 'major' this is considered 'significant' in EIA terms, so as far as practicable, mitigation measures should be identified that reduces the potential magnitude or significance of effect.

In each technical chapter, the specialists undertaking the EIA have identified appropriate mitigation measures based on their assessment of potential significant impacts.

3.0 Scheme Description

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3.1 The Site

The Site is approximately rectangular in shape, covering 3.42 hectares which contains buildings associated with Halsnead Farm, including a large farmhouse (in the south-east). There are areas of hardstanding surrounding the agricultural buildings.

The Site is located immediately to the south of the M62, approximately 1km to the east of Junction 6. It is immediately to the west of Fox's Bank Lane.

There are three main buildings within the red line boundary which would be demolished. One of these is Halsnead Farm and the remaining two being agricultural buildings associated with Halsnead Farm.

The Site is bound by a dense tree belt that runs along the northern site boundary, beyond which is the M62. There is also dense woodland planting on the eastern, southern and western boundaries of the Site, ensuring limited visibility.

The M62 runs just north of the boundary of the Site, the westbound lanes are the closest to the Site, Junction 6 is the closest access point from this motorway to the Site.

The Site is currently not subject to public access.

The Environment Agency's Flood Map for Planning shows that the Site is in Flood Zone 1 and therefore at low risk of flooding from rivers and the sea. There is one small area of surface-water in the north-east of the Site. There are six Grade II Listed Buildings located within a 1km radius of the Site, the nearest is the Grade II Listed 'Old Halsnead' which is around 50m from the western boundary of the Site, separated by a dense tree belt.

There are no statutory designations in relation to biodiversity, landscape or the historic environment on the Site.

The Site is part of a sustainable urban extension classified through Knowsley Council's Policy Map. Two policies are connected to the site; LP-SEU2C (Sustainable Urban Extension – South of Whiston and Land South of M62) and LP-SEU1 (Sustainable Urban Extensions and Safeguarded Land) which can be found through Knowsley Council's website: <https://www.knowsley.gov.uk/planning-and-development/planning-policy/local-plan-policies-map>.

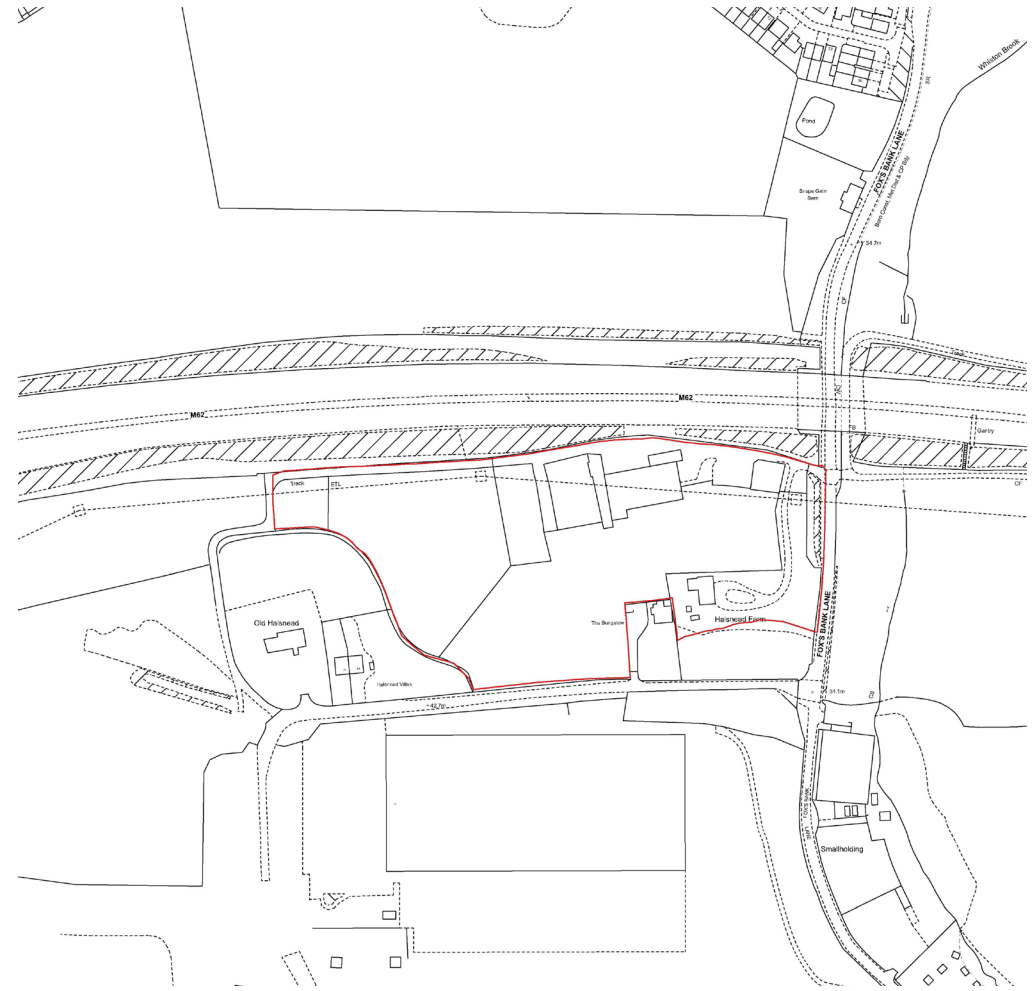


Figure 2: Site Location Plan

3.0 Scheme Description



Figure 3: Proposed Site Plan

3.2 Proposed Development

The proposed development comprises the “*demolition of existing buildings and construction of up to 95 affordable homes, creation of access from Fox’s Bank Lane, construction of internal roads and footways, landscaping, works to trees and associated works*”.

The 95 residential dwellings includes a mixture of 1- and 2-bed apartments and 2-, 3- and 4-bed houses.

The development would be laid out with several cul-de-sacs coming off one main arterial road running east to west through the centre of the Site. All dwellings will have access to off-road parking.

Development would be set away from the M62 to the north, with tree planting along the northern edge of the development, further screening views. There would be a landscaped area between the dense tree belt to the north of the Site, screening the M62 and the northern developed edge. This would function as amenity open space, with pathways running through it.

Street trees would be planted along the southern edge of the main arterial road as well as to the front of dwellings.

Vehicle access to the site would be from Fox’s Bank Lane, which runs along the eastern boundary.

Construction aims to commence in April 2026 and is programmed to last 91 weeks, completing in January 2028.

The Proposed Development has been discussed at length with neighbours directly affected. There have been discussions with Tritax, The Land Trust and National Highways, whose land would be used to access the Site. Wider neighbour consultation has also taken place and there has been a presentation to local councillors.

The Proposed Development would be delivered as part of the wider Halsnead Garden Village development, which will provide a significant boost to housing and employment in the borough while also improving access to nature. The Proposed Development would contribute to Halsnead Garden Village’s affordable housing provision, which has an overall target of 25% affordable housing.

3.0 Scheme Description



Figure 4: Visual Sketch of the Proposed Halsnead Garden Village

4.0 Alternatives

4.0 Alternatives

4.1 Alternatives

Paragraph 2 of Schedule 4 of the EIA Regulations requires the Applicant to provide details of the main alternatives considered. The following options are considered:

- *Alternative designs and layout for the proposed development in the context of Design Evolution; and*
- *The 'do nothing' alternative where the proposed development is not progressed.*

Alternative locations have not been considered as the site is allocated for development in the local plan. The site has been shown to be viable and Strategic Environmental Assessment has been carried out.

The design of the Proposed Development has evolved through several iterations to reach the most appropriate and environmentally sensitive development for The Site. The scheme initially considered was for the delivery of 35 larger executive homes, opposing the chosen Proposed Development of up to 95 homes.

Iterations of the design have been considered ranging from 80 to 91 homes. These iterations have had a detrimental impact through various factors. These have included: encroachment on root protection areas, overlooking, proximity to a nearby listed building and extending outside the development zone. The design of the Proposed Development seeks to strike a balance between economic viability, providing a mixture of housing and mitigating environmental constraints on The Site.

The 'Do Nothing' Alternative

Under Policy CS3 (Housing Supply, Delivery and Distribution), the Knowsley Local Plan states that provision will be made for 8,100 new dwellings between 2010 and 2028, at an annual average of 450 dwellings per annum. This is a minimum net figure.

The proposed Site forms part of Knowsley's housing provision for the plan period and housing must therefore be delivered for Knowsley Council to achieve its housing targets. The 'do nothing' alternative is therefore not appropriate.



Figure 5: The view looking west from the eastern part of the study Site (Site Photo Credit: Lanpro)

5.0 Environmental Assessment

5.0 Environmental Assessment

5.1 Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA)

The LVIA identifies the impact of the development on the surrounding landscape and visual receptors through a combination of desktop study and review of existing landscape character assessments to establish the baseline and field based work to assess the impact on a range of visual receptors from different viewpoints surrounding the Site.

The Site encompasses mixed land use including agricultural fields and woodland. It is surrounded by further agricultural land and new logistics warehouses and residential development. It is bound to the north by the M62 motorway. The Site is within National Character Area 56: Lancashire Coal Measures and historically identified in the Halsnead Estate Character Area by the Landscape Character Assessment of Knowsley Metropolitan Borough (2007).

The grade II Listed Old Halsnead is located beyond the south west corner of the Site. There are three further listings to the north east of the site but the setting of these assets is not influenced by the Proposed Development.

Mitigation of effects will be achieved through a comprehensive soft landscape strategy, tree planting to screen views and directional lighting to reduce light spill.

The landscape receptors for consideration are of local importance and low value, they are:

- *Mature vegetation*
- *Agricultural fields*
- *The setting of Grade II Listed Old Halsnead*

The Site is bound by semi-rural areas and the M62, there are important road connections adjacent to the site. Development is contained by mature vegetation. Significant effects on landscape receptors are not expected.

There will be a minor positive effect on mature vegetation, with enhanced green infrastructure and a strengthening of the boundary with Old Halsnead; there will be a minor (neutral) effect on the setting of Old Halsnead once proposed planting has matured. The loss of agricultural fields is permanent and cannot be mitigated, however this is in accordance with what is proposed in the Halsnead Garden Village Masterplan.

The visual receptors for consideration through the LVIA are:

- *Residents of homes along Fox's Bank Lane including Old Halsnead*
- *Users of local footpaths*
- *Motorists on the local road network*

Effects on visual receptors have been assessed through four representative viewpoints. Local topography and the presence of mature vegetation, motorway embankments and recent building of Halsnead Garden Village means that long distance views of The Site are not possible. Viewpoints are located close to The Site on the road and path network. In the long term, the significance of effects from all viewpoints is minor (neutral). Mature vegetation is expected to screen much of the proposed development and majority of receptors will experience limited views of the development, with significance of effects decreasing as newly planted vegetation matures.

5.2 Air Quality

The Proposed Development has the potential to cause air quality impacts during the construction and operational phases, as well as expose future residents to elevated pollution levels. Activities such as demolition, excavation, ground works, cutting, construction, concrete batching and storage of materials will have a potential effect on the air quality surrounding the Site. An assessment was undertaken to determine the baseline conditions and assess the significance of predicted effects. The assessment consisted of a construction phase assessment including demolition, earthworks, construction, trackout and the potential for dust emissions. The operational phase assessment consisted of the effects from road traffic exhaust emissions. The potential effects were defined by predicting pollutant levels at sensitive human receptor locations using dispersion modelling for multiple scenarios.

There are no Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) in the vicinity of The Site, alongside this, air quality monitoring results also indicated that pollutant levels were below the relevant air quality objectives.

During the construction phase potential effects from fugitive dust emissions can have potential impacts on the air quality. The assessment showed that the effects were predicted to be not significant, following the implementation of mitigation measures.

During the operational phase, potential effects from road traffic exhaust emissions can have potential impacts on the air quality. Concentrations of pollutants are predicted to be below the relevant Air Quality Objectives. The assessment showed that the effects were predicted to be not significant.

The potential for future residents to be exposed to poor air quality was also assessed. The assessment indicated that the pollutant concentrations were below the relevant criteria amongst the Site, therefore the predicted effect is not significant, and the site is suitable for residential use from an air quality perspective.

There are mitigation strategies put in place throughout the construction, operational and future of the Proposed Development to reduce poor air quality emissions, this is seen through a Construction Environmental Management Plan and other environmentally friendly methods.

Overall air quality effects with the Proposed Development have been deemed not significant.

5.0 Environmental Assessment

5.3 Transport and Access

The Proposed Development has the potential to cause effects on the environment in respect of transport and access regarding The Site. The temporary increase in HGVs and cars which operate and transport materials and construction workers on The Site may have potential impacts to the noise, air, dust and dirt. A reading of traffic flows were taken from various sources from 13 access and road networks surrounding The Site. The assessment was drawn from forecasts of Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) flows, 24-hour Automatic Traffic Counts (ATCs) and capacity assessments

In the construction phase of the Proposed Development, the volume of traffic has not been determined in detail, however based upon previous experience the traffic is not expected to increase significantly. Any impacts will be suitably mitigated through the Construction Environment Management Plan (CEMP). The residual impacts are considered Negligible (temporary).

In the operational phase of the Proposed Development there will be a permanent increase in vehicles which arrive and depart from The Site, due to the future residents. This increase however does not breach the Institute of Sustainability and Environmental Professionals (ISEP) thresholds for further assessment. Including cumulative impacts, all links but one are expected to experience less than a 10% increase in traffic, which is not considered significant. An impact of c.12% is reported along Fox's Bank Lane (South of the Access), this is not a particularly sensitive link. The impact of the Proposed Development on surrounding receptors is considered Negligible (Permanent).

There are various factors of mitigation to reduce the effects on the environment due to transportation. These practices are; wheel washing, the CEMP and promoting active travel (using public transport, walking, cycling and car-sharing).

5.4 Noise

The noise technical chapter, written by Hepworth Acoustics, assesses the likely impacts from noise on the Proposed Development. The noise chapter of the Environmental Assessment was assessed using qualitative methods. The assessment is focused on the need to mitigate construction noise by implementing appropriate methods during the construction method.

During the operational phase, potential long term noise impacts from increased traffic can influence the effects on the environment. The assessment uses a comparative approach which investigates the difference between calculated traffic noise levels for the 'without development' and 'with development' scenarios based upon future anticipated traffic flows.

The assessment, in combination with the Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) has provided mitigation methods which are designed to reduce noise impacts levels. The mitigation methods include restricted working hours, designated vehicle routes, silencers and engine covers.

During Construction

The assessment of the construction phase of the Proposed Development has been completed using the 'ABC Method' which uses three action levels to determine if mitigation is needed.

The residual noise impact on the Proposed Development has been calculated as a 'Neutral/negligible' for off-site Construction Traffic and up to 'Moderate Adverse Impact' on the on-site works. When considering the mitigation methods in combination with the constructional phase the residual noise impact has been reduced to 'Minor Adverse Impact' for the onsite works and 'Negligible' for the off-site Construction Traffic.

During Operation

The assessment of operational traffic noise has been undertaken for two scenarios:

- *The 'Do Nothing' scenario, this represents future baseline traffic flows without Proposed Development.*
- *The 'With-development' scenario, this represents the predicted traffic flows inclusive of the Proposed Development. The traffic growth has been accounted for using TEMPro-derived growth factors.*

The traffic flow on the Proposed Development has been calculated as a 'Negligible' significance of noise impact. When taking into account the mitigation methods in combination with the operational phase, the residual noise impact after completion of the Proposed Development, the impact of noise is 'Negligible (Not Significant)'.

In conclusion, the noise impacts on the Proposed Development, alongside the residual effects are seen as 'negligible' or 'Minor Adverse', the appropriate mitigation methods set out in the CEMP have reduced noise effects and therefore do not need to be further established. Double glazing and ventilation systems are proposed to dwellings closest to the M62, alongside acoustic fencing to mitigate noise to residents.

5.0 Environmental Assessment

5.5 Biodiversity

The Ecology technical chapter, written by Amenity Tree, assesses the likely ecological effects associated with the Proposed Development using baseline data and an assessment of ecological features associated with the Proposed Development.

Methodology included a desktop study, consultations, arboricultural and ecological surveys and information from the Local Plan and Halsnead Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). The assessment was set out in compliance with CIEEMs (Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management) 'Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment, Terrestrial, Freshwater and Coastal'.

The assessment found that the Site is located within the SSSI Impact Risk Zone for the Mersey Estuary SSSI / Ramsar site. Residential developments are not covered in this risk zone and Natural England would not need to be consulted for the proposed development.

There is a Local Nature Reserve (Clinton Wood) 3800m south of the Site. There is also Section 41 Woodland with 41 habitats listed on the Site.

The assessment determined that the likely significant environmental effects of the Proposed Development are to the following receptors:

- *The Bat roost identified in the existing farmhouse*
- *Presence of NERC Act Section 41 (An act which places duty on public authorities to have regard of species and habitats) woodland on the southern boundary.*

The assessment advises that the Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) includes mitigation proposals for silt, dust and waste management to avoid harm to the ecological surroundings. The Proposed Development will achieve 14.6% Biodiversity Net Gain through on-site enhancements.

The assessment has advised for an improvement in roosting provisions for bats and of foraging conditions through the placement of bat mitigation and increased planting in order to achieve no residual effects on ecological receptors. The scheme will obtain a bat mitigation license to allow lawful demolition and re-erection of the bat roost. The CEMP will detail Tree Protection measures and measures to protect woodland.

The Proposed Development is considered unlikely to contribute to cumulative impacts of the wider proposals in the Garden Village area. Wider areas are not considered relevant, as the site is ecologically contained.

5.6. Heritage

The Heritage assessment identifies the potential effects on the relevant heritage assets associated with the Proposed Development. This chapter should also be read in conjunction with the Historic Desk-Based Assessment (HEDBA) which establishes the archaeology and the potential impacts to heritage because of the development.

The assessment consisted of collating information from the Merseyside Historic Environment Record (HER) and the Historic England National Heritage List for England (NHLE) within a 1km search of the Site. The assessment also consisted of consultations of documentary and cartographic sources including historical maps, plans and documentary sources, British Geological Survey data (BGS), available geotechnical data and a Site walkover.

There are six Grade II Listed Buildings located within 1km of The Site including Old Halsnead which has significant connections to the Site. The grounds of 'Old Halsnead' are bound immediately to the north by the Site.

The Listed Buildings within 1km of the Site have significant value to the 'Old Halsnead' grounds and the history of the Site, the Listed Old Halsnead and associated buildings are being taken forward as 'medium sensitivity'.

There are two non-designated heritage assets (NDHA) partially within the site. These are 'Halsnead Park, Whiston' and 'Halsnead Park Wall, Whiston'. These relate to the historic parkland environment.

Construction Phase

The construction phase will result in a minor adverse impact to the significance of the non-designated Halsnead Park Wall, however the phase will have negligible impacts on other designated heritage assets and archaeological remains.

There is embedded mitigation through reduced working hours and using existing materials to rebuild the Halsnead Park Wall which will help to reduce any impacts that the Proposed Development may have on the heritage surrounding the Site. The residual effects of the Proposed Development are considered to have a negligible adverse effect. There are no cumulative effects.

Operational Phase

The operational phase will not affect the significance of designated heritage assets or archaeological remains. The Halsnead Park Wall NDHA will experience a low impact to its significance, which will be offset through mitigation.

5.0 Environmental Assessment

Evergreen trees will be planted along the edge of the mature deciduous woodland which surrounds the plot of Old Halsnead, to ensure an appropriate level of screening.

The residual impacts of the Proposed Development operational phase have been identified as not significant in EIA terms; however, mitigation will still take place.

There are no cumulative effects.

The chapter has established that there are minimal effects from the Proposed Development, however the Listed Buildings are considered to be sensitive to the development, there will be a limited effect on the setting of Old Halsnead. Mitigation methods have been embedded into the design in order to reduce the impacts.

5.7 Socio-Economics

The Socio-Economic technical chapter, written by Darren Wisher of Wisher Consulting, assesses the likely impacts on the Proposed Development. The Socio-Economic chapter of the Environmental Assessment was assessed using the sensitivity of five receptors relating to the baseline conditions of the Proposed Development which are: Local Housing Market, Local Population/labour Force, Local Economy, Social Infrastructure and Local Government Finances.

This technical chapter highlights the importance in meeting residential needs in conjunction with the Knowsley Local Plan Core Strategy and the Halsnead Masterplan Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) alongside meeting National levels of housing delivery.

Receptor 1 - Local Housing Market

The 2021 Census shows there is a population of 155,000 people in Knowsley, therefore the need for housing is apparent. The Local Housing Market will be supported, the up to 95 dwellings will all be affordable units, split across three tenures- social rent, rent to buy and shared ownership and offer a range of bedrooms spanning from one to four bedrooms. The overall significance of the effect will be substantial beneficial.

Receptor 2 - Local Population & Labour Force

In Knowsley the job density is below the Great British average, highlighting the need for employment. It is expected that approximately 220 residents will occupy the scheme, a combination of increased employment and an increased population within the development will increase the quality of life. The overall significance of the effect will be moderate beneficial.

Receptor 3 - Local Economy

The Local Economy will be supported through employment opportunities during the construction phase both on and off site to local and nationally based employees.

The scheme is estimated to support £3.5 million of additional household expenditure each year which at least 40% will be retained in the borough of Knowsley. The overall significance of the effect will be moderate beneficial.

Receptor 4 - Social Infrastructure

The social infrastructure in Knowsley such as educational and health facilities has capacity to accommodate the residents of Halsnead Garden Village. Primary school facilities have the capacity to welcome new students, this may be due to the planned expansion of facilities funded by recent developers.

The additional 220 residents, compared to the current census data, would require GPs in England to need an additional 0.1 of a GP. The overall significance of the effect will be minor negative.

Receptor 5 - Local Government Finances

The Council's 2024/25 Budgeting Monitoring Report shows a balanced position was achieved at the 2024/2025 financial year. It is assumed that all 95 dwellings will be under Council Tax B properties. The overall significance of the effect will be moderate beneficial.

A Social Value Strategy will accompany the application to mitigate socio-economic effects, alongside a s106 financial contribution that will be agreed.

6.0 Further Information

6.0 Further Information

6.1 Further Information

The Planning Application for the Halsnead Farm development will be made available to view on the Knowsley Council website: <https://planapp.knowsley.gov.uk/online-applications/>

Comments can be left at this address.



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