



Request for SCOPING OPINION under Regulation 15 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (as amended)

REFERENCE NUMBER: 26/00249/SO

DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT: Request for SCOPING OPINION under Regulation 15 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (as amended) for 'THE ERECTION OF UP TO 260 DWELLINGS, ASSOCIATED ACCESS AND INTERNAL ROADS INCLUDING CONNECTIONS TO THE SURROUNDING COMMITTED DEVELOPMENTS.'

SITE: LAND OFF WINDY ARBOR ROAD, WHISTON, KNOWSLEY

- **The proposal does not fall within Schedule 1**
- **The proposal does fall within Schedule 2**

The submission relates to a proposed development for up to 260 residential dwellings together with vehicular accesses, internal roads, open space and associated infrastructure including connections to the surrounding committed development across a land parcel within the Halsnead Garden Village Sustainable Urban Extension (SUE). The site is allocated for development within the Knowsley Local Plan Core Strategy (January 2016) and extends to approximately hectares.

SCREENING OPINION RELATING TO PROPOSED RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT AT HALSNEAD GARDEN VILLAGE

The proposal is classed as an 'Urban Development Project' under Schedule 2 10 (b) of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Regulations. The proposal has previously been assessed against the selection criteria stated within Schedule 3 of the EIA Regulations and it is considered that due to the scale of this development alongside the wider housing/SUE site allocation that the development may lead to likely significant effects on the environment, constituting EIA development requiring the submission of an Environmental Statement. A short summary of the selection criteria against which the screening opinion was considered is set out below under the following headings: characteristics of the development; location of the development; and characteristics of potential impact.

Characteristics of the development

At approximately 260 residential dwellings with associated work on a parcel of land totalling 7.7 hectares, the proposal is considered to be a major development that exceeds the thresholds stated within schedule 2. The development is part of a larger Urban Development Project as identified within the Core Strategy, which allocates the Halsnead Garden Village site SUE for approximately 1503 new homes. The SUE2 policy within the Core Strategy requires development to demonstrate a comprehensive approach to the SUE site development and infrastructure provision which is embodied in the Halsnead Garden Village Masterplan.

The Local Planning Authority considers that the development proposal is demonstrably part of a larger Urban Development Project and must have regard to the accumulation of the specific development with others within the larger project area.

Location of the development

The land was released from the Green Belt in January 2016 on adoption of the Core Strategy and allocated as a SUE for residential development. The site consists of 7.7 hectares of land within the SUE allocation consisting of agricultural/pastureland and areas of tree cover.

Characteristics of Potential Impact

The scale, location and context of the development proposal gives rise to the following potential impacts: transport and access; air quality; noise; biodiversity; land contamination; cultural heritage; landscape and visual effects; climate change and greenhouse gases; flood risk; and the interaction of the above factors.

Regard is also given to the magnitude, spatial extent, nature of the impact, its transboundary nature, intensity and complexity, probability, duration, frequency and reversibility, the cumulation of the impact with other existing and/or approved development and the possibility of effectively reducing impact.

The development proposal has been considered in light of the information available and in the context of the EIA Regulations and Guidance, is considered to constitute EIA development that would give rise to significant environmental effects. On this basis an ES is required. It is expected that the ES will only need to respond proportionately to the predicated cumulative impacts of the wider Urban Development Project (the Halsnead SUE site) although the detail shall relate largely to the application site area. Further details are set out in the Scoping Opinion below.

SCOPING OPINION

The following comments identify matters on which the applicant should incorporate into the EIA process and document within the ES. The characterisation of the Scope of the ES sets out the starting point for this process which may change as additional

information becomes available. The scoping opinion is based on the Environmental Impact Assessment Scoping Report reference 665038 dated 2.4.26 and associated documents submitted under the Council's reference 26/00249/SO. This scoping opinion is provided in accordance with Regulation 15 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (as amended). This opinion does not deal with the planning merits associated with the proposal, which will only be assessed as part of a submitted planning application.

Content of the ES

The ES that supports the planning application should include the following sections as a minimum. This is further detailed in Schedule 4 of the EIA Regulations:

1. Non-technical summary
2. Detailed scope of works
3. Reference to key plans and legislation
4. Detailed baseline review: description of the development; description of the reasonable alternatives; description of the reasonable aspects of the current state of the environment (baseline scenario); description of the factors specified in regulation 4(2) likely to be significantly affected by the development (population, human health, biodiversity, land, soil, water, air, climate, material assets, cultural heritage and landscape); description of the likely significant effects of the development on the environment resulting from:
 - A) The construction and existence of the development;
 - B) The use of natural resources, considering the sustainable availability of these resources;
 - C) The emission of pollutants, noise, vibration, light, heat and radiation, the creation of nuisances, and the disposal and recovery of waste;
 - D) The risks to human health, cultural heritage or the environment;
 - E) The cumulation of effects with other existing and/or approved project taking into account existing environmental problems;
 - F) The impact of the project on climate;
 - G) The technologies and the substances used.
5. The description of the likely significant effects on the factors specified in regulation 4(2) should cover the direct effects and any indirect, secondary, cumulative, transboundary, short term, medium term and long term permanent and temporary, positive and negative effects on the development. The assessment should take into account the nature of impact (importance, magnitude and duration quantified as appropriate), reversibility of impact, mitigation, monitoring measures (including reference to long term management and maintenance measures) and residual impacts.
6. A description of forecasting methods or evidence used to identify and assess the significant effects on the environment.

7. A description of the measures envisaged to avoid, prevent, reduce or if possible offset any identified significant adverse effects on the environment and, where appropriate, any proposed monitoring arrangements.
8. A reference list detailing the sources used in the ES.

Conclusions of the EIA should be transparent and all information used to draw conclusions should be clearly presented and objective to enable third party verification. Best practice guidance such as EA Best Practice Guidance and CIEEM Guidelines should be followed. The scoping phase of the EIA presents the best opportunity to ensure that all the environmental impacts of a development are considered at an early stage, and any EIA should make a clear distinction between construction and operational impacts.

The EIA Scoping Report sets out the general approach to the EIA assessment, setting out key general difficulties and uncertainties. As the design of the proposed development is still emerging and the environmental surveys/assessments are ongoing, the scope may be reviewed to reflect progress. Any changes to the scope of the EIA will be reported in the ES. Where these changes are agreed with the LPA, this is considered to be an acceptable approach.

The EIA Scoping Report indicates that the ES will be based on defined parameters identifying the extent of different land uses, maximum building heights and numbers of dwellings. This will provide an element of flexibility whilst also allowing robust assessment and this approach together with the proposed structure of the ES and methodology is considered to be acceptable. It is advised that the applicant consult best practice guidance including the EA best practice guidance and CIEEM Guidance for Ecological Impact Assessment. An integrated approach should be taken to the EIA methodology to ensure that consideration is given to interactions and in-combination effects. The results of the assessments should be used to inform design and master planning.

The applicant indicates that the following topics will be scoped into the ES:

Socio-economics
Archaeology and Built Heritage
Transport and Access
Noise and Vibration
Ecology
Landscape and Visual Impact
There will also be a cumulative and residual effects chapter.

The applicant has indicated their intention to scope the following topics out of the EIA:

Water Resources and Flood Risk
Ground Conditions and Land Contamination

Air Quality
Climate Change Adaptation and Greenhouse Gas Emissions
Microclimate (daylight, sunlight and wind)
Agriculture, Land and Soils
Human Health
Waste and Materials
Major Accidents and Disasters

The Local Planning Authority agrees with the general scope of the ES proposed within the Scoping Opinion Request. Cumulative impact of the whole SUE site must also be taken into account. It is noted that cumulative/in-combination effects will be included and this will allow the inter and intra project effects to be assessed across each topic. Additional comments are provided below, and it is requested that the results of the assessments are used to inform development design.

Land included and Cumulative Effect

The applicant has stated that the ES will consider the potential for likely significant effects on the environment resulting from committed developments in the area and identifies a number of schemes that have been granted and/or are in the process of being built out as well as taking into consideration the whole SUE allocation, in order for the likely significant effects for the scheme alone and in combination to be assessed.

In addition to the cumulative schemes outlined in Scoping Report, the following applications/sites should also be included and considered:

22/00233/FUL DEMOLITION OF EXISTING BUILDING AND REDEVELOPMENT OF LAND AT DYE HOUSE, PRESCOT, TO ERECT UP TO 45 RESIDENTIAL UNITS (TO INCLUDE A MIX OF HOUSES AND APARTMENTS) WITH ASSOCIATED INFRASTRUCTURE AND LANDSCAPING (ACCESS TO BE TAKEN FROM THE EXISTING DEVELOPMENT TO THE NORTHEAST) – Granted

20/00767/REM - APPLICATION FOR APPROVAL OF RESERVED MATTERS PURSUANT TO OUTLINE PLANNING PERMISSION 15/00022/OUT (OUTLINE APPLICATION FOR MIXED USE DEVELOPMENT COMPRISING UP TO 750 NO. DWELLINGS & UPTO 929 SQ M OF COMMERCIAL/INDUSTRIAL BUILDINGS (USE CLASSES B1/B2/B8)) APPROVAL SOUGHT FOR APPEARANCE, ACCESS, LAYOUT, SCALE, AND LANDSCAPING FOR THE ERECTION OF 53 NO. DWELLINGS (USE CLASS C3)

20/00576/FUL HYBRID APPLICATION COMPRISING;
FULL PLANNING PERMISSION FOR A NEW FOODSTORE (USE CLASS E(a)),
EMPLOYMENT DEVELOPMENT (USE CLASSES E(g), B2 AND B8), ACCESS,
LANDSCAPING, AND THE PROVISION OF ASSOCIATED INFRASTRUCTURE,

INCLUDING CAR AND CYCLE PARKING FACILITIES, VEHICLE CHARGING SPACES, PEDESTRIAN ACCESS ROUTES AND SERVICING;
OUTLINE PLANNING PERMISSION FOR A MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT COMPRISING A DRIVE THRU RESTAURANT, DRIVE THRU COFFEE SHOP AND PUBLIC HOUSE TOGETHER WITH ASSOCIATED PARKING AND LANDSCAPING (ACCESS TO BE CONSIDERED ALL OTHER MATTERS RESERVED FOR FUTURE APPROVAL) – GRANTED
26/00006/OUT OUTLINE PLANNING APPLICATION (INCLUDING DETAILS OF ACCESS WITH ALL OTHER MATTERS RESERVED) FOR THE ERECTION OF UP TO 120 DWELLINGS (USE CLASS - C3) AND OTHER ASSOCIATED WORKS – PENDING DETERMINATION

26/00166/HYB HYBRID APPLICATION FOR THE ERECTION OF UP TO 190 RESIDENTIAL DWELLINGS COMPRISING: PHASE A - FULL PLANNING APPLICATION FOR THE ERECTION OF 93 DWELLINGS WITH ASSOCIATED WORKS (INCLUDING ACCESS, PUBLIC OPEN SPACE, LANDSCAPING, SUSTAINABLE URBAN DRAINAGE SYSTEMS AND OTHER ASSOCIATED WORKS); AND PHASE B - OUTLINE PLANNING APPLICATION FOR UP TO 97 DWELLINGS (WITH ALL MATTERS RESERVED).

23/01037/OUT OUTLINE PLANNING APPLICATION (WITH ALL MATTERS OTHER THAN ACCESS RESERVED) (TO BE DETERMINED BY HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL ONLY) FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF UP TO 350 DWELLINGS, PUBLIC OPEN SPACE, LANDSCAPING AND ASSOCIATED INFRASTRUCTURE WORKS. FULL DETAILS FOR SITE ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS VIA A NEW JUNCTION ON CHAPEL LANE (TO BE DETERMINED BY KNOWSLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL ONLY) AND EMERGENCY ACCESS VIA SANDY LANE (TO BE DETERMINED BY HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL) - APPEAL UNDERWAY

The scoping opinion sets out the chapters of the ES and confirms that cumulative/in-combination effects will be included in each chapter and as a summary. This is acceptable.

Socio-economics, Archaeology and Built Heritage, Transport and Access, Noise and Vibration, Ecology, Landscape and Visual Impact

The LPA agree that these should be scoped into the ES. However, it is also considered that water resources and flood risk should be scoped in. The LPA considers that the remaining topics can be scoped out of the ES.

Landscape and Visual Effects

The LPA consider that landscape and visual effects should be scoped into the ES and the cumulative impacts of the development across Halsnead Park and the surrounding land designation will need to be considered. Please refer to the

Landscape and visual impact section of the comments received from Natural England in relation to further advice.

The SUE as a whole comprises the Halsnead Estate Cronton and Pex Hill landscape character area as defined within Knowsley's Landscape Character Assessment. The proposed development has potential to result in a significant impact on it. Part of the site is a designated ancient woodland pasture and there will be associated impacts on this designation as well. The parkland landscape should additionally be regarded as a non-designated heritage asset. Given the nature of the development, it is considered that the development will have a potentially significant effect on the landscape and visual amenity.

When considering the impact of the development upon landscape and visual amenity, the following impacts need to be considered: operational impacts including seasonal changes and establishment of mitigation. The Environmental Sustainability Manager has asked that one additional viewpoint is included. I've included a screenshot below showing the location of the viewpoint identified to the southwest of the site by a red arrow.



Ecology and Biodiversity

The LPA agrees that biodiversity should be scoped into the ES. MEAS has been consulted on this scoping opinion. MEAS has stated that whilst Appendix C analyses the results of a desktop study and concludes that the site does not contain Ancient Woodland Pasture, MEAS does not accept this conclusion. The results of the study indicate the site may contain natural regeneration/Plantation Woodland on

a long established or ancient woodland site. Using the Handbook for Updating the Ancient Woodland Inventory for England, analysis of this area should be provided which has been informed by the results of the proposed woodland and grassland botanical survey. It is noted that the site is as a on Magic Maps. Regard should also be given to the comments received from Natural England.

In relation to protected species, badger and brown hare are known to be present in the wider area and surveys for these species should be included within the scope of the ecological surveys.

The ecology chapter concludes that the Ecological Impact Assessment will be carried out in accordance with the CIEEM guidelines and will take all appropriate legislation into the consideration. Subject to the inclusion of Badger and Brown Hare surveys within the ecological survey scope, it is considered that the proposed ecological surveys are sufficient to suitably ecologically characterise the site and inform the Ecology Impact Assessment. The scoping report is acceptable from a ecology perspective.

The proposal will require assessment by the Habitats Regulations to assess potential recreational impacts on the nearby internationally designated sites (Mersey Estuary SPA and Ramsar sites).

Cultural Heritage and Archaeology

The LPA agree that the cultural heritage as it relates to archaeology, non-designated and designated heritage assets should be scoped into the ES. MEAS has offered comments as summarised below.

The Environmental Impact Assessment Scoping Report prepared by RSK offers limited details in relation to baseline summary conditions and so MEAS has offered comments based on information recorded on the MHER. The following non designated heritage assets are recorded on the MHER within the development area:

- MME15147 - Halsnead Park, Whiston, a late 18th or early 19th century park;
- MME15681 - Halsnead Park wall, Whiston, a late 18th or early 19th century boundary to the landscaped park of Halsnead;
- MME15781 - Former site of an icehouse, Main Drive, Whiston, a mid to late 19th century structure;
- MME21762 - Former site of a coal pit, Halsnead Park, Whiston, an early 19th century feature;
- MME6857 - Barn and outbuildings at Prince's House Farm, Cock Glades, Whiston, possibly 18th century building;
- MME6856 - Former site of a coal pit, Main Drive, Halsnead Park, Whiston, a 19th century feature; and
- MME13083 - Former Site of Prince's House, Cock Glades, Whiston, an 18th century building.

Additionally a large number of previously undiscovered coal shafts (likely 18th century, late post medieval /early industrial period) were identified during geoenvironmental investigations within an adjacent development to the east of the site. A number of archaeological assets relating to historic coal mining of a similar period were recorded during recent development works to the south (MME21789 18th century coal shafts) with other archaeological finds including Roman pottery shards (MME2179) and post-medieval ditches of unknown function (MME21792 and MME21793).

These archaeological assets are indicative of the potential for similar remains to be found in the proposed site area. As such, MEAS has recommended that archaeology be scoped into the ES.

It is noted that the MHER identifies Halsnead Park as a non-designated heritage asset (MME15147). MEAS has also confirmed that the construction phase does not recognise impacts from ground stripping for potential grouting and capping of coal shafts and general ground stripping across the site. It is during this phase of the development works that archaeology will be observed if present.

The assessment methodology lists sources that will be used in the determination of the baseline. MEAS has suggested additional sources including local archives and consultation of the Geoenvironmental Assessment reports appended to the Scoping Report for information relating to the historic coal mining activities on the site. Additionally, in the prediction methodology and the assessment of significant effects it is noted that there is no reference to understanding the nature of the potential archaeological baseline of the site and its significance/sensitivity. MEAS refers the applicant's attention to two documents:

The Historic Environment of North West England: A Resource Assessment and Research Framework (2021) which identifies what is important or significant archaeologically across the region (<https://researchframeworks.org/nwrf/>); and

The Archaeology of Mining and Quarrying in England, A Research Framework for the Archaeology of the Extractive Industries in England (NAMHO 2016) (<https://researchframeworks.org/amqe/>).

MEAS has stated that in section 7.3.15 sensitivity is informed by the evidential, historical, aesthetic and communal values of the heritage assets and references Conservation Principles which is dated 2008. However, MEAS would prefer to see use of the more recent NPPF definition of significance: 'The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. The interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic...'. MEAS would want to see an understanding of the predicated significance of any archaeological asset to be affected by the proposed development, with this to be discussed in local and regional terms and supported by a consideration of the importance of the component parts of the archaeological asset where known.

The 'Mitigation Recommendation' should read that an appropriate level of archaeological investigation rather than 'mitigation' will be identified. The archaeological process means that investigation precedes mitigation. MEAS consider that it is incorrect to state that the investigation would relate to the value of the heritage assets. The value of the assets cannot be fully known until intrusive investigation has taken place and any value prescribed prior to this would be provisional or predicted. ClfA Standard for Archaeological Field Evaluation (December 2023) provides a definition for archaeological evaluation – 'An archaeological field evaluation will seek to determine, record and report on the nature, extent, preservation and significance of archaeological remains within a defined area'.

Please note MEAS's request for the Archaeological Report to be a standalone document so that it can be added to the MHER.

The Conservation Officer has also offered comments agreeing that archaeology and built heritage should be scoped in and confirming that there are no listed buildings within the application site and referencing the Halsnead Park Estate as a non-designated heritage asset, within the application site boundary, which includes Main Drive (named Cock Glades in historic mapping), unlisted buildings (including the buildings forming the Princes House Group and the sandstone boundary walls, gateways and entrance lodges to its perimeter.

The following are designated heritage assets within 650m of the application site:

The Grade II listed St Nicholas' Church (List Entry:1261894) approximately 235m west of the proposal site boundary.

<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1261894>

The Grade II listed Sandfield House (List Entry: 1253251) approximately 400m northeast of the proposal site boundary.

<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1253251>

The Grade II listed Gate Piers beside northeast Lodge to Halsnead Park (List Entry: 1253429) approximately 525m east of the proposal site boundary.

<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1253429>

And the adjacent Grade II listed Northeast Lodge to Halsnead Park (List Entry: 1253249) approximately 525m east of the proposal site boundary.

<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1253249>

The Grade II listed Snape Gate Barn (List Entry: 1253250) approximately 525m southeast of the proposal site boundary.

<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1253250>

The Grade II listed Old Halsnead (List Entry: 1261787) approximately 580m to the southeast of the proposal site boundary.

<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1261787>

The Grade II listed Paddocks and Stables (List Entry Number: 1253505) approximately 640m southwest of the proposal site boundary.

<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1253505>

And the adjacent Carr House Farmhouse (List Entry Number: 1253441) approximately 650m southwest of the proposal site boundary.

<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1253441>

The methodology proposed in the scoping report in relation to the assessment of heritage and cumulative impacts is considered acceptable. However, it is recommended that a plan is provided to confirm the committed development sites which will be included in respect of the cumulative impacts.

Air Quality

It is considered that air quality can be scoped out of the ES for the reasons set out in the Scoping Report. Environmental Health has confirmed they agree with this approach. When the first Halsnead Garden Village application was submitted, there were concerns regarding NO₂ concentrations at locations close to the site (e.g. Cronton Road/Whitefield Drive), as levels were approaching the annual mean air quality objective. However, concentrations have reduced significantly and, whilst recent diffusion tube monitoring data may have been influenced by ongoing highway improvement works at Tarbock Island, which have altered traffic flows across the surrounding network, these works commenced in March 2024, and concentrations were already showing a declining trend at that time.

The applicant should nevertheless demonstrate through a standalone Air Quality Assessment and supporting Transport Assessment that development traffic, together with cumulative traffic associated with the wider Halsnead Garden Village development and other committed developments, will not have a significant impact on air quality at sensitive receptor locations.

Please note in EH's response that 6 new diffusion tubes have been installed along Windy Arbor Road in 2026.

Please also have regard to the response from Natural England.

Noise and Vibration

Environmental Health has confirmed that the proposals identified within section 7.5 of the Scoping Report are acceptable. The LPA agrees with the inclusion of noise and vibration within the ES.

Climate Change and Greenhouse Gases

It is proposed that climate is scoped out of the ES and the LPA agrees with this approach for the reasons set out in the Scoping Report. Please refer to the climate change section of Natural England's response for further advice regarding assessment.

Traffic and Access

The LPA agrees that Traffic and Access should be scoped in the ES. National Highways has confirmed that the Traffic Assessment will need to cover a number of areas in order for NH to understand the forecast impact of the operation of the SRN. These areas are:

Existing Conditions – provide an understanding of the existing use of the development site and existing traffic conditions at key junctions within the study area for assessment, and the safety record across the same area with collision data analysis of the most recent 5 year period available that includes causality analysis of any identified collision clusters;

Development Proposals – set out the development proposals, including the development quantum and any phasing plans, access arrangements, parking for vehicles (including EVCP) and cycles and the sustainable access proposals for the site to encourage modal shift to deliver sustainable development.

Traffic Impact Assessment – provide a clear understanding of the study area, assessment scenarios (which should be for the opening year of the proposed development assuming a full build out and occupation in line with the DfT Circular 01/22), background traffic growth and relevant development and infrastructure (which should be agreed with the Highway Authorities/LPA).

Forecast Traffic Impact – Identification of traffic generation of the proposed development and assignment to the surrounding road network, which should include junction 6 of the M62.

NH have confirmed that the provision of the forecast traffic impact through Junction 6 of the M62 will enable them to determine the requirements for any further assessment of the junction subject to the extent of traffic that is forecast to be assigned through the junction. NH would support scoping discussions on this prior to submission of the TA. NH would welcome early engagement. Ongoing engagement with NH regarding traffic impacts, structural interfaces and boundary treatments are considered to be important to protect the safety, integrity and operational efficiency of the strategic highway network. NH have caveated their response to state that the above comments do not represent a pre-determined view of the acceptability of the proposed development.

The Local Highways Authority has confirmed that they are satisfied with transport being scoped into the EIA. The LHA has provided some broad comments but confirmed that a detailed technical response will follow when the officer returns from annual leave. The LHA has asked for the following to be considered within the Transport chapter:

- How this parcel fits within the wider Halsnead Garden Village transport strategy and the infrastructure already secured through previous permissions;
- The proposed access arrangements, including the role of Lickers Lane, Main Drive and connections to adjoining phases;
- Walking, cycling and public transport connectivity, particularly links to Whiston Station, schools and the wider Garden Village network;
- Connectivity and active travel routes through the neighbouring phases and along Fox's Bank Lane;
- Cumulative impacts from surrounding committed and emerging development, particularly during the construction phase;
- Construction traffic routing and management arrangements, including whether a CTMP is proposed;
- Any further mitigation required as a result of this parcel and how that sits alongside existing obligations and infrastructure already secured across the wider scheme.

Given that the strategic highways principles and mitigation measures have already been established through the wider Garden Village approvals, the TA should demonstrate how the proposal integrates with the wider framework and that the proposed dwelling numbers can be accommodated.

Ground Conditions and Land Contamination

In relation to contaminated Land, the LPA and Environmental Health agree that this can be scoped out of the ES.

Environmental Health has reviewed the following reports and has commented below as follows:

- Brownfield Solutions (January 2025) Phase 1 Geo-Environmental Assessment Report, United Living, Whiston, Prescott Ref: JL/C5980/13829
- Brownfield Solutions (May 2025) Phase II Geo-Environmental Assessment Report, United Living, Halsnead Gardens, Whiston, Prescott Ref: MAS/C5980/13951 Rev A

Phase 1 Geo-Environmental Assessment

1. The Phase 1 report concludes that there is the potential for contamination from any made ground present on site as well as the underlying coal measures. The associated Groundsure report and Site Location Plan have a different red line boundary to that provided elsewhere in the report (with the buildings/area in the west and south west excluded). As such not all the correct information for the proposed development site has been included. For example Section 3.1 *Historical Setting* records tanks 25m to the west, however, these are associated with Prince's House which is included within the proposed red line boundary. It is not clear whether the site walkover covered this area either. It is advised that the Preliminary Risk Assessment including the preliminary conceptual site model needs to be reviewed to ensure the accuracy of the information in relation to the proposed development plan. This information has been transposed into the Phase II report.
2. The Site Features Plan Drawing Ref: C5980/02 only shows the location of one mineshaft (also relevant to the Phase 2 report).

Phase 2 Geo-Environmental Assessment

3. Intrusive works undertaken in early 2025 comprised 30 trial pits (1.9m-4mbgl), 2 Trial trenches (2.3m-5.0mbgl), 13 window samples (2.28m - 4.38mbgl) and 16 rotary open boreholes (10.2m-40mbgl). It is noted that very limited intrusive works have been undertaken in the area of the current farm buildings. It is advised that additional work is required to fully characterise any risks associated with this area of the site (see point 1).
4. Made ground (topsoil) was identified in 15 locations whilst made ground was recorded in 4 locations to maximum depths of 0.7m to 2.1mbgl. 15 samples were analysed for a range of contaminants including speciated PAHs. 5 samples were analysed for TPH and screened for asbestos. WS103 (within the area of the farm buildings) recorded elevated arsenic (39mg/kg) and lead (980mg/kg) where clinker was noted to be present in the made ground. There were no other exceedances of the relevant generic assessment criteria. It is advised that once further site investigation

has been undertaken in the areas of the buildings the risk assessment and remedial measures should be refined.

5. Eight wells (6 shallow and 2 deeper) were monitored for ground gas on 6 occasions between the 13th February 2025 and 22nd April 2025. Peak gas concentrations were methane 0.7%v/v and carbon dioxide 8.6%v/v with a maximum initial gas flow of 3.3l/hr. Steady state conditions were lower with methane at 0.2%v/v and carbon dioxide 4.8%v/v and a flow rate of 0.2l/hr. The report concludes that the site is consistent with Characteristic Situation 1 whereby no gas protection measures are required. We have reviewed the relevant information and are satisfied with this conclusion. If, however, further investigation encounters significant biodegradable material or ground conditions which may alter the ground gas risk assessment, it will need to be revisited. This should include the pond on site.
6. Two mine shafts have been identified on site as well as potential broken ground which requires drilling and grouting. The details of how these are to be remediated and verified should be included in any future Remediation Strategy. Consultation with the Mining Remediation Authority will be required. Whilst the submitted gas monitoring data indicate a low gas risk (CS1), the risks associated with mine gas should be reviewed following the design of any mine shaft remediation and/or stabilisation works to confirm that the proposed remediation strategy remains appropriate.

The Coal Authority has confirmed that the site is within a Development High Risk Area and therefore past coal mining activities within the site should be fully considered as part of the ES in the form of a risk assessment together with any necessary mitigation measures. However, the LPA is satisfied that the risks associated with the coal mining legacy of the site can be appropriately considered via a specific Coal Mining Risk Assessment. The CA has confirmed that the Phase 2 Geoenvironmental Assessment May 25 (prepared by Brownfield Solutions Ltd) would fulfil this requirement. The layout will need to take into account the location of recorded mine entries and their subsequent zones of influence. As such, the LPA considers that ground conditions and contaminated land can be scoped out of the ES.

Water Resources and Flood Risk

The LLFA has confirmed that water resources and flood risk should be scoped into the ES. The LLFA has confirmed that they agree with the applicant's assessment that the site lies within Flood Zone 1 and that the majority of the site is subject to a low risk of surface water flooding which suggests that, from both fluvial and pluvial flood risk perspectives, the site is not currently at significant flood risk and is unlikely to be exposed to significant flood risk in the future.

However, there are ecologically important water features immediately downstream of the site, including Big Water, for which the site currently functions as part of the contributing catchment through a combination of surface water runoff, subsurface

flows and/or groundwater pathways. There is clear evidence within the site that these hydrological processes contribute to sustaining the downstream water features. Despite this, the relative contribution of each source and the way in which these hydrological and hydraulic processes interact under baseline conditions remain unclear.

It is essential to understand the scale and significance of potential impacts arising from land use change and catchment disturbance associated with the proposed development. Such changes could affect local hydrological and hydraulic processes and, consequently, the quantity, quality and long-term functioning of the downstream water features throughout the development lifecycle. For these reasons, the LLFA considers that Water Resources and Flood Risk are important environmental topics that should be included within the scope of the EIA.

Wind Microclimate

The LPA agrees with the approach to scope this out of the EIA.

Climate Change Adaptation and Greenhouse Gas Emissions

The LPA agrees with the approach to scope this out of the EIA having regard to the nature of the development.

Microclimate (daylight, sunlight and wind)

The LPA agrees with the approach to scope this out of the EIA having regard to the nature of the development.

Soil/Agricultural Land

The LPA consider that soils and agricultural land quality can be scoped out of the ES as significant areas of contamination are unlikely and loss of agricultural resources has already been considered as part of the SUE allocation. Please refer to the soils and agricultural land quality section of Natural England's response for further advice regarding assessment.

Waste and Materials

The LPA consider that it is acceptable for waste and materials to be scoped out of the EIA as no significant effects are anticipated. However, consideration should be given to policies WM8 and WM9 of the Merseyside and Halton Joint Waste Local Plan.

Human Health

The LPA agrees with the approach to scope this out of the EIA having regard to the nature of the development.

Major Accidents and Disasters

The LPA considers that vulnerability to major accidents and disasters can be scoped out of the EIA as no significant effects are anticipated.

Conclusion

The LPA agrees with the topics to be scoped into the EIA as outlined within the EIA Scoping Report submitted, with the addition of water resources and flood risk which should also be scoped in. It is noted that the cumulative impacts of the whole SUE site should be taken into consideration.

Please note the information and decisions made within this SO are based on the information provided within the Scoping Opinion Request Report at this time and is provided at officer level.

The Council looks forward to working with you collaboratively on the ES, and your development proposals. Please contact me if you have any queries.