OUTLINE APPLICATION FOR 850 DWELLINGS, A 60 BED (C2) CAREHOME AND ASSOCIATED INFRASTRUCTURE.

Prepared by PRISM PLANNING
on behalf of EAGLESCLIFFE LLP

NON TECHNICAL SUMMARY (NTS)

PRISM PLANNING

Environmental Statement
Non Technical Summary

Site
Allens West, Durham Lane, Eaglescliffe, Stockton-on-Tees

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Project
Outline application (with all matters reserved) for the erection of a residential development comprising 845no. dwellings (Class C3) and a 60no. bed Care Home (Class C2) with associated retail, crèche and community facilities, landscaping, roads, parking and infrastructure

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1. Introduction

1.1. An Environmental Statement (ES) has been prepared on behalf of Eaglescliffe LLP to accompany the submission of an outline application (with all matters reserved) for the erection of a residential development comprising of 845 dwellings (Class C3) and a 60 bed Care Home (Class C2). The application includes associated retail, crèche and community facilities, landscaping, roads, parking and infrastructure. This document provides a 'non-technical' summary of the ES.

1.2. The complete ES includes nine technical topic chapters.

- Landscape and Visual Impact
- Ecology
- Transport
- Ground Investigation
- Archaeology
- Flood Risk Assessment
- Noise & Vibration
- Air Quality
- Socio-Economic

1.3. These technical chapters contain the detailed analysis of impacts and mitigation and should be referred to for the complete assessment of impact.

1.4. This statement has been prepared having regard to the relevant regulations and summarises the work that has been undertaken to identify and mitigate the potential impacts of the proposals within and around the submission site.

1.5. The ES has to provide a robust assessment of environmental impact of the development, with particular regard to the key effects identified.

1.6. The application submission comprises the following documents:

- Planning Application Forms and Notices
- Planning Statement
- Statement of Community Involvement
- Transport Assessment
- Travel Plan
- Environmental Statement (ES)
- Arboricutural Report
- Design and Access Statement

2. Site Description

2.1. The site extends to a gross area of circa. 46 hectares. The site originates historically from WWII when it was initially used by the MoD for the decommissioning of aircraft.

2.2. The Allens West site is located within the Tees Valley, south of Stockton-on-Tees, and north of the market town of Yarm. It offers good access to the rest of the local area, with excellent links via train, road and air to the rest of the UK and internationally. The main trunk roads servicing the site are the A66 and the A19.

2.3. A plan indicating the general location of the site is attached as Appendix 1 and an aerial photograph of the site is attached as Appendix 2.

2.4. The site is bounded by residential development to the east and south. The Darlington to Middlesbrough railway runs along the southern boundary. The west of the site is characterised by the former Elementis Chromium works and the north is bounded by a tree covered nature reserve, once forming part of the original MOD site. The former chemical plant is in the process of being de-commissioned.

2.5. The site's current access was originally formed by the Ministry of Defence. Clear sight lines are implemented to allow for a priority access onto Durham Lane. This will form the primary access to the site. An additional access will also be implemented further north up Durham Lane

2.6. A high voltage power line crosses the site from north to south.

2.7. The application site lies entirely within the administrative boundary of Stockton-on-Tees.

Extant Permission

2.8. An outline planning permission has been previously granted for the Allens West site. The 'mixed use scheme' was granted permission on the 17th of December 2009

2.9. The application, which was approved in outline form with all matters reserved, allowed for:

- Up to 10,000m^2 of general industry and storage or distribution (B2 and/or B8)
- Up to 2,200m^2 of light industry (B1[c])
- Up to 500 residential dwellings (C3)
- Up to 500m^2 of community facilities (D2)
- Up to 250m^2 of retail use (A1)
- Up to 5,000m^2 of Care Home (C2)

2.10. The mixed use scheme contained several key elements which have been carried across to the current application. For example, the principles of the access were approved under the mixed use scheme, as were the principles of residential permeability and the car park adjacent to the Durham Lane frontage of the site. It is important to consider that all though a 'fresh' application is being submitted, the ethos and principles of the original permission remain very much intact.

3. Project Description

The Development Proposals

3.1. The proposals are submitted as an outline submission, referring to a site with a gross area of circa. 46 hectares. The red line site boundary plan is attached as Appendix 3.

3.2. The submitted master plan shows the proposed development including access, internal roads, indicative landscaping, and plot layout.

3.3. The layout has been designed to account for constraints presented by planning policies and zones (namely the HSE Exclusion Zone to the south western tip of the site), as well as through site characteristics such as the pylon zone which crosses the site from north to south on the eastern boundary, and the strip of protected Poplar trees which cross the site from the east to south west.

3.4. The proposed development comprises 845 no. houses; a 60-bed residential/nursing care home; a small local shopping parade (providing up to 250m² of retail floor space and a potential crèche); community facilities up to 500m² and associated landscaping, roads, parking and infrastructure.

3.5. The 845 houses comprise 248 no. 2-bed units, 384 no. 3-bed units and 213 no. 4-bed units. The densities achieved by the development are 30.63 dph for housing alone, and 31.74 dph considering the scheme in its entirety.

3.6. As outlined above, access to the site is to be taken from the existing roundabout on Durham Lane. This will be complemented with a further new roundabout to be constructed near to Carters Moor Farm, towards the northern end of the Durham Lane frontage to the site. A Transport Statement, prepared by SAJ Transport Consultants, forms part of the application submission and provides a detailed analysis of the impacts of the proposed roundabout, taking into account the existing permission for the site, upon the local transport network.

3.7. Pedestrian linkages will also be provided as part of the development proposal, including a new crossing point over Durham Lane.

Development Phasing

3.8. Given the scale of the development, it is anticipated that construction will be undertaken in phases and is likely to involve a number of construction companies and at least two house-builders. In this regard it is hoped that conditions attached to any planning permission will reflect this.

3.9. Construction work is expected to commence in 2012/3. Predicting build out rates with any degree of certainty in the current economic climate is fraught with difficulty. Notwithstanding, due to the size of the development it is considered that the development will be completed over a 13-17 year period, unless market conditions change significantly in the intervening period.

3.10. Detailed consideration of phasing is not submitted with this application. Further details will follow should the application be approved at the 'reserved matter stage'.

4. Summary of Environmental Effects

Introduction

4.1. A series of technical assessments have been undertaken (Part 2 of the Environmental Statement) to assess the potential environmental impacts of the proposed development. This section provides an overall summary of the potential environmental impacts for each of the technical areas. The impacts of the proposals are described in accordance with terminology set out by the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment and the language used in the report stems from their recommendations.

Landscape and Visual Impact

4.2. The landscape and visual impact assessment has established that the proposed development will have no residual effect on the baseline conditions for landscape character and visual amenity in the immediate area.

4.3. The landscape character and visual amenity of the local area and wider sub-region will not be compromised as a result of the proposed development. Indeed, it is considered that the proposed development will be integrated in the landscape without exceeding the capacity of the landscape to accommodate this change. The proposed residential development will have less impact on the three development areas than the previously approved commercial development.

4.4. In landscape terms, the proposed development in such a location and context is considered to be acceptable.

4.5. Further details on the baseline assessment, impacts and mitigation measures are presented in Part 2, Chapter 9 Landscape and Visual Impact.

Ecology

4.6. The site presents some significant constraints with regards to Ecology. Due to the historic use of the site, the storage of water in 'fire ponds' has provided a suitable, but somewhat unusual habitat for Great Crested Newts (GCN's) who use the site for breeding purposes.

4.7. Naturally Wild, have designed a mitigation strategy which would involve translocating the newts from the Allens West site to specially constricted and enhanced habitat in Coatham Woods. This is in addition to the habitat creation work which is being undertaken independently of this project at the former Elementis Nature Reserve.

4.8. With regard to the GCN issues, Naturally Wild conclude that the habitat for the newt population will actually be enhanced, and subject to the appropriate licences from Natural England, the scheme will have a positive impact upon the population over the longer term.

4.9. It is concluded that significant ecological impacts are not anticipated, subject to the implementation of the specific mitigation measures proposed by Chapter 10 of the Environmental Statement.

4.10. It is predicted that with the proposed mitigation in place the development will have a neutral or positive impact upon the natural habitats in and around the Allens West site.

4.11. The proposals will initially remove or alter some of the habitat used by bats for foraging. However, it is not anticipated that any roosts in trees or buildings will be impacted upon and mitigation measures have been proposed to minimise any risk of damage to roosts. Furthermore, the schemes habitat enhancement measures are beneficial for bats. Overall, the impact upon bats is considered to be neutral.

4.12. During construction, site clearance activities will require the removal of existing scattered trees, hedgerows and limited small areas of woodland. It is likely that a significant adverse impact could occur if such activities were carried out during the breeding bird season but after the implementation of mitigation measures it is considered that the impact will not be significant. The site is considered to be of little importance to wintering birds, no mitigation measures are deemed necessary, and any impact is assessed by the Environmental Statement as not being significant.

4.13. Post-construction monitoring is also recommended to assess the success of bat mitigation. The ecological assessment undertaken has not identified any residual impacts that are considered to be significant.

4.14. Further details on the baseline assessment, impacts and mitigation measures are presented in Part 2 Chapter 10 Ecology.

Transport

4.15. Issues relating to transport, are addressed in the Environmental Statement, the Transport Assessment and the Travel Plan.

4.16. It is concluded in Chapter 11, that overall, the impacts of the development will be slight. This conclusion is reached by considering the extant permission for the mixed use scheme which, if it was to be built, would generate a certain level of traffic. The evaluations done as part of the transport assessment demonstrate that the number of vehicles entering or leaving the proposed development site, is not significantly greater when balancing the mixed-use against the proposed development. This is shown in Table 11.11 of the main Environmental Statement.

4.17. Despite this conclusion, careful consideration has been given to issues such as road safety, severance, pedestrian delay, pedestrian amenity, and fear/intimidation. The document concludes by stating on all these points there is at best, no impact whatsoever, and at worst, a slight indiscernible impact.

4.18. It is recognised that there will be a need for some improvements to the local highway network to address specific impacts arising from the development. These will be the subject of legal agreements between the developer and the Council. The final detail of these will be negotiated during the life of the development.

4.19. It has been concluded that the residential development, with any necessary mitigation, will have no greater impact than the development currently granted extant planning consent at Allens West and that there are no highways related reasons why the application should not be approved.

4.20. Further details on the baseline assessment, impacts and mitigation measures are presented in Part 2 Chapter 11 Transport, the Transport Statement and its accompanying Travel Plan

Ground Investigation

4.21. Given the historical context of the site, it has been crucial to assess land contamination thoroughly. The site was remediated in 2001 by Entec.

4.22. The site currently benefits from permission for both commercial and residential use; investigations at the site have shown generally low levels of contamination in soils at the site following previous remediation. Any minor effects relating to contaminated land can be mitigated through environmental best practice during construction.

4.23. Notwithstanding, it has been recommended that during the operational phase basic remediation techniques including capping of garden areas with clean topsoil and subsoil.

4.24. Overall the Environmental Statement concludes that the development has small, but positive impact on the site.

4.25. An increase in permeable area is also seen to be beneficial as it will restore the natural groundwater beneath the development site.

Archaeology

4.26. The archaeological assessment considered the potential impacts of the construction and operation of the proposed development. Baseline information was gathered over a 1Km radius from the Tees Archaeology Historic Environment Record (HER).

4.27. On 2nd of September 2011 a public consultation event was organised at Allens West by this Brigantia Archaeology and Prism Planning. The event was attended by a number of people who had worked at or lived near the site: information and recollections contributed by those people have also been integrated into the Environmental Statement, Chapter 13.

4.28. It is concluded that with the exception of Carter Moor Farmhouse, the proposed development would have no effect on any scheduled Ancient Monument, statutory Area of Archaeological Interest, registered park or garden, or registered battlefield.

4.29. The Statement concludes that due to the nature of the site, intrusive or geo-physical surveys would likely yield no results and are therefore inappropriate.

4.30. The Chapter does however recommend that the existing buildings be subject to archaeological recording prior to demolition.

4.31. Further details on the baseline assessment, impacts and mitigation measures are presented Chapter 13.

Flood Risk

4.32. The site is classified as being Flood Zone 1 by the Environment Agency. This is the lowest classification with the smallest degree of risk. There is no evidence of the site having ever been flooded. The site is assessed to be of low permeability.

4.33. During the consideration of the 'mixed-use development' work was undertaken to locate any existing drainage facilities. During this examination of the site, a private drainage pipe was identified. There are no public sewers on site according to Northumbrian Water records.

4.34. Following on from the assessments of flood risk and identification of the sewers, fluvial, tidal and groundwater flood risk is low to minimal.

4.35. The Environmental Statement does identify that risk of sewer flooding is increased with extreme rainfall events. Notwithstanding, the assessment of risk is still low. Similarly, Pluvial flooding (flooding overland) is also considered to be low.

4.36. Further consideration of the drainage design will be given at the reserved matters stage. The design of which should discharge at a maximum rate of 400 litres/second. Should this not be met, on site attenuation would need to be implemented.

4.37. Overall, it is concluded that, in terms of flood risk, the site is suitable for the development proposed.

Noise and Vibration

4.38. There are three phases to be considered as part of the application. These are; the demolition of the existing buildings, the construction of the development (including roads and infrastructures) and the operational phase (or when the development comes into use).

4.39. Each of these phases has been assessed individually in Chapter 15 of the Environmental Assessment.

4.40. Any increase in road traffic noise which results from the development will be insignificant when the development is operational (i.e. once the houses are occupied) and no further mitigation measures will be required. Furthermore, no impact in terms of vibration caused by increased traffic flows resultant from the development has been predicted and therefore no additional vibration mitigation measures are necessary.

4.41. Further details on the baseline assessment, impacts and mitigation measures are presented in the Environmental Statement.

Air Quality

4.42. It is acknowledged that construction works have the potential to generate significant quantities of dust. Accordingly, an assessment was carried out to assess the impacts associated with dust releases during the construction phase of the development.

4.43. The principal concern was for those people living in the properties within the surrounding residential areas of Eaglescliffe where deposition of dust onto surfaces is possible. The deposition of dust will be a short term impact and should not cause long term effects on local air quality. Moreover, the implementation of effective mitigation measures can substantially reduce the potential for nuisance dust to be generated in accordance with best practice as detailed within this assessment.

4.44. Air quality predictions were carried out in order to assess impacts once the development becomes occupied. The results indicate that the impact of the proposed development on existing concentrations of nitrous oxide and dust will be minimal.

4.45. Further details on the baseline assessment, impacts and mitigation measures are presented in Part 2 Chapter 13 Air Quality.

Socio-Economic

4.46. Prior to the recent economic turmoil Stockton experienced strong economic performance, as indicated through the improvements to GVA and unemployment rates (quoted in ES Part 2). However, Stockton still remains well below regional and national averages.

4.47. The assessment identified that there will be no significant negative socio-economic impacts as a result of the proposed development, therefore no mitigation is required. Indeed, it is considered that the development would have an overall beneficial effect on the immediate and surrounding area in terms of socio-economic impact due to the investment levels and employment generation (which could be up to 6000 temporary jobs over the life of the development both direct and indirect). The proposal will bring particular benefit to Stockton-on-Tees where unemployment and deprivation are higher than regional and national averages.

4.48. Moreover, the proposed development will provide additional finance to Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council from central government for re-investment in the area from the New Homes Bonus.

4.49. The one negative socio-economic impact identified is be the loss of employment land, however when offset against the temporary and permanent job creation which the scheme will bring it is concluded that this loss is turned into a positive. Stockton has, in any event, a significant oversupply of employment land.

4.50. Further details on the baseline assessment, impacts and mitigation measures are presented in Part 2 Chapter 16 Socio-Economic Assessment.

5. Interaction of Impacts

Introduction

5.1. It is important as part of the Environmental Impact Assessment process to consider the interaction of environmental effects and potential cumulative effects. These are summarised below.

Site Interactions

5.2. There are two key areas of interactions that are foreseen, these being:

5.3. Interaction of construction effects – related impacts in terms of ground/water ecology/landscape and air/noise over the construction period; and

5.4. Interaction between the proposed development and the existing residents of Eaglescliffe.

Construction Impacts

5.5. Although no significant construction impacts are predicted, interactions will occur throughout the development. It has been outlined that through the adoption of best practice in construction techniques (e.g. appropriately timed and managed construction) it will allow for these impacts to be reduced.

5.6. Ecological mitigation is recognised as being a vital part of the scheme. The ES gives significant weight to the importance of the ecological issues. With the implementation of the pond creation and reclamation it is assessed that over the long term, the ecology will see a benefit.

Operational Impacts

5.7. The housing developed will be progressively occupied with some residents being on site from the early part of the period as dwellings are completed. The use of best construction management methods throughout the construction of the remainder of the phases will mitigate any impact on occupiers whilst construction is still occurring within the immediate vicinity of occupied units.

5.8. No significant operational effects are predicted as the development comes into use. Overall, it is considered that the accumulation of effects from the proposed residential development will occur at its greatest during the construction period and especially in the short term when the significant road infrastructure will be implemented. However, these impacts will be relatively short-lived.

Cumulative Impact

5.9. No significant cumulative effects are predicted. Cumulative landscape and visual impact of the development is assessed to be negligible. Overall, cumulative ecological impact is assessed as not significant.

5.10. Since the proposed development represents an increase of housing over the previously approved commercial development, cumulative socio-economic effects have been assessed to be of minor significance.

6. Conclusions

6.1. This document presents a non technical summary of the environmental effects predicted in relation to the development proposals. The complete Environmental Impact Assessment is presented in the ES. These technical papers contain the detailed analysis of impacts and mitigation and should be referred to for the complete assessment of impact.

6.2. It has been concluded that effective mitigation and adequate controls for the anticipated construction period, and the operational stage, can be achieved. It is considered that the impact of the proposals during the construction phases will not be significant and during the operational phase it is predicted that there will be numerous beneficial impacts due to the provision of needed housing.

6.3. There will be some residual effects although these are predicted to be minor following the proposed mitigation measures.

7. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Site Location Plan

Appendix 2 – Aerial Photograph

Appendix 3 – Red Line Boundary

Appendix 4 – Indicative Site Layout Plan