

Dunsbury Hill Farm

Environmental Statement - Non
Technical Summary

Portsmouth City Council

March 2012

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Introduction

A planning application has been submitted to Havant Borough Council (HBC) by Portsmouth City Council (PCC) for development of Dunsbury Hill Farm for employment uses and a quality hotel with conference facilities.

This is a hybrid planning application, meaning an application that is in part outline and in part detailed. Outline permission is sought for employment uses and a hotel with conference facilities and ancillary uses, a detailed permission is sought for a new link road to Hulbert Road and a link road with bus-gate to Woolston Road; together with landscaping, infrastructure and associated works. These works comprise the "Proposed Development". All matters apart from Access are reserved.

This summary forms part of an Environmental Statement (ES) which has been prepared to accompany the application. It outlines the proposed scheme, the likely significant environmental effects and any mitigation proposals necessary to reduce adverse effects.

The Site

The Site a 33 hectare area of land located to the west of Leigh Park, Havant. The Proposed Development includes 20.2 hectares which will be developed for employment uses and a hotel with conference facilities. The rest of the Site will be developed to provide a comprehensive landscape framework and supporting infrastructure including a new link road.

The Site is within the ownership of Portsmouth City Council apart from a small area of land adjacent to Hulbert Road which is in the ownership of the Department of Transport.

It is located on undeveloped land between Waterlooville and Leigh Park on the north western side of Havant Borough. The Site lies immediately to the east of the A3(M) motorway Junction 3, and the A3(M) runs along the western edge of the Site.

The residential area of Waterlooville lies to the west of the Site, while the Leigh Park estate

lies to the east. Open countryside consisting of blocks of woodland and agricultural fields lie to the north of the Site. There is a further area of woodland and agricultural fields to the south of the Site, with superstores located further south on Purbrook Way.

The slip road leading off the A3(M) is the B2150 Hubert Road, which runs on the western side of the Site, and is proposed to provide access for the Proposed Development

The Site gently rises from 20 metres AOD in the south to approximately 45 metres AOD in the north. The Site falls away to the east down towards the wooded enclosures around Hermitage Stream and down in the south west towards the A3(M) embankment. An exposed high point or ridgeline coincides along Park Lane Bridleway 123. Land to the east, adjacent to Calshot Road and Prospect School is open, levelling out to the Leigh Park area at circa 15m AOD.

The principle urban features are the western settlement edge of Leigh Park and a large pylon with overhead cables running north to south across the Site. The A3(M), although not directly visible, can be heard and it becomes visible with a more audible presence at the raised roundabout at Junction 3.

The Site comprises a series of extensive open fields enclosed with established hedgerows. It is dissected across the north east corner by Park Lane Bridleway which connects Waterlooville with the Leigh Park estate and runs south-east to north-west across the Site and crosses the A3(M) via a footbridge.

The borders of Waterlooville are largely contained and not visible due to the mature embankment vegetation along the A3(M). The western side of Leigh Park is topographically lower and the borders are wooded restricting any views. The housing of Leigh Park is predominantly brown and red brick 1960s low to medium rise terraces and apartments, built as public housing stock.

Background to the Development and Evolution of the Proposals

The proposals for the development of employment uses at Dunsbury Hill Farm have been evolving for a number of years. The site at Dunsbury Hill Farm was first allocated for employment uses in the Revised Deposit Draft Havant Borough District-Wide Local Plan, February 2002. The justification for additional employment land within the Local Plan was based on two important issues:

- A serious lack of supply of good quality employment sites to attract inward investment and provide for expansion of existing businesses; and
- Problems in the Havant economy evidenced by high out-commuting, higher than average unemployment (in some wards) and an over dependence on traditional manufacturing.

As part of the Local Plan development process, HBC carried out a range of studies into the supply of and demand for employment land in the Borough. This work considered both the general need for employment land, and also the specific need for it in relation to given sites.

A number of alternative sites were considered in a study of the A27 Corridor, commissioned by SEEDA and produced by Grimleys and Vail Williams. This study concluded that, whilst other employment sites were available in the Corridor, none provided the opportunities for raising standards and facilitating inward investment in the way that Dunsbury Hill Farm provided and that other smaller sites had relatively poor infrastructure, were too small and could not offer a location able to create a 'critical mass' from employment land with higher skilled jobs. The then Revised Deposit Draft of the Local Plan was revised to increase the supply of employment land. Dunsbury Hill Farm was allocated as a suitable site in Policy EMP 1.10.

A masterplan for a business park at Dunsbury Hill was produced and supported by an

Environmental Statement (ES) which was published in February 2003. The masterplan was considered as part of the Local Plan Inquiry held between November 2002 and June 2003. The Inspector's report of 6th May 2004 noted that "some development with a reduced volume and spread of building could be accommodated at Dunsbury Hill Farm whilst ensuring the retention of the Strategic Gap function. However, in the absence of any information that a reduced scheme would be viable it is concluded that the land should revert to the Strategic Gap designation."

A study was consequently commissioned to revise the masterplan to address the comments made by the Inspector so that the site could be re-submitted into the Local Plan as a modification. This assessment is detailed in a report by Rummey Environmental Ltd, 'Dunsbury Hill Farm, Siting of Employment Allocation in the Strategic Gap, October 2004'.

The site was subsequently included in the Havant Borough District-Wide Local Plan (adopted by HBC in September 2005) as an Employment Site under Policy EMP 1.4 - Land at Dunsbury Hill Farm, Park Lane, Havant/Waterlooville on the grounds that all other options considered were not as suitable for the use proposed or there were difficulties with the land ownership of other sites.

In addition the Partnership for Urban South Hampshire (PUSH), a partnership of 11 Local Authorities in Hampshire, developed a Sub-Regional Strategy for South Hampshire under the South East Plan which was underpinned by a goal to improve the sub-region's economic performance. PUSH recognised Dunsbury Hill Farm as a key strategic employment site in a number of evidence based studies.

The HBC Regeneration Strategy for Havant Borough and the Leigh Park Strategic Framework (July 2006) identified Dunsbury Hill Farm as a major development opportunity. The Site was considered important because it will deliver a considerable number of jobs next to Leigh Park which is a priority area for regeneration, as well as providing space for start-up businesses.

The Havant Borough Council Core Strategy adopted on 1st March 2011 sets the planning framework for the Borough until 2026.

Policy CS18 Strategic Site Delivery identifies strategic sites that are critical to achieving the Borough's Core Strategy vision, and provide the development requirements for the site at Dunsbury Hill Farm.

The Core Strategy states that *"Dunsbury Hill Farm is a key strategic employment site for the borough and the wider sub-region, which will form a new businesses gateway to South Hampshire from the A3(M). The creation of a high quality business and technology park with excellent transport connections will deliver a large number of jobs in close proximity to Leigh Park. It will provide new first class employment floorspace for start-up and growing businesses. It could provide approximately 60,000 square metres of new employment floorspace. This is about a third of the total requirement for new employment in the borough up to 2026."*

The Proposed Development

The Proposed Development which is the subject of this ES comprises the following principal elements:

- Employment uses (B1, B2 and B8) including an Enterprise Centre (46,450m²) in Phase 1;
- A hotel with conference facilities (5,574m²);
- Employment uses (B1, B2 and B8) (15,329m²) in Phase 2;
- A new access junction off Hulbert Road;
- A bus gate with Woolston Road;
- A new west to east link road through the Site with a dedicated public transport link to connect the site to Leigh Park;
- Retention of existing trees and hedgerows where possible;
- Provision of a 150-180m wide landscaped gap between the A3(M) and the Proposed Development and east – west green finger providing landscape structure to the Site;

- Maximum building heights.

The Proposed Development will encompass transport infrastructure consisting of a new access junction to connect the Site to the A3(M) via Hulbert Road, a bus gate to connect the site to Leigh Park through a bus only access point, a link road to define the primary circulation route through the Site with a dedicated public transport link to maintain and improve circulation to and around the site. The existing bridleway which crosses the Site will also be maintained and improved.

The major land uses including employment and a hotel with conference facilities will be developed over two phases. A strong landscaped buffer will be created and as far as practical, existing features of nature conservation interest and landscape importance including trees and hedgerows will be retained.

Phase 1 of the development is located in the southern and central portions of the Site and, in line with the requirements of the Core Strategy, comprises 13.2 ha of land which will accommodate 46,450m² of employment floor space (Use Classes B1, B2 and B8), that will include 10,000m² for an Enterprise Centre and 5,574m² of hotel floor space. Phase 1 also includes other ancillary uses required to support the site and its employment uses.

Phase 2 of the development comprises 7 ha of land and is located in the northern portion of the site. Phase 2 will provide an additional 15,329m² of employment floor space with B1, B2 and B8 Uses.

The hotel is located on the south western side of the Site to enable the creation of a high quality entrance and landmark feature. Parameter Plan 2 indicates that this facility will be located to the south west of the Proposed Development close to junction 3 with the A3(M) and the southern spur road that forms an extension to Hulbert Road (the B2150) in a northerly direction.

Link Road

The design specification for the link road is set out in the Highway Design Report which

accompanies this planning application. To summarise the proposals comprise:

- A four arm standard roundabout on Hulbert Road;
- A lay by accessed off the fourth arm of the roundabout on Hulbert Road;
- Joining into the existing roundabout on Woolston Road;
- Two way single lane carriageway between the proposed new roundabouts on Hulbert Road and Woolston Road;
- A bridge over Hermitage Stream;
- A 3m wide shared footway/cycleway to the north and a footway to the south of the link road between the hotel roundabout and Woolston roundabout;
- A bus stop in each direction (located within lay bys between the hotel roundabout and the Woolston Road roundabout).
- A bus gate at the Woolston Road roundabout to prevent access to the Proposed Development by general traffic.

The layout has been designed to avoid any perceived coalescence between Havant/Leigh Park and Waterlooville/Cowplain urban areas with careful consideration of the integration of built form within the landscape such that built form is screened by the established and proposed landscape structure

Building Scale

Rooflines of buildings within Phase 1 will be below the 40m contour to exploit the screening effect of Beech Wood and planting alongside the A3 (M) corridor. Phase 2 rooflines will be below the 45m contour to ensure that Dunsbury Hill and Bell's Copse and the planting to the east of Park Lane Stream will screen views into the Site.

Appearance

The Design and Access Statement discusses potential appearance of the Proposed Development based on the development principles. In terms of development character, the built form will be generally organic with the lengths of building footprints limited in order to

integrate the development into the wider landscape. Design will consider natural surveillance and seek to create active busy spaces.

Environmental Impact Assessment

An environmental impact assessment of the effects of the development has been conducted by members of the assessment team, based on a series of development parameters relating to land use, scale (building heights) and movement. These parameters are illustrated.

Summary findings are presented below, covering impacts during construction and on completion of the development.

Land Use

The land is currently under grazing and woodland land uses and based on the evidence from the specialist survey it is not likely to be of Grade 3a or above (best and most versatile). The total permanent land take from agricultural land is ca 33 ha. In national and regional terms there would be a permanent adverse effect of slight significance.

The majority of the land is let to two tenants on short-term arrangements that could be terminated at short notice. The Site is ancillary to the wider business of one tenant and there will be a very slight impact on his business. The impact on the other tenant will be neutral. This tenant grazes the fields as a hobby and they do not form part of his business.

Socio Economic

Leigh Park has a population of about 26,700 with a relatively young age structure. Overall the area suffers from high levels of deprivation. Many of the manufacturing firms that were once based there have now left the area and there is a significant gap between the skills of the local population and the jobs available in the sub-region. Leigh Park District Centre has a high level of vacant retail units and the area is characterised by high levels of social rented housing. The Core Strategy recognises that

addressing the skills gap is a priority for the regeneration of the area and the provision of new employment facilities in the area is equally important.

The Proposed Development will generate major economic benefits in the form of temporary and permanent employment creation and increased economic value. During the construction phase, it will create some 844 direct construction jobs plus a further 245 indirect / induced jobs at the local level and 371 at the regional level. During the operational phase it will create 3,506 gross direct jobs, with 1,272 being net additional jobs at the local level and 1,893 at the regional level.

The Proposed Development will ensure that the supply of employment land meets local needs over the period to 2026, providing a high quality mix of business premises. The scheme will generate additional annual GVA of £44.3 million at the local level and £72.5 million at the regional level and provide a major boost to the local economy.

The creation of a wide range of office, industrial and warehouse jobs will provide local people, local skills and learning providers and local businesses with the opportunity to work in partnership to address the area's skills gap and enable local people to fully capture the benefits of the new jobs in their area.

The Proposed Development is expected to have an overwhelmingly positive socio-economic impact, contributing towards the economic development and regeneration objectives of the area.

Transport and Accessibility

The Proposed Development would include a new access junction forming a roundabout on B2150 Hulbert Road and a link road to the west, with a bus only link to the east connecting to Leigh Park.

The Site, currently consisting predominantly of agricultural land, is located close to the A3(M) Junction 3 between Waterlooville and the Leigh Park area of Havant. The B2150 Hulbert Road past the Site has no pedestrian footways and has a derestricted speed limit.

This connects to Purbrook Way further south of the Site at an un-signalised roundabout, which currently experiences congestion. Purbrook Way leads west to Junction 4 of A3(M). The Leigh Park estate is a 20mph zone with footways and street lighting. Havant town centre is located approximately 3km south east of the Site.

The traffic model assessment shows that in 2026 with Phase 1 and 2 of the development there would be an increase in queues and delays in the local road network. In particular queues would increase at the Hulbert Road / Purbrook Way roundabout and journey time increases would be most significant travelling southbound on Hulbert Road. These impacts are offset to some extent by the significant improvements to the public transport network that would be facilitated by the site with the Cross Borough Service.

Air Quality

Air quality in the vicinity of the Site is likely to be relatively good, as pollutant concentrations are currently below the Air Quality Strategy (AQS) objectives, and HBC has not currently declared any Air Quality Management Areas.

The Site is located in a residential area with no permitted industrial installations within a one kilometre radius. The nearest major pollutant source to the site is the A3(M). There are no designated international ecological sites within a kilometre of the proposed site.

There are 444 properties within 200 metres of the development. Provided dust mitigation measures are implemented during construction, the risk to these surrounding properties from dust nuisance would be negligible. Traffic travelling to and from the Site during construction would be most likely to use the A3(M) for access, with construction workers additionally using the local road network. The effect of construction traffic is expected to be negligible.

Results of the local air quality assessment have shown that changes in concentrations of nitrogen dioxide and PM10 due to the Proposed Development are small or imperceptible at all receptors, in both future years of assessment. As concentrations

would be expected to remain below the AQS objectives both with and without the Proposed Development, the overall effect on air quality is considered to be negligible.

Noise and Vibration

With appropriate noise mitigation measures and good working practices, it would be possible to minimise the duration and extent of significant construction noise effects. A number of generic noise control measures have been described in the ES.

The operation of the site, including the car parks, site traffic and night time deliveries is unlikely to have a significant effect on the nearest noise sensitive properties. Where there may be potential noise impacts from the unknown usage of the units, the detailed design of the Proposed Development and conditions imposed can ensure that the nearest residents are not affected by the noise from the Site outside acceptable limits.

The noise from the A3(M), the access road, the car parks and night time deliveries is most likely to affect the proposed hotel. The design of the layout, construction and orientation of the hotel can influence the noise levels within the hotel bedrooms.

An increase in traffic flows by 25% or a decrease by 20% would result in a 1 dB noise change. It is expected that the additional road traffic generated by the Proposed Development would be sufficiently low volume not to affect existing road network.

Cultural Heritage

The Site contains no designated heritage assets and no significant known heritage assets. There would be no effects on any designated heritage assets and their settings.

The main issue identified was the likely significant effects of the Proposed Development on currently unidentified archaeological remains that may lie within the Site. This reflects the fact that the Site has not been subject to past development and construction phase of the development therefore has the potential to disturb and degrade currently unidentified archaeological remains. To address this issue, a

comprehensive programme of archaeological research has been recommended.

Ground Conditions and Land Contamination

No contaminated land was found during the recent limited intrusive investigation. There is some suggestion from the desk study that contaminated land may be present on the Site as a result of the infilling of ground with inert waste from the A3(M) construction works. This has been interpreted to mean excess spoil not required for the motorway earthworks. The presence of significant quantities of substances harmful to environmental or human receptors is expected to be unlikely. The effect on the scheme of any contaminated land is therefore assessed as neutral in the long term.

Water resources and Flood Risk

There is not anticipated to be any significant effects on the water environment during construction or operation.

The key water environmental receptors at the site include Hermitage Stream and Park Lane Stream. It is assumed that much of the surface water run-off will be discharged to these receptors. Due to the type of geology and the soils of the Site there will be no drainage directly to infiltration.

The provision of a restored section of Hermitage Stream will provide minor ecological geomorphological and local flood risk benefits to this Site.

The level of pollution from run-off from the main link road is low. However, to follow best practise and the general drainage philosophy for the Site, it is proposed that a form of sediment retention, such as swales or gully pots, is used, and storage provided for a serious spillage at the roundabouts to the west of the Site.

The Proposed Development will increase impermeable areas on Site and will require attenuation mitigation.

The differing land use will require different levels of mitigation. Examples of the different

levels of mitigation have been described in the ES.

Landscape and Visual Assessment

Landscape Effects

From a wider perspective the effects upon the landscape and other designations can be described as follows:

- No effect upon the South Downs National Park or the Chichester AONB, as the Site falls within the South Hampshire Lowlands (NCA 128) and sits within the settlement context of Waterlooville or Havant and not the more open land to the north which falls with the associated South Downs NCA,125;
- Localised impact upon the landscape character of the land within the Strategic Gap, with retention of the strong existing pattern of woodland compartments. The proposals do provide opportunity to reinforce woodland, particularly boundary planting, helping to mitigate the effects with careful location of proposed buildings within an overarching landscape structure;
- Minimal impact upon the wider landscape character areas;
- Impact upon site vegetation would be limited with the majority of vegetation retained and reinforced as part of the proposed landscape structure with the exception of the loss of the mature oak/ash trees along the proposed alignment of the link road to the immediate north of its junction with Hulbert Road. Localised mitigation measures could be employed such as 'No Dig Design Solutions' for trees which are located at the edge of the Link Road corridor;
- Impact upon the footpath network could be mitigated by providing footpaths and additional east-west connections, within the Site itself, encouraging walking;
- Watercourses, specifically Hermitage Stream, could be improved with retired banks and decanalised appearance. Woodland cover should be managed to diversify the habitat, improve accessibility

and potentially to create a north-south walk via Neville's Park; and

- Local environmental improvements could provide benefit to the wider Leigh Park especially on the eastern boundary of the Site; measures could include improvements to open space and management of spaces used for recreational purposes.

Overall, the impact upon the landscape of the Site is considered to be minor to moderate adverse, reducing to minor adverse with time, as the link road and development are integrated into the existing established landscape by the new landscape structure.

Visual Effects

Views to and from the Site are contained, limiting the visual influence of the Site and any associated impact upon the receptors identified. Those visual effects which are key to consider include:

- Views from the properties identified adjoining the Site, principally Calshott Road and Ramsdale Road, to identify adequate screening adjoining the Site and within the Site between the development parcels, particularly to screen any glimpse or oblique views from more distant views such as properties at the new Woolston Road development;
- Views of different parts of the Site from Bridleway 123 which will be close to development parcels and the views would change substantially. The development will need to consider how this route can be integrated and devise means of mitigating the visual effects. For example considering the potential for a new visual framework as part of the built form within the masterplan; and
- Limited visibility of elevated parts of the Site will need to be carefully considered in terms of the overall height of rooflines to avoid visual impact above tree canopies.

Overall, the impact upon the existing views is considered to be minor to moderate adverse, reducing to minor adverse with time, with the establishment of the structural landscape.

Ecology

A walk-over ecological survey of the Site and its immediate surrounds was undertaken on 20th July 2010 and on 12th August 2010, broadly following the 'Extended Phase 1' methodology as set out in Guidelines for Baseline Ecological Assessment (Institute of Environmental Assessment 1995). The land west of Hulbert Road was surveyed on 13th September 2011, based on the latest design for the connection of the new link road to Hulbert Road.

Further ecological surveys were undertaken between December 2010 and September 2011 to gather sufficient baseline information on protected species that could be affected by the Proposed Development, in order to inform the layout and design of the scheme.

A detailed vegetation survey was undertaken in May 2011 within fields in the south of the Site that will be directly affected by the construction of the link road. Five hedgerows that are within the Site or on the boundary were inspected in May 2011 in relation to the 'wildlife and landscape' criteria set out in Schedule 1 of the Hedgerow Regulations 1997. There are three hedgerows at the Site or on the boundary of the Site that appear to qualify as ecologically important hedgerows under the Hedgerow Regulations (1997).

The Site only includes a small area of woodland at Neville's Park East SINC, although woodland adjoins the Site to the west, south and east boundary. These woodlands are designated as SINCS and are also either ancient woodlands or woodlands where there is a significant element of ancient semi-natural woodland surviving.

With proposed mitigation fully implemented, the significance of the overall effect of the Proposed Development on ecological features and protected species is likely to be neutral with some slight beneficial impacts and some slight adverse.

Waste and Recycling

The Proposed Development will result in the generation of 16,901 tonnes of construction waste and 2,751 tonnes per annum of

commercial and industrial waste. If good recycling practices are adopted it will be possible to reduce the volumes of waste by at least 60% for construction and demolition waste and at least 50% for operational waste. This will reduce the impact of the waste on the existing waste treatment capacity in Hampshire and the associated environmental impacts. As the waste produced is minimal in comparison to the overall waste arisings in Hampshire and the available treatment capacity it is expected that the Proposed Development will result in a minor impact in terms of waste.

Habitats Regulation Assessment

A Habitats Regulations Assessment Stage 1 - Screening exercise has been undertaken for this project and has been reported separately in Appendix 15.1, Volume 3 of the ES. The Screening report focused on possible likely significant effects of the Dunsbury Hill Farm project on seven international sites, as agreed with Natural England.

The study showed that there are no likely significant effects on the international sites considered in this Stage 1 - Screening due to construction and/or operation of the Dunsbury Hill Farm development alone or in combination with other plans and projects, and that there is therefore no requirement for any further stages of the HRA process (i.e. Stage 2 - Appropriate Assessment) to be completed.

Cumulative Effects

The consideration of cumulative effects has determined that there are no interactions between the environmental topics that form part of the EIA that are likely to result in a significant effect on a single receptor.

It also confirmed that there are no relevant Core Strategy site allocations or consented schemes which might contribute to an assessment of cumulative effects save in respect of transport modelling. The EIA has concluded that the moderate increase in traffic flows will lead to imperceptible changes in traffic noise and air quality.

Conclusions

The Proposed Development responds to the need for increased employment in Havant and presents a sustainable way of accommodating a large part of Havant's development requirements.

This Environmental Statement has examined the significant environmental effects of the Proposed Development and has found that, whilst some adverse environmental effects are unavoidable, it is remarkable that, for a large scale development, the adverse effects are generally minor with many residual benefits being identified including a major beneficial socio-economic effect. Such adverse effects have been minimised, as far as is practicable, through sensitive and sustainable design and the adoption of best practice in the management and control of construction. These findings thus corroborate the initial work done by the Borough Council in identifying Dunsbury Hill as an area having the environmental capacity for major new development.

This Environmental Statement has been prepared by a team led by Atkins on behalf of Portsmouth City Council. It accompanies a planning application under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 for the development of land at Dunsbury Hill Farm for employment uses and a quality hotel with conference facilities.

Copies of the Environmental Statement can be purchased in a hard copy format for £80 (plus VAT) or on CD for £10 (plus VAT) by arrangement with Atkins at the address below:

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The application will be available to view and comment on via the Borough Council's website and in the Council offices.

