

Planning Statement

Taylor Wimpey UK Limited
Land at Bentfield Green, Stansted Mountfitchet
May 2013



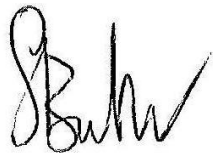
Quality Assurance

Site name: Land at Bentfield Green, Stansted Mountfitchet

Client name: Taylor Wimpey UK Limited

Type of report: Planning Statement

Prepared by: Steven Butler BSc MSc



Signed

Date 7 May 2013

Reviewed by: Andrew Blackwell BA (Hons) MRTPI



Signed

Date 7 May 2013

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Appendices

Appendix 1 – Uttlesford District Council EIA Scoping Opinion response

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared on behalf of Taylor Wimpey UK Limited (hereby referred to as the "Applicant") to support an (outline) application for the *erection of up to 140 dwellings, primary school, allotments, public open space, sports pavilion and associated car parking, village green provision, landscaping, and associated infrastructure and access* at Bentfield Green, Stansted Mountfitchet. It follows pre-application discussions with Officers at Uttlesford District Council and Essex County Council, and a public exhibition in Stansted Mountfitchet to inform local residents and interested parties of the proposals.
- 1.2 This Statement seeks to explain the proposals to the local planning authority, local community, and other interested parties, and sets out the main advantages of the scheme and the benefits it would bring to Uttlesford District Council. It includes a brief description of the site and deals with the main planning considerations. The relevant planning policy considerations are set out at Chapter 5 to this Statement.
- 1.3 The application is supported by a number of specialist studies that have been commissioned to consider, in detail, the constraints and opportunities relating to the site. These are:
- Design and Access Statement (prepared by CSa)
 - Extended Phase 1 Ecology Appraisal (CSa Environmental)
 - Flood Risk Assessment (Hannah Reed)
 - Utilities Appraisal (Hannah Reed)
 - Topographical Survey (Kings Land Surveys)
 - Transport (i-Transport)
 - Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Assessment (CSa)
 - Arboriculture (Ian Keen)
 - Heritage Desk-Based Assessment (CgMs)
 - Heritage Statement (CgMs)
 - Education Site Suitability Statement (Bidwells)
 - Statement of Community Involvement (Bidwells)

2 Overview of the Proposed Development

- 2.1 This application seeks planning permission for up to 140 dwellings, with a primary school, allotments, public open space, sports pavilion and associated parking, village green provision, changing rooms pavilion, landscaping, and associated infrastructure and access.
- 2.2 The application is in Outline form, with all matters reserved with the exception of Access. (Landscaping, Scale, Appearance and Layout are Reserved Matters).

Headline Information

- 2.3 The key points about the application are as follows:
- The application site is 14.98 hectares (ha) in size
 - Up to 140 homes on a 4.57ha section of the site comprising an average density of approximately 31 dwellings per hectare
 - 40% affordable housing split across tenures (tenure and mix to be agreed)
 - 2½ storey maximum building height across the site
 - 2 points of vehicle access into the site, both from Pennington Lane only. Proposed pedestrian and cycle access via Bentfield Bower to proposed village green
 - Section of Pennington Lane between Rainsford Road and Long Croft to be downgraded to prohibit vehicle accesses but to allow pedestrian and cycle access
 - 1 form entry primary school and pre-school in the northern part of the site – Bentfield Primary School would be retained as existing
 - Proposed dwellings would achieve a privacy distance of at least 46 metres from existing residential properties in the vicinity
 - Sports ground and pavilion to serve local community. Ample off-street parking to be provided at Pavilion.
 - Legal agreement between the Applicant, Uttlesford District Council, and Essex County Council to ensure the delivery of land for the school site, money for early years and primary provision, open space and sports pavilion maintenance, and provision of highway improvements

- 2.4 Image 1 below shows the proposed site layout. It shows the arrangement of the dwellings, areas set aside for landscape buffering, the school, play space, and means of proposed access into the site.



Image 1: Indicative Masterplan

Context

- 2.5 The development is proposed in response to an identified housing shortage in the District of Uttlesford. The land at Bentfield Green has many features which make it suitable for residential development in the short term:
- Containment and reinforcement of existing countryside landscape features
 - Green Belt protection
 - Sustainable location
 - New allotments
 - Extended village green area
 - New playing fields
 - Extended school facilities

- 2.6 This scheme represents a significant refinement of earlier iterations for development of the site which were offered through the emerging Local Plan process and at the public exhibition for the application. The masterplan proposed by this application has been influenced by the ecological and landscape constraints, supporting studies and recommended mitigation measures, in addition to the views of local residents obtained at the public exhibition.

Supporting Information

- 2.7 The suite of technical evidence which supports the application has been subject to a scoping exercise with Uttlesford District Council as part of the pre-application process. In the opinion of Uttlesford District Council the submission of an Environmental Impact Assessment was not considered necessary. The accompanying documents are listed at 1.3 above.
- 2.8 The accompanying Statement of Community Involvement explains how the views of local residents and interested parties have been taken into consideration in the preparation of the scheme following feedback from the public exhibition.
- 2.9 The Design and Access Statement explains how the proposed scheme would integrate with the locality. It explains the rationale for the proposed use, amount, layout, scale and appearance of the development together with an indication of landscaping and access considerations.
- 2.10 The Transport Assessment sets out a detailed justification for the scheme in terms of its impact upon existing highways and access conditions in Stansted Mountfitchet.
- 2.11 The remaining supporting studies and surveys submitted with the application combine to demonstrate that, subject to suitable mitigation and use of conditions where necessary, the proposals would not only be acceptable in planning terms, but would be of significant benefit to the locality and wider Uttlesford District.

3 **The Site**

- 3.1 The application site is shown on the attached Site Location Plan reference CSa/1936/129 and the proposed Illustrative Masterplan reference CSa/1936/120. It comprises a parcel of land approximately 14.98 hectares in size on the north-western fringe of Stansted Mountfitchet. No part of the site is within the Metropolitan Green Belt. Image 2 below shows an aerial photograph of the site and its surroundings:



Image 2: The site and its surroundings

- 3.2 A full description of the site and its surroundings is set out in the accompanying Design and Access Statement.
- 3.3 Pennington Lane borders the site along its eastern boundary. This is where vehicle and principal points of pedestrian access to the site are proposed. To the south the site backs on to residential properties on Bentfield Green and to Bentfield Bower. To the north are open arable agricultural fields separated, in part, by an existing belt of landscape buffer.
- 3.4 Public transport accessibility from the site is good and the site is within close walking distance of existing bus services on Bentfield Bower/Bentfield End Causeway, Bentfield Green and Cambridge Road in Stansted Mountfitchet. The site is within a short walking distance of Stansted Mountfitchet

station on the West Anglia Main Line which operates regular services to London Liverpool Street, and to Cambridge and beyond.

- 3.5 Stansted Mountfitchet benefits from a good range of local services and facilities, including two primary schools and a secondary school, a library, a doctor's surgery, a number of pubs and restaurants, and convenience retail outlets on Cambridge Road, and the junction between Chapel Hill and Lower Street.

4 Background to the Current Proposal

- 4.1 Historical records show that the site has been used for arable agricultural purposes up the present day.
- 4.2 In 2008 a planning application for the change of use of the part of the land north of Bentfield Green Farmhouse from agricultural land to a playing field, including the erection of changing facilities, was refused in May 2008 under reference number UTT/0210/08/FUL. A subsequent appeal was dismissed in May 2009, the Inspector taking the view that the visual impact and location of the changing facilities within close proximity of Bentfield Bower, and the additional vehicular traffic caused by the development due to the location of the proposed access, would have an unacceptable impact upon the character, appearance and tranquillity of the Bentfield Green Conservation Area.
- 4.3 The development proposed by this application has had regard to the constraints presented by the 2009 appeal decision. An explanation for the way it addresses the issues is contained in the Planning Assessment at chapter 5 of this Statement.

5 Planning Policy

- 5.1 This chapter provides an explanation of the composition of the applicable sources of relevant planning policy and the weight that can be attached to it in light of the National Planning Policy Framework (hereafter referred to as "the Framework"). It then identifies the policy guidance which is of relevance to the determination of this planning application.

Basis for Decision Making

- 5.2 Section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states that the determination of proposals must be made in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Development Plan

- 5.3 The applicable development plan comprises the Uttlesford Local Plan (2005) saved policies (2007). The time horizon of the Local Plan was up to the year 2011. It is important to note that even though the saved policies of the Uttlesford Local Plan form part of the Development Plan, these policies fall within a category referred to in paragraph 215 of the Framework which states that:

Due weight should be given to relevant policies in existing plans according to their degree of consistency with the Framework (the closer the policies in the plan to the policies in the Framework, the greater weight that may be given).

- 5.4 Taken in tandem with paragraph 197 of the Framework, the policies of the Development Plan must be balanced against consistency with the Framework and that the Framework exerts the more significant force given its recent publication. This is elaborated upon at paragraph 15 below.
- 5.5 The Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government laid an order before Parliament to revoke the East of England Plan from 3 January 2013. These policies therein no longer form part of the Development Plan for the site and therefore are not mentioned in any depth in this Statement.

Emerging Replacement Development Plan

- 5.6 The Council is in the process of replacing the saved policies of the current Local Plan with its new Local Plan. It published the Public Participation on Development Plan Document, Consultation on

Proposals for a Draft Local Plan in summer 2012. When adopted, the new Local Plan will set out the vision, objectives and spatial development strategy for the District up to 2027 together with a suite of policies to be used in the determination of planning applications.

- 5.7 Limited weight can be attributed to the Draft Local Plan in the determination of this planning application because it is still at an early stage of its production and has not been subject to an examination by an Inspector (the Council expected to adopt the plan by the end of 2013 at the time of the Draft Local Plan publication but the adoption has been delayed beyond this date). Nevertheless, a number of its draft development management policies give an indication of the Council's expectations of applicants in the consideration of proposals for development.

National Planning Policy Framework

- 5.8 The Framework was published by the Government on 27 March 2012 and is a material consideration of considerable weight in the determination of this planning application. The Framework sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how it expects them to be applied (paragraph 1). The document replaces and consolidates previous Government policy statements and guidance and introduces new considerations that may not be reflected by development plan policies that were prepared and adopted in accordance with previous guidance.
- 5.9 As a consequence, the Framework states that up until 27 March 2013 (one year from its publication) decision-takers may give full weight to development plan policies adopted since 2004 if there is a limited degree of conflict with the Framework (paragraph 214). In other cases, adopted policies are to be given weight according to the degree of consistency with the Framework – the closer the policies in the plan to the policies in the Framework, the greater the weight that may be given (paragraph 215).
- 5.10 In light of this advice, since the application will be determined after March 27 2013, the policies in the Local Plan will be considered out-of-date and its policies can only be given 'due weight' according to the degree of consistency with the Framework.
- 5.11 In accordance with paragraph 216 of the Framework, the policies in the Council's Draft Local Plan may be given due weight according to the stage of preparation, and degree of consistency with the Framework.

Other Material Considerations

- 5.12 The Council has published Supplementary Planning Guidance on Accessible Homes and Playspace (adopted 2005), Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy (adopted 2007), and design in the Essex Design Guide (adopted 2005). These documents are all relevant material considerations.

Planning Policy Guidance

- 5.13 This section provides a brief summary of the most relevant policies contained in the Framework, draft Local Plan and adopted Local Plan that should be taken into account in the determination of this planning application.
- 5.14 Because the draft Local Plan and the majority of the adopted Local Plan can only be given weight according to the degree of consistency with the Framework, the information presented and the planning assessment that follows focuses mainly on the guidance of the Framework, as far as it is relevant to this planning application.

National Planning Policy Framework

The presumption in favour of sustainable development

- 5.15 At the heart of the Framework is the introduction of a 'presumption in favour of sustainable development'.
- 5.16 For decision taking, this means approving development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Critically, where the plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out of date (as is the case for this planning application), the Framework advocates that permission should be granted unless:
- ***The adverse impacts of doing so would "significantly and demonstrably" outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole; or***
 - ***The policies in the Framework indicate that development should be restricted (paragraph 14).***
- 5.17 In determining proposals, local planning authorities are required to apply the presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraph 197). They should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible, working proactively to secure developments that improve

the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area (paragraph 187). The Framework states that its contents, taken as a whole, constitute the Government's view of what sustainable development means in practice (paragraph 6).

- 5.18 The Framework's guidance in respect of housing, design, sustainable transport and the conservation of the historic and natural environment is particularly pertinent to the consideration of this application. Relevant details are explained below.

Delivering a wide choice of high quality homes

- 5.19 The provision of housing to meet needs contributes to the social dimension of sustainable development (paragraph 7). Widening the choice of high quality homes is recognised as a positive improvement (paragraph 9). To do so, local planning authorities are required to plan for a mix of house sizes, types and tenures to meet local needs (paragraph 50).
- 5.20 The Framework seeks to significantly boost the supply of housing and requires local authorities to maintain a sufficient supply of specific deliverable sites to provide five years worth of housing plus an additional buffer of 5% to ensure choice and competition in the market for land (paragraph 47).
- 5.21 The Framework makes clear that housing applications should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development. Critically, where local authorities cannot demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable sites it states that:

"Relevant policies for the supply of housing should not be considered up-to-date" (paragraph 49).

- 5.22 In such cases, the guidance of paragraph 14 (described at paragraph 16 above) is applicable.

Requiring good design

- 5.23 The promotion of good design is one of the 12 core planning principles promoted by the Framework. It states that good design is indivisible from good planning (paragraph 56) and permission should be refused for developments of poor design that fail to take the opportunities available for improving the quality and character of an area and the way it functions (paragraph 64).
- 5.24 The Framework provides guidance on what constitutes good design, stating that local planning policies and decisions should aim to ensure that new developments:
- Will function well and add to the overall quality of the area;

- Establish a strong sense of place;
- Optimise the potential of the site to accommodate development, creating and sustaining an appropriate mix of uses (including the incorporation of public open space);
- Respond to local character and history whilst not preventing or discouraging innovation;
- Create safe and accessible environments;
- Are visually attractive as a result of good architecture and appropriate landscaping (paragraph 58).

Sustainable transport

- 5.25 The Framework supports a pattern of development that facilitates the use of sustainable modes of transport and reduces greenhouse gas emissions and congestion (paragraph 30). It aims for a balance of land uses within an area so that people can be encouraged to minimise journey lengths for employment, shopping, leisure, education and other activities (paragraph 37).
- 5.26 All developments that generate significant amounts of movement should be supported by a Transport Assessment. Plans and decisions should take account of whether improvements can be undertaken within the transport network that cost-effectively limit the significant impacts of the development. The Framework states that development should only be prevented or refused on transport grounds where the residual cumulative impacts of development are severe (paragraph 32).
- 5.27 The Framework states that decisions on planning applications should ensure developments that generate significant movement are located where the need to travel will be minimised and the use of sustainable transport modes can be maximised (paragraph 34).

Promoting healthy communities

- 5.28 The Framework states that the planning system can play an important role in facilitating social interaction and creating healthy, inclusive communities. To deliver the social and recreational facilities the community needs, opportunities should be sought to plan for the provision and use of shared open space and community facilities, such as sports buildings, to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments.

Conservation of the natural environment

- 5.29 The Framework outlines how the planning system should seek to minimise the impact on, and provide net gains in biodiversity. This can be achieved through establishing coherent ecological networks resistant to current and future pressures (paragraph 109).
- 5.30 Development of brownfield land should be encouraged, but the Framework notes that any targets should be 'locally appropriate' (paragraph 111). Where this is not possible and significant development of agricultural land is demonstrated to be necessary, local planning authorities should seek to use areas of poorer quality land in preference to that of higher quality (paragraph 112).

Conservation of the historic environment

- 5.31 The Framework states that heritage assets should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance (paragraph 126). Applicants are required to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal upon their significance (paragraph 128).
- 5.32 When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. Substantial harm to or loss of a listed building, park or garden should be exceptional (Grade II) or wholly exceptional (Grades I or II*) (paragraph 133). Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm, this harm should be weighted against the public benefits of the proposal (paragraph 134).

Public rights of way

- 5.33 The Framework states that policies should protect and enhance public rights of way and access, and that local authorities should seek opportunities to provide better facilities for users (paragraph 75).

Summary of the Framework

- 5.34 The Framework contains important policies relevant to the determination of this planning application in relation to sustainability, transport, design, conservation and, in particular, housing. These policy aims should be given considerable weight as it can be demonstrated that the Local

Plan policies relevant to the delivery of housing are out of date, and as such precedence should be given to the Framework in the decision making process.

Uttlesford Local Plan

- 5.35 The status and relevance of the Uttlesford Local Plan is subject to the guidance contained in the Framework. For the reasons set out between 15 and 22 above, policies in the Local Plan relevant to the delivery of housing are out of date. This includes policies S1 (Development Limits for Major Urban Areas), and S7 (The Countryside) which as a matter of principle seek to resist development which do not accord with those policies. For the purpose of this application only the relevant up-to-date policies are to be mentioned as part of this Appendix.
- 5.36 Part of the site is adjacent to the Bentfield Green Conservation Area, the boundary of which was extended since the adoption of the Local Plan proposals map and is shown at Image 2 below. As such the proposal must have regard to the provisions of Policy ENV1 – Design of Development within Conservation Areas, in that it must not have a significant negative impact upon its character and appearance.

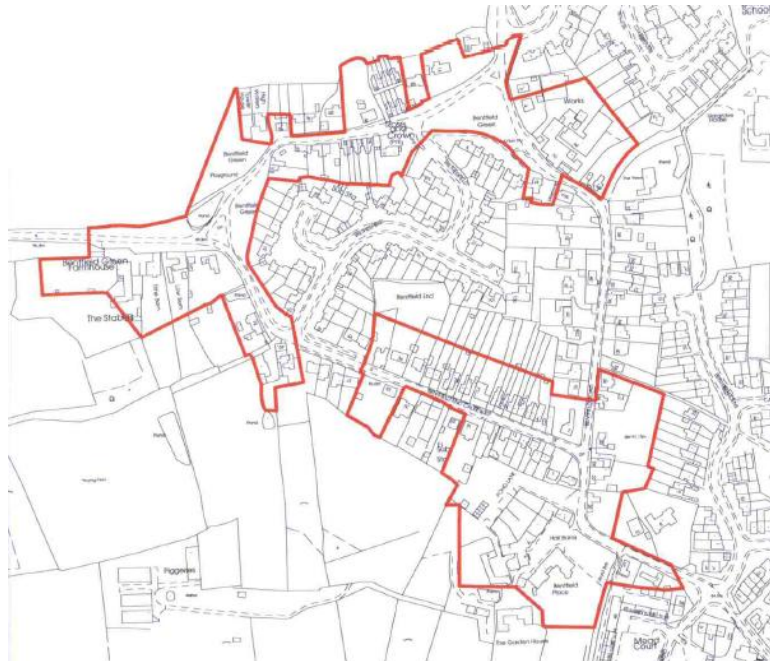


Image 2: Bentfield Green Conservation Area

- 5.37 The part of Pennington Lane adjacent to the north eastern corner of the site is a Protected Lane and is covered by policy ENV9. Development proposals likely to harm such features will not be permitted under this policy. Uttlesford District Council Protected Lanes Assessment (2012) determines that the section of Pennington Lane north of the existing allotments (to the north of the existing junction with Rainsford Road) should retain its historic lane protected status and therefore remains covered by policy ENV9 and relevant to the determination of this application.
- 5.38 In addition to the above there are a number of general Local Plan policies that are applicable to the consideration of an application on this site. These are as follows:
- GEN1 – Access
 - GEN2 – Design
 - GEN3 – Flood Protection
 - GEN4 – Good Neighbourliness
 - GEN6 – Infrastructure Provision to Support Development
 - GEN8 – Vehicle Parking Standards
 - ENV3 – Open Spaces and Trees
 - ENV5 – Protection of Agricultural Land
 - H1 – Housing Development
 - H9 – Affordable Housing
 - H10 – Housing Mix
 - T1 – Transport Improvements

Supplementary Planning Documents

Essex Design Guide

- 5.39 The Essex Design Guide sets out a range of criteria to guide the layout and design of the development.

Accessible Homes and Playspace

- 5.40 The Accessible Homes and Playspace SPD (205) sets out criteria for housing to be delivered to Lifetimes Homes Standards, wheelchair housing and accessible play space

Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy

- 5.41 The Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy SPD (2007) advises that the Council will negotiate to achieve the requirements of Level Three of the Code for Sustainable Homes up to 2012. After this the Council will encourage all development to achieve a four star rating up to 2016 when all development will be expected to be zero carbon with a six star rating. The SPD encourages developers to provide at least 10% of the predicted energy requirements for the development from renewable or low carbon energy sources on all developments of five or more homes. It also sets out advice on how to achieve energy efficiency.

Uttlesford Local Residential Parking Standards

- 5.42 The Uttlesford Local Residential Parking Standards was adopted by Uttlesford District Council in February 2013. It sets out detailed requirements for the quantity, design and layout of parking spaces and garaging for residential development. It retains the standards previously prescribed in the Essex County Council Parking Standards, which was adopted in 2009, but due to local circumstances it adds an additional requirement for 4+ bedroomed houses.

Emerging Local Plan

- 5.43 Uttlesford District Council's adopted Local Plan is to be replaced by a new Local Plan. The Council published its Public Participation on Development Plan Document, Consultation on Proposals for a Draft Local Plan in June 2012. It was due to adopt the new Local Plan by the end of 2013 but due to delays has not, at the time of writing this statement, published its submission consultation document. Adoption is therefore unlikely to occur until mid 2014 at the earliest.
- 5.44 Draft policy SP6 (Housing Strategy) identifies locations for accommodating housing growth including settlement expansions at the market towns. Only 60 dwellings are proposed to be allocated within the existing development boundary at Stansted Mountfitchet. Notwithstanding this very small proposed allocation (compared to the size of the settlement and its future locally generated housing needs), the policy sets out the following factors which will be taken into consideration in identifying [unallocated] sites on the edge of the market towns and key villages, including Stansted Mountfitchet:
- Proximity of the site to existing services and facilities
 - Impact upon the settlement character – the approaches to the settlement and the historic core
 - Impact upon the countryside setting of the settlement

- Use of brownfield sites
- Loss of any existing use of the site such as employment or recreational uses

Summary

- 5.45 Due to the status of the adopted Local Plan, the policies contained within the Framework should be given precedence in the decision making process – the scheme should be assessed in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development. The policies of the emerging Local Plan should be given limited weight due to the relatively early stage in its production. It nevertheless contains a number of criteria that give an indication of the Council's expectations of applicants in determining proposals for sustainable development.
- 5.46 Having regard to the Framework and the principles of sustainable development contained therein, **permission should be granted for the development unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits**, when assessed against the policies contained in the Framework taken as a whole.
- 5.47 The planning advantages of the scheme which are set out in the relevant accompanying reports and are also discussed in chapter 6 of this Statement. These, in addition to the policy considerations set out above, provide a compelling case in favour of the grant of planning permission.

6 Planning Assessment

- 6.1 In the adopted Local Plan for Uttlesford the site is located outside the development boundary for Stansted Mountfitchet where residential development would not normally be allowed, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In the emerging Local Plan Stansted Mountfitchet is identified as a key village in the settlement hierarchy but is proposed to be allocated only 60 dwellings up to the year 2028 – in addition the site is not proposed for allocation. It is therefore clear that this application would need to provide compelling reasons why development of this site should be accepted now.

The Need for Housing

- 6.2 Having regard to the circumstances set out above, a new circumstance in the determination of this application is the Council's significant shortage of housing land supply, which is calculated at present as being between 3.2 and 3.9 years. This is identified in the Council's Housing Trajectory Statement of 5 Year Land Supply 2012. The gap clearly needs to be addressed in order to prevent the current deficit from getting worse.
- 6.3 Notwithstanding the immediate deficit, there is even further emerging evidence which demonstrates that the current housing trajectory in the District will need to be at the very least maintained in order to meet locally generated need going forward. In line with the requirement set out in the Framework, that Councils should ensure that their Local Plans "meet the full objectively assessed housing needs for market and affordable housing in their area" (paragraph 47), the District Council has recently commissioned work on arriving at a locally derived housing figure. The Greater Essex Demographic Forecasts produced by Edge Analytics identifies a range of potential housing scenarios. Scenarios based upon *household projections* (as per the 2009 SHMA growth scenario) suggest a requirement for increased housing numbers than the level currently set out in the Draft Local Plan, which proposes only 388 dwellings per annum based upon *economic projections*. The current demographic forecasts have suggested a housing need of some 415 dwellings within the District, and this figure still lies towards the lower end of the scale of scenarios modelled. There is therefore a strong likelihood that the housing requirement in Uttlesford District will need to increase even further.
- 6.4 The ability of the current proposals to address clear evidence of need for market and affordable housing in Uttlesford District is a compelling consideration in favour of the application proposals.

The Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

- 6.5 Another new circumstance, and significant material consideration in favour of development of this site, is the National Planning Policy Framework (the "Framework"). The relevant policies of the Framework are set out in detail in Chapter 5 to this Statement above, alongside the relevant policies and guidance contained within the development plan and other material considerations, and critically, the weight that should be attached to each set of policies and guidance contained within them.
- 6.6 The central theme of the Framework is the presumption in favour of sustainable development and this is a consideration of considerable weight in the determination of this application. The relevant policies of the Uttlesford Local Plan are out of date and the benefits of granting permission for the development would significantly outweigh any adverse impacts of doing so.
- 6.7 In the first instance the technical evidence submitted with this application in the accompanying statements demonstrates that the development proposed by this application is sustainable. The development also offers many overarching benefits which are supported by the Framework, and correlate with the Council's aspiration to protect the Green Belt. Planning permission for the scheme should therefore be granted without delay. The key benefits are considered in detail below.

The Benefits of the Development

Suitability of the Application Site

Suitability of Stansted Mountfitchet

- 6.8 Stansted Mountfitchet is identified as a key village in the Uttlesford Draft Local Plan. It had a population of 5,533 (2001 Census) which is now estimated to be increased with the construction of some 700 houses in the south of the parish. It ranks third in the size of settlements within the District and has a good range of services including retail, school facilities, doctor's and dentist's surgeries, a mainline railway station, and is well located in relation to major employment provision at London Stansted Airport. It is also located within very close reach of higher order services at Bishop's Stortford, and has good access to the M11 at Junction 8. Its size and range of facilities in terms of infrastructure and connections therefore make it a suitable settlement for carrying further housing to meet locally generated demand in the short term.

- 6.9 That the site is located on land directly adjacent to Stansted Mountfitchet, outside of the Metropolitan Green Belt, is further consideration in favour of the application proposals that reflects both the Framework and Local Plan policy.

Green Belt Protection

- 6.10 The proposed development would provide for a sustainable expansion of Stansted Mountfitchet in a way that correlates with the Council's key policy objective to protect the Metropolitan Green Belt. The settlement is protected to the south, west and east by Green Belt policy. The designation and determination of precise boundaries reflects a painstaking exercise undertaken in 1995 as part of the adoption of the Local Plan which is still reflected in the most up-to-date policy guidance. The essential aims of the Green Belt are outlined in the Framework, one main purpose of which is the need to "*prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another*". In the Draft Local Plan the Council has given further emphasis to earlier expressions of Green Belt protection in the preparation of the Local Plan by confirming it as its lead objective "*to maintain and protect the Metropolitan Green Belt by allowing building in only the most exceptional circumstances*". The application site is not in the Green Belt and is therefore suitable for the proposed development.

Characteristics of the Site

- 6.11 In the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) (2012) the site is identified as unsuitable due, firstly, to landscape impact and, secondly, to the access via Pennington Lane. To make such an assumption about the development proposed by this planning application would disregard the facts of the case. In particular:
- Landscape containment. The proposed masterplan responds specifically to the opportunities posed for landscape protection, improvement, and reinforcement for the site set out in the Council's independently commissioned Landscape Character Assessment, undertaken by Chris Blandford Associates (2006). The Indicative Masterplan has paid close attention to issues such as scale, form, and extent of proposed landscaping features, in order to sensitively plan the development in accordance with the Proposed Landscape Strategy Objectives in the Assessment which states that "*subject to careful regard to issues of scale and form, there is scope to incorporate sensitively planned urban extensions on the edges of historic villages*". The Accompanying Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment explains in greater detail how the proposal has been sensitively planned in this regard.
 - Access via Pennington Lane. In terms of the suitability of the access, the potential yield based upon the SHLAA methodology identified scope for between 169 and 281 dwellings. The quantum of development proposed by this application, at 140 dwellings, is significantly below

this assumption. The development takes its lead from the capacity of the surrounding highway network, fresh survey information, and subsequent refinements to the proposed junction configurations at Pennington Lane. The most up-to-date Transport Assessment, which accompanies the application, has taken account of feedback received at the public exhibition and subsequent traffic surveys have been completed to find the optimum level of development for the site to ensure that the traffic and access impact would remain at acceptable levels.

Type and Quantum of Development

6.12 The proposed development would deliver up to 140 dwellings on the site. This amount would provide a critical mass of population to support the provision of a new school on the site whilst at the same time ensuring that the density of the development within the developable area relates well to the character of existing residential areas adjacent, and that the on-site sports facilities, allotments, and open space would benefit from optimum patronage from residents. The accompanying Land Use Plan sets out the following features:

- **31%** of the total site area would be set aside for the residential land use, which equates to a density of approximately 30.6 dwellings per hectare (or 12.4 dwellings per acre). This density is clearly reflective of achieving a density of development that responds to the characteristics of the local built environment, and the desirability of the built form of the development to future occupiers itself.
- **22%** of the site would be dedicated to structural landscaping and SuDS features. The structural landscaping, including the retention of existing and establishment of new buffering along the northern boundary, would effectively minimise the impact of development upon the appearance of the countryside to the north. SuDS features including swales and balancing ponds would be positioned in the south eastern corner of the site primarily for the purpose of effective drainage and water regulation, but with the added benefit of enabling the development to mesh harmoniously with the built up edge of the existing settlement.
- **38%** of the site would be dedicated to public open spaces. This includes the area set aside for the sports pavilion, pitches, village green, and allotments. The area set aside for these uses would occupy by far the largest amount of space within the site and is ample to the scale and location of the development.
- **9%** of the site would be occupied by the proposed school. The location, siting and design of the school has been finalised and agreed with Essex County Council, the local

education authority, during the course of pre-application discussions. The suitability of the school site, in terms of compliance with detailed assessment criteria, is covered in the accompanying Education Site Suitability Statement.

- 6.13 The percentages set out above have been derived utilising a constraints-led approach to the Masterplan, having regard to the level of landscape buffering, open space, SuDS and ecological mitigation proposed, in conjunction with the findings of the public exhibition and outcomes of the Transport Assessment which based its surveys according to a worst-case-scenario assessment.
- 6.14 Detailed considerations of the amount and distribution of uses within the development are set out in the Design and Access Statement.

Education Site Provision

- 6.15 Bentfield Primary School is currently at capacity. This problem is compounded by the lack of available space at the school for expansion. The application site is some 100 metres away from Bentfield Primary School and provides a realistic and feasible opportunity to address this capacity issue in the short term.
- 6.16 The proposed primary school would be 1 form entry and would have a pre-school facility on the site. This facility would be in addition to Bentfield Primary School, which would remain unchanged as a result of the implementation of planning permission for this development, should it be granted. This would be subject to a legal agreement between the Applicant, local planning authority and education authority. The Applicant has received the continued support of ECC in the development and refinement of the school proposals since pre-application discussions commenced in October 2012.
- 6.17 Accompanying the application is an Education Site Suitability Statement which sets out in detail how the school site would meet the suitability criteria set by ECC when assessing potential sites. The exact position of the school within the application site has been refined to take account of comments raised by ECC officers during the pre-application process in this respect.

Dwelling Size and Tenure Mix

- 6.18 The masterplan proposal has been devised in liaison with Uttlesford District Council's Housing Officers to ensure that the scheme would meet locally generated need in accordance with the most up-to-date housing market evidence (UDC Housing Strategy 2012-2015), in line with the guidance contained within the Framework. The exact number, size, and tenure split of dwellings is to be

agreed at the reserved matters stage, however a breakdown of the likely dwelling types is as follows:

- Mix of sizes from 1 to 5 bedroomed dwellings including apartments/flats
- 40% affordable housing across tenures
- 5% bungalows

Deliverability

- 6.19 The Framework places a priority upon sites which are "*deliverable*" i.e. "*available now*", in a suitable location for housing and "*with a realistic prospect that the housing will be delivered within five years and in particular that development of the site is viable*" (the Framework footnote 11).
- 6.20 The Applicant has a proven track record of delivering residential development and is committed to the early delivery of the site for development. Residential development on the application site is deliverable in the short term, coming forward over the period 2014 to 2018-19. It is available for development now as it is under the control of a single party and is unencumbered in all respects.

Sustainability and Accessibility

- 6.21 The application site is located within a sustainable location in Stansted Mountfitchet; in terms of walking it would be accessed by safe, convenient and attractive footways for pedestrians from Pennington Lane. These footways would provide access to the nearest bus stop some 60 metres to the south of the site's boundary. This stop is served by two regular bus routes (the 7A and 306) to Stansted Airport, Bishop's Stortford, and Wicken Bonhunt. Further bus routes are available from Cambridge Road. The mainline railway station is only 1.2km to the south of the site, which is equivalent to a 15 minute walk or a 5 minute cycle.
- 6.22 A residential Travel Information Pack would be provided for each dwelling as part of the house purchaser's Welcome Pack. This accords with Essex County Council's policy to reduce the need to travel by car and encourage sustainable travel. The accompanying Transport Assessment provides further details as to the benefits of the site in terms of its accessibility.
- 6.23 In terms of environmental sustainability, the design and construction of the school would meet the BREEAM rating of very good. All new homes would be designed to achieve a maximum of Code 3 Level of the Code for Sustainable Homes. In addition, a range of other measures would help achieve high sustainability credentials, including:

- Water Conservation – Low use sanitary features to help minimise water consumption
- Site Waste Management Plan – to include procedures for the minimisation of waste production and the diversity away from landfill. Details may be controlled via reserved matters or through a planning condition
- Construction – promotion of the Considerable Constructors Scheme

6.24 All construction works would comply with part M of the Building Regulations.

Ecological Enhancement

6.25 The site is presently dominated by arable agricultural land and is considered in the accompanying Ecological Appraisal to be of low botanical and ecological value. A number of habitats are found to be present on the site, and the strategic landscaping proposed as part of the scheme would provide excellent opportunities for the enhancement of these habitats, in particular for bats and invertebrates. The inclusion of new SuDS water features and new hedgerows also offer the potential for further enhancement. The masterplan shows that the scheme would provide a clear enhancement over existing conditions and it is proposed to reserve details of such enhancements for the Reserved Matters stage.

Preservation of Heritage Assets and Landscape Containment

6.26 The accompanying Built Heritage Statement confirms that the proposed Masterplan has been sensitively designed to mitigate and minimise the effects of development upon Bentfield Green Conservation Area and nearby Listed Buildings. Moreover, the scheme provides additional measures to ensure that the Bentfield Green Conservation Area would be enhanced as a result of the scheme.

6.27 In the first instance it is clear, based upon the 2009 Appeal proposal for a sports ground and changing facilities (referred to at 4.2 above), that the scheme proposed by this development is required to adequately address the Inspector's comments concerning harm to the character, appearance, and tranquillity of the Bentfield Green Conservation Area. The proposed points of vehicle access into the site would be located sufficiently far away from the Conservation Area boundary so as to avoid unnecessary vehicle movements within its proximity or boundaries. In addition, the allotments have been sensitively located to buffer the new development from existing premises on Bentfield Green in order to mitigate against the impact of urbanisation on the listed buildings and Conservation Area.

- 6.28 Furthermore, the proposed village green has been designed and positioned immediately adjacent to the Conservation Area boundary to further enhance its character, appearance and tranquillity. Further details in this respect are set out in the accompanying Design and Access Statement.
- 6.29 In terms of landscape containment, it is clear that the landscaping has been designed to ensure that the proposals are accommodated in the site without adversely impacting on the landscape character or setting of the wider countryside. Similarly, views from the adjoining settlement, including the Bentfield Green Conservation Area, are limited by existing development at or adjacent to the Site boundaries.
- 6.30 The siting of the proposed dwellings adjacent to Pennington Lane are set behind a linear area of open space which contains a swale. A privacy distance of at least 46 metres would be achieved between the fronts of the new houses and the existing properties along Long Croft in order to preserve existing amenity.
- 6.31 The setting of the protected section of Pennington Lane would also be retained because the houses would be set back from the route behind an area of open space. Most notably, the village green and playing fields would make a positive contribution to the setting of Bentfield Green and the interface with the adjoining countryside.

Other Detailed Considerations

Highways and Access

- 6.32 It was revealed as part of the Community Engagement process that a common local concern was the impact of the proposed development upon the existing local highway network. The Transport Assessment process has tested for a scheme of 170 units, 30 more than the number proposed the application. It provides an analysis of existing conditions and has been subject to regular liaison and review with Essex County Council, the local Highway Authority (ECC). The Transport Assessment provides a robust, worst case assessment of the potential traffic generation of the proposals. Most significantly it has been demonstrated that the junctions which were assessed as having the greatest impact from the proposal do and will continue to operate within their operational capacity. No highway improvements are required to mitigate the impact of the proposal.
- 6.33 In terms of access, the development would have two points of vehicle access into the site to ensure that it is fully integrated with the existing surrounding residential areas. As part of the access strategy the following features are offered:

- Financial contribution to Essex County Council, the Local Highway Authority, to provide drawings, undertake the consultation, and implement the works to prohibit vehicular access to the section of Pennington Lane between the two points of proposed vehicle access. Essex County Council is supportive of this strategy.
- The site layout allows for a future public footpath link north of the site towards the existing public bridleway to allow for an off-road route to the village of Manuden. This would aid connectivity and countryside penetration as advocated at paragraph 75 of the Framework.

6.34 The proposed access arrangements have been agreed by ECC in the lead up to the submission of the application.

Drainage

- 6.35 The proposed drainage strategy has been designed to mitigate the risk of flooding from surface water runoff. The site is not within an area of high flood risk and so adequate flood risk measures are proposed in the form of strategically placed storage swales and balancing ponds to attenuate the site runoff. An added benefit of this strategy is that these features would enhance the appearance and ecological offer in the development.
- 6.36 Maintenance of the attenuation ponds, swales, and on-site pumping station is proposed, details of which may be reserved for the detailed design stage of the development.
- 6.37 The site is within Groundwater Source Protection Zone 1. The development would implement appropriate pollution prevention measures in accordance with guidance set out in the Framework.

Arboriculture

- 6.38 The accompanying Arboricultural report confirms that the masterplan respects the constraints posed by the trees to result in a harmonious relationship between the built form and tree stock.
- 6.39 None of the trees within the site are covered by a Tree Preservation Order.
- 6.40 The most notable arboricultural impact is that it would be necessary to create a small gap in the recently planted linear copse (running north to south) to provide connectivity between the school site and its playing field, however the potential for new planting within the gardens of dwellings and within the areas of open space would adequately compensate for this loss.
- 6.41 All works to, and within close proximity of trees within the site, would be in conformity with the BS 5837:2012 standards.

Ecology

- 6.42 The Ecological Appraisal prepared by CSa identifies that no designated wildlife sites occur within or adjacent to the site, and that the development would have no impact upon the ecological value of sites within the wider area. Surveys undertaken in 2012 identify the presence of possible bird, reptile, bat, and great crested newt habitats on and within close proximity to the site, although no reptiles or great crested newts were found. The Appraisal concludes that subject to suitable mitigation measures, the proposed development would have no detrimental impact upon these possible habitats.
- 6.43 Where there is a risk that the presence of possible bat habitats may be compromised by tree removal in the established hedgerow along the northern boundary as part of the school site facilitation, further precautionary surveys are scheduled to be undertaken in May/June 2013 in accordance with European Legislation. These surveys will include further identification and likely absence of Great Crested Newts. These surveys would have the added advantage of informing the detailed design of the site including proposals for the final lighting scheme, SuDS features, and extent and type of new landscape planting.
- 6.44 As agreed in the pre-application consultations, it is proposed that the findings and recommendations of the bat and Great Crested Newt surveys are to be presented to Uttlesford District Council as an Addendum to the Ecological Appraisal prior to the determination of the application.

Archaeology

- 6.45 The site has historically been used for arable agricultural purposes and there are no items or structures of known heritage or archaeological interest present on, or within close proximity to, the site. The accompanying Heritage Desk Based Assessment considers that the site therefore has limited potential for any significant archaeological evidence. However, due to the size of the site, further archaeological mitigation is likely to be required and such details may be secured by an appropriately worded planning condition.

Services

- 6.46 The Utilities Assessment that accompanies the application describes the availability of gas, electricity, water and telecommunications services. The development could be supplied with normal network service supplies.

Community Involvement

- 6.47 The design and planning development of the scheme has been fully inclusive of the local community and has evolved to take account of public and stakeholder comments. The accompanying Statement of Community Involvement summarises the findings of the public exhibitions that took place in Stansted Mountfitchet in February 2013 in order to assist the Applicant in the formulation of the application. Most notably the scheme responds to concerns and comments in the following ways:

- Further highways surveys were conducted to identify peak traffic flows in order to identify and plan accordingly for a "worst case scenario". The results of the survey have influenced the Applicant to reduce the amount of development proposed.
- The number of dwellings has been reduced from 170 to 140 thereby seeing a significant reduction in the density of development within the developable area. This would also see a significant reduction in the potential for traffic generation at peak times
- The Applicant has sought to incorporate a policy compliant mix of dwellings using the most up-to-date evidence provided by UDC to ensure that local housing need would be appropriately met.
- In order to seek to improve pedestrian safety in the vicinity of Bentfield Primary School further investigations were commissioned into possible junction alteration options between Pennington Lane and the two proposed points of access into the site. This has resulted in the proposed prohibition of vehicular access to Pennington Lane between Rainsford Road and Long Croft to further improve safety against current levels.

Environmental Impact Assessment

- 6.48 Uttlesford District Council was consulted for its formal opinion as to whether an Environmental Impact Assessment would be required. Its view is that the effects of the development would not be so significant as to require the submission of a formal EIA. The scoping response letter is attached at Appendix 1.

- 6.49 It should be noted that at the time the scoping opinion request was submitted for consideration, the draft scheme was for 170 units. As the scheme proposed by this application is some 30 units lower it is considered that the effects of the development would be even less.

Affordable Housing Statement

- 6.50 The proposed development provides for a comprehensive mix of housing by type and tenure, based upon locally generated need. Predominantly family housing is envisaged but there would be opportunities for smaller units including a number of apartments, and a policy compliant number of bungalows (5%).
- 6.51 40% of the new dwellings would be affordable in nature providing a mix of tenures (including affordable rent) and house types.
- 6.52 The precise nature of the affordable housing provision will be subject to further discussion and detailed agreement with Uttlesford District Council. The detail of the mix, including the approach to Lifetime Homes, will be defined by the supporting Section 106 agreement and subsequent reserved matters applications.

7 Conclusion

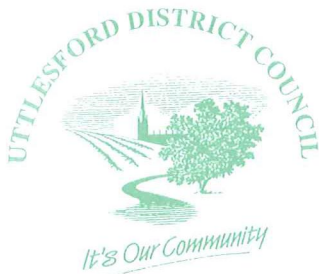
- 7.1 This planning application has been prepared for Taylor Wimpey UK Limited in response to a pressing housing shortage in Uttlesford District. The scheme has been formulated in accordance with advice received from senior planning officers and members of Uttlesford District Council, statutory consultees, and the general public.
- 7.2 Approval of this application at the earliest opportunity would assist the Council meet its immediate housing requirement in a way that responds to locally generated housing need in a way that protects the Green Belt.
- 7.3 The suite of supporting evidence accompanying this application, in addition to the justification set out throughout in this statement, provides a compelling case for the grant of planning permission; the scheme would provide many benefits that would significantly outweigh any harm caused.
- 7.4 The key benefits of the scheme are as follows:
- Responds directly to a pressing housing need Uttlesford District
 - Community gain through the provision of a new school, sports pitches, allotments, and public open space
 - The site is suitable, available, and the scheme can be delivered immediately
- 7.5 The scheme represents an efficient use of land whilst ensuring that it integrates with the character and appearance of the adjacent built environment and landscape. The traffic impact of the proposed development would not result in a material reduction in highway safety or capacity. The remaining supporting technical studies combine to demonstrate that, subject to the use of suitable planning conditions where necessary, the proposals would be wholly acceptable in planning terms.
- 7.6 Uttlesford District Council is now invited to consider the proposal in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development. It is respectfully requested that planning permission is granted accordingly.

8 Section 106 Agreement Heads of Terms

- 8.1 It is proposed that Taylor Wimpey UK Limited as applicant would enter into a Section 106 agreement with Uttlesford District Council, Essex County Council and the freehold owners of the site, such an agreement being conditional upon the grant and implementation of planning permission.
- 8.2 Matters to be addressed are likely to include the following:
- **Affordable Housing**
 - **Education Contributions** – contribution of land and money to early years and primary education provision
 - **Open Space and Sports Pavilion Maintenance**
 - **Transport** – Contribution to or provision of highway improvements
- 8.3 Matters to be addressed in such an agreement are subject to discussion, review and detailed articulation.

Appendix 1

Appendix 1 – Uttlesford District Council EIA Scoping Opinion response



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Essex CM1 1HT

Monday 18th March 2013

Our ref: UTT/13/0435/SCO

Please ask for on 01799 510 556
email: mtourvas@uttlesford.gov.uk

Dear Mr Butler,

SCREENING OPINION

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 (as amended)

**TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT)
REGULATIONS 2011**

PROPOSAL: Erection of up to 170 Residential Dwellings, with Proposed Allotments, Formal Playing field Pitch, Open Space and Village Green Provision, also Associated Landscaping.

LOCATION: Land at Bentfield Green, Stansted Mountfitchet, Essex

APPLICATION NUMBER: UTT/13/0435/SCO

I refer to the above SCREENING OPINION application which was received 21 February 2013.

This proposal relates to a development defined as being within "Schedule 2" within the above Regulations, therefore the authority is required to adopt a formal Screening Opinion under Regulation 5.

The formal view of this Authority is that the effects of the development would not be so significant as to require the submission of a formal Environmental Impact Assessment. The justification for this view is set out in the assessment attached.

I can confirm that in accordance with the Regulations a copy of this decision will be placed on Part 1 of the Planning Register with the submitted planning applications.

I trust the above is of help however should you have any further queries please do not hesitate to contact me on the above number.

Yours sincerely,

Maria Tourvas
Development Manager Team Leader

Uttlesford District Council

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 (as amended)

THE TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESMENT) (ENGLAND AND WALES) REGULATIONS 2011

DETR CIRCULAR 02/99, ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

SCREENING APPLICATION: UTT/13/0435/SCO

PROPOSAL: Proposed Erection of upto 170 Residential Dwellings, with Proposed Allotments, Formal Playingfield Pitch, Open Space and Village Green Provision, also Associated Landscaping.

LOCATION: Land at Bentfield Green, Stansted Mountfitchet, Essex

SCREENING OPINION

Under Regulation 5 of the above Regulations the authority is required to adopt an opinion (a SCREENING OPINION) as to whether an Environmental Impact Assessment (an EIA) is required in relation to the above planning application that has been submitted to it.

The Local Planning Authority (LPA), Uttlesford District Council, has considered the proposals and its SCREENING OPINION is that:

An EIA IS NOT REQUIRED

The considerations, in coming to this decision are as follows:

Schedule 1

The proposal does not fall within Schedule 1 of the Regulations that would require mandatory Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA).

Schedule 2

The proposed site's area would each exceed the EIA thresholds. The proposed area for the housing, the provision of formal playingfields, allotments, plus the associated provision of for the proposed development in terms of public open space, parking, landscaping, vehicular access, footpath links, changing rooms and swale covers a total area of 12.8 hectares. As such the proposal does constitute a 'Schedule 2' development that is one which falls within Schedule 2 of the above Regulations (Class 10 (b) urban development project where development exceeds 0.5 hectare), thereby the proposed development would be required to be screened.

Schedule 3 – Criteria for Column 2 of Schedule 2

In relation to the selection criteria the Local Planning Authority has concluded as follows.

Characteristics of Development

The proposed scheme would involve the erection of up to 170 residential dwellings covering a proposed area of 4.9 hectares, with the proposed public open space, playfield pitches and village green plus proposed allotments covering a further area of approximately 7.1 hectares. The size, scale, design of the proposed scheme has not been submitted and an indicative layout plan has been circulated. The number of car parking spaces and level of private amenity space is unclear at this present time.

Access into the site would be taken off Bentfield Green. The relationship of the proposed access to serve the proposed development and the surrounding area is unclear at this present time as further information would need to be provided in terms of its size, design and siting.

The working hours (both construction and operational) do not appear to be specified, however, these can be controlled through conditions should a planning application be submitted and planning permission be granted.

It is considered that even though the scheme exceeds the thresholds on balance the size of the proposal, the accumulation of it with other developments and its surroundings, the use of natural resources, the production of waste, the likelihood of significant additional pollution or other nuisances and the risk of accidents are such that there will not be a significant effect on the environment. However, this would be further justified and demonstrated through the submission of specialist reports, refer to section below on Characteristics of Potential Impact.

Location of Development

The proposed development site is located outside the Development Limits of Stansted, and it is located within Countryside. There are residential properties that are located opposite and adjacent to the application site.

There are allotment gardens that are located to the east of the application site, Pennington Lane, which falls outside the subject identified site.

There are water bodies that appear on the site.

The falls within Flood Risk Zone 1 and Groundwater Protection Zone.

The proposed development would result in change of visual appearance from an area that appears rural to one that is more urbanised and built, together with the possible creation of new and transferred habitats as part of a landscaping scheme, and possible removal of trees. The ground levels of the site appears generally level from the information submitted.

The subject area in itself falls within a sensitive area by reason of the following;

The site falls within Flood Risk Zone 1 which has a low risk of flooding however based on the overall size and scale of the proposed development a Flood Risk Assessment would need to be carried out to ensure that the proposed development would not increase the risk potential of flooding on site or to the neighbouring surrounding area. The area falls within a ground water protection zone and any works would need to adhere to British Standards.

The site as a whole falls within building height restriction zones due to flight paths.

The area falls within the open countryside. The proposed development is likely to have a visual impact upon the countryside and the approach into Stansted from north to south along Pennington Lane.

The application site is adjacent to the Bentfield Green Conservation Area which is located to the south.

Characteristics of Potential Impact

There are recognised sensitive areas of the site and of the proposed development. There would be possible wildlife habitats as a result of trees and hedges on site, the changing ground levels also resulting from drainage ditches/water course. The associated intensification as a result of the proposed development is likely to have impact in terms of noise and disturbance, possible litter/pollution.

As part of any application submission a Tree survey, arboriculture implication assessment and method statement, also a visual impact assessment has to be undertaken and submitted.

An Ecological Phase 1 Assessment would need to be submitted as part of any planning application submission. This would need to identify whether there are any nesting birds within the existing trees, also possible amphibians and/or reptile species within grassland, margins and standing water, also roosting bats and nesting birds etc. This should identify any further surveys and mitigations measures that need to be undertaken.

The site is located adjacent to an accessible town. However, the proposed scheme would still result in the creation of additional traffic within the locality due to the number of new dwellings with public open space, playing fields and allotments being proposed. A Transport Assessment would need to be carried out as part of any application submission to assess whether the scheme is acceptable and if there would be a detrimental impact in terms of highway and safety. Consideration would also need to be afforded to the nature of the road and visibility splays.

With regards to any visual impact as a result of the development a Design and Access Statement, that would tie into the visual impact assessment, this would need to be submitted as part of any application and is an aspect that would be assessed as part of the determination of any application.

A Site Waste Management Plan would be required to be submitted outlining methods of reducing, re-using and recycling waste in accordance with national legislation, together with a Sustainability Statement outlining various energy saving features that have been adopted within the design and proposed to be used. This would reduce the developments carbon footprint inline with Council Policy and national legislation.

A Flood Risk Assessment would be required as part of any planning submission due to the size of the site area based on the overall size and scale of the proposed development a Flood Risk Assessment would need to be carried out to ensure that the proposed development would not increase the risk potential of flooding on site or to the neighbouring surrounding area. It would need to be demonstrated that the proposed scheme would create a neutral affect or betterment and that it would not increase the risk of flooding to other areas, which could also be achieved through proposed mitigation measures.

The area falls within a ground water protection zone and any works would need to adhere to British Standards, particular care would need to be taken near any watercourses.

The proposed development falls within building height restrictions, however relevant air authority bodies may need to be consulted of any landscaping scheme so as to not impact upon airmstrikes.

It is considered that the noise level would be higher, although with regards to the housing aspect this may not vary from the type of existing noise levels and would generally blend with existing background noise.

In terms of air quality it is likely that there would be minimal significant impact resulting from the development. However, due to the scale of the proposed development this would need to be demonstrated through an Air Quality Assessment, both in terms of construction works and daily vehicle movement.

Historical impact, ecology, nature conservation, noise, traffic, sustainable drainage including flooding and sustainable construction would need to be assessed and will need to be further assessed and monitored during the course of assessing the application and possible works. There are a number of points which could be suitably addressed through the imposition of conditions should planning permission be granted in the future.

The subject area does not fall within an environmentally sensitive area as outlined in paragraph 36 of Circular 2/99. The proposed development is not one with particular complex and potentially hazardous effects and hence is not considered that it would not have complex, long term or irreversible impacts as outlined in paragraph 41/42 of Circular 2/99.

The potential impact of the development has been considered taking into account of planning policy requirements, which would mitigate the environmental impact. After considering the above factors it is the Council's opinion that the development does not require an EIA provided the measures listed above are undertaken during the designing and construction of the proposed scheme.

The Local Planning Authority has considered the 'selection criteria' in Schedule 3 of the Regulations and has concluded that the proposal would not be likely to have a significant effect on the environment.

Following the evaluation of the information submitted by the applicant, and the Council's knowledge of the local area. Notwithstanding this, the following documents should be submitted to support the submission of any application:

- Utilities;
- Affordable housing provision;
- Education contribution provision (to be discussed with Essex County Council);
- Lifetime homes/wheelchair accessible housing;
- Site waste management plan;
- The site also falls within BAA safeguarding zone therefore you will need to check that the height of the scheme is not an issue;
- Groundwater pollution control statement;
- Designing out crime/crime prevention measures;
- Plus any proposed External lighting and lighting pollution statement, more so the case with regards to the proposed footpaths;
- Planning Statement (Inc. justification of development within countryside both in terms of housing);
- Five Year Housing Land Supply Assessment;
- Statement of Community Involvement;
- Design and Access Statement;
- Sustainability Statement;
- Indicative Masterplan layout (if necessary);
- Flood Risk and Drainage Assessment;
- Landscape /visual impact Assessment;
- Arboricultural Survey and Assessment;
- Ecology Report- encompassing phase 1 survey and detailed survey work;
- Transport Assessment (including access assessment);
- Air Quality Assessment

Signed: M. A. T. R. O. U. S.

Dated: 18.3.13

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