

## **2. METHOD AND APPROACH**

### **2.1 Introduction**

2.1.1 This Chapter sets out a statement on the method and approach applied by the consultant team in preparing this Environmental Statement. Whilst there are no statutory requirements concerning the form of an ES, the general approach has been a systematic assessment of the likely effects, drawing where appropriate on the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 1999 as amended by the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2008, DETR Circular 02/99 Environmental Impact Assessment, and the DTLR guidelines on the preparation of Environmental Statements "Environmental Impact Assessment: Guide to Procedures" (2000).

2.1.1 The Masterplan was informed by the preparation of baseline studies (assessments of current conditions at site), and an assessment of environmental impacts arising from the development proposals, together with recommended mitigation strategies envisaged to avoid, reduce or remedy any adverse significant effects.

2.1.1 Development thresholds such as the maximum quantum of floorspace for various uses and maximum building heights were fixed in order that the Environmental Impact Assessment tested the worst case scenario.

### **2.2 Scope of Environmental Impact Assessment**

#### **Scoping**

2.2.1 A formal request for a Scoping Opinion was submitted by RPS to Winchester City Council in March 2009, pursuant to Regulation 10 of the EIA Regulations, in order to determine the scope of technical information required to examine the significance of environmental effects arising from the development. The request included a location plan and a brief description of the nature and purpose of the development and its possible effects on the environment, and is enclosed at Appendix 2.1.

2.2.2 The possible effects on the environment referenced in RPS's Scoping Opinion request followed the preliminary assessment of the predicted likely effects of the proposals from the experience of the EIA team with similar proposals, preliminary knowledge of the environmental conditions around the site, and the requirements of the EIA Regulations. They were also informed by meetings and liaison with the Local Planning Authority (LPA), statutory consultees and other interested parties.

2.2.3 Winchester City Council adopted a Scoping Opinion on 21 April 2009, which is enclosed at Appendix 2.1.

2.2.4 A letter was submitted to Winchester City Council on 29 October 2009 in order to advise of amendments to both the proposals and the site area. A copy of the letter is enclosed at Appendix 2.2.

#### **Appropriate Assessment**

2.2.5 The proposed development is in the catchment of the River Itchen, a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). Consideration was therefore given as to whether the proposal was likely to have a significant effect on the River Itchen and therefore require Appropriate Assessment.

2.2.6 Correspondence between Parsons Brinckerhoff (on behalf of the applicant), Winchester City Council, Natural England and the Environment Agency established that the two main issues that needed to be considered were water supply and abstraction, and foul drainage.

#### **Water Supply and Abstraction**

2.2.7 Southern Water was contacted by Parsons Brinckerhoff in relation to the issue of water supply and abstraction. They advised that the proposed development at Barton Farm can be supplied with potable water from its existing network and within its current abstraction licence. The Environment Agency then confirmed that as the development will not require any additional consents for water supply, an Appropriate Assessment with respect to water supply and abstraction was not required to

support the application.

### **Foul Drainage**

2.2.8 In relation to foul drainage Natural England advised that if the proposed development at Barton Farm could be served by the existing discharge consent for Harestock Treatment Works then there would be no need for an Appropriate Assessment to support the application. Southern Water subsequently confirmed that there is currently headroom in the existing consent for up to 5,000 new homes and therefore the development could be served by the existing consent. It was therefore established that an Appropriate Assessment with respect to foul drainage was not required to support the application

2.2.9 Further information on the consideration given to the need for an Appropriate Assessment can be found in Chapter 15 (Hydrology and Drainage). Copies of the correspondence between the various parties in relation to both issues can be found at Appendix 15.5.

## **2.3 Statutory Consultees**

2.3.1 The EIA consultant team has made separate contact with statutory consultees, as referenced in individual Chapters, on detailed matters relating to technical aspects of the development and the preparation of the planning application proposals.

2.3.2 Informed by the initial responses from statutory consultees and the technical “baseline” studies the development proposals and initial site layout were prepared. Where additional assumptions have been made about the parameters of this proposed application, they have been set out in the various technical sections of this Environmental Statement.

## **2.4 Methodology**

2.4.1 The process of EIA, which has culminated in the preparation of this ES, has involved the identification of the potential environmental effects of the proposed development and the assessment of the extent and significance of the potential environmental effects. This process is based on consideration of the character, duration and importance of the effects; the environmental sensitivity of the development area; and any quantified thresholds or indicative criteria set out in Government regulations and policy guidelines. Where quantifiable criteria are not available, expert judgement is applied.

2.4.2 In order to carry out an assessment of the likely environmental effects of the proposals, the existing conditions must first be defined. The likely extent of the environmental effects and their significance can then be gauged. All of the baseline studies (eg transportation, air quality, ecology etc) have followed relevant guidance, where available, as described in the individual technical sections.

2.4.3 Impact prediction techniques have used, where applicable, recognised models or frameworks the criteria for assessments following prevailing standards or designations. Where statutory criteria are not available, non-statutory guidance or acknowledged points have been adopted. The details of all predictive methods and assessment criteria are given in individual supporting technical reports, where applicable.

2.4.4 Where the impact assessment procedure indicates that the proposed development is likely to have significant adverse effects (if any), the ES identifies appropriate mitigation measures to reduce, compensate or eliminate the impacts and/or to take advantage of the opportunities for environmental enhancement. Such mitigating measures can either be incorporated into the proposed design and operation of the development or through the introduction of particular safeguards.

2.4.5 A range of criteria has been used to determine the significance of predicted impact, expressed as negligible, low or minor, moderate or high. The effects have been assessed quantitatively, where possible, and the significance has been assessed using one or more of the following criteria:

- International, national, regional and local standards
- Relationship with planning policy
- Sensitivity of receptor environment
- Reversibility of effects

- Duration of effects
- Inter-relationship between effects
- Results of consultation.

2.4.6 Appropriate mitigation measures to avoid, reduce and, if possible, remedy significant adverse effects are set out together with the commitment to mitigation.

2.4.7 The EIA has had regard to all aspects of the environment likely to be significantly affected by the development. Part 1 of Schedule 4 of the 1999 Regulations identifies the environmental topics to be assessed, which can be grouped together into three categories:

**(a) Human (eg Population, Land Use)**

These environmental considerations are addressed in the ES chapters relating to the Proposed Development (Chapter 4), Socio-Economic Assessment (Chapter 6), Transportation (Chapter 7), and Land (Chapter 14).

**(b) Ecological (Flora, Fauna)**

The potential effects on the flora and fauna of the site are considered in the chapters covering Air Quality (Chapter 8), Noise and Vibration (Chapter 9), Ecology (Chapter 10), Lighting (Chapter 13), and Hydrology and Drainage (Chapter 15).

**(c) Material Assets (eg Archaeology, Landscape)**

The potential effects on the material assets of the site are considered in the chapters covering Landscape and Visual Impact (Chapter 11), Archaeology and Built Heritage (Chapter 12), Waste Disposal (Chapter 16) and Services (Chapter 17).

## **2.5 Summary of Key Project Characteristics and Potential Environmental Effects**

2.5.1 In order to set the scene, it is useful to identify the broad characteristics of the proposals and any sensitivity in terms of the local environment, which will together determine the areas of greatest potential environmental significance. The key project characteristics are set out below:

- Provision of 2,000 dwellings, comprising a separate and identifiable neighbourhood for the City of Winchester.
- A Local Centre comprising a new primary school, retail food store, community building, Health Centre, district energy centre and supporting/ancillary uses.
- Improvements to the highway and public transport network.
- Formal and informal recreation and amenity space.

2.5.2 The issues most likely to be environmentally sensitive relate to:

- Landscape and Visual Impact; and
- Traffic and Transport.

