

Town & Country Planning (EIA) Regulations 2017
Secretary of State Screening Direction – Written Statement

Application name:	Land at 55 Vastern Road Reading (Vastern Road proposal)
SoS case reference:	PCU/EIASC/E0345/3224129
Schedule and category of development:	Schedule 2: 10(b) ii) the development includes more than 150 dwellings

Full statement of reasons as required by 5(5)(a) of the 2017 EIA Regulations including conclusions on likelihood of significant environmental effects.

The Secretary of State has considered whether the above proposal is likely to have significant environmental effects. He has undertaken this screening taking into account the criteria set out in Schedule 3 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017. In doing so he considers the main matters to be addressed are:

Schedule 3 selection criteria for Schedule 2 development refers:

1 (a) – (f) regarding characteristics of development

Having regard to the scale and nature of the proposed development, the Secretary of State does not consider that a significant environmental effect is likely in terms of physical changes in the location; production of waste; use of natural resources or the risks of major accidents and/or disasters relevant to the development concerned.

In terms of pollution and nuisance, the Secretary of State has had regard to the cumulation with other existing development and/or approved development. Planning Practice Guidance states that there are occasions when other existing or approved development may be relevant in determining whether significant effects are likely as a consequence of a proposed development. While the Secretary of State accepts that the proposed development is likely to result in some additional traffic movements. He is aware that the site is in an air quality management area, but he is not persuaded that the impact of development on this scale, when viewed cumulatively, would be of the magnitude necessary to justify an environmental statement. He considers that this matter could be dealt with by way of normal planning practice.

2 (a)-(c) (i) – (viii) regarding location of development

The Secretary of State notes that the site is not in a sensitive area and there are no statutory designated sites within 10 km, and no non-statutory ecologically designated sites within 3km of the development. The Secretary of State has regard to the Council's concern as to the effect on the River Thames priority habitat and has consulted with Government's specialist advisors on ecological and Flooding matters. Having had due regard to the specialist comments of the Environment Agency and Natural England, the Secretary of State does not consider that significant environmental effect is likely in terms of any impact on the special features which led to their designation.

The Secretary of State has had regard to issues concerning flooding and pollution. He has carefully considered advice and specialist comments from the Environment Agency and concludes that these matters could be dealt with by way of normal planning practice.

3(a) –(e) regarding characteristics of potential impact

The Secretary of State considers that the magnitude and spatial extent of the proposal would be mainly experienced in the immediate locality. Having regard to the scale and nature of

the proposals, he does not consider that a significant environmental effect is likely in terms of the intensity and complexity of the impact.

Conclusion

The Vastern Road proposal involves the development of 240 dwellings on a 0.73 ha site and falls within the threshold and criteria set out in schedule 2:10 (b):- urban development projects of the Regulations.

In assessing whether the proposal constitutes EIA development the Secretary of State has consulted the Environment Agency, the Government's specialist advisers on flood risk and contamination issues. Having had due regard to their comments and the evidence submitted by the applicant, the Secretary of State has concluded that the potential environmental effects on these issues are not so significant as to justify the proposal constituting EIA development. The Secretary of State has also consulted Natural England, the Government's specialist advisers on ecological and landscape issues. Having had due regard to their comments and the evidence submitted by the applicant, the Secretary of State has concluded that the potential environmental effects on these issues are not so significant as to justify the proposal constituting EIA development.

In reaching this conclusion, the Secretary of State has also considered the measures to mitigate the potential environmental impacts. He has concluded that the proposed measures are sufficient to obviate the need for an environmental impact assessment.

Is an Environmental Statement required?	No
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Date	14 May 2019