

## Growth Economy and Culture

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Land At Brickhill Street  
South Caldecotte  
Milton Keynes  
MK17 9FE

Date: 30/07/2019

Dear Lydia,

### **The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017**

**Application No:** Milton Keynes Planning Application Reference 19/01818/OUT

**Proposal:** Screening opinion for the proposed development of South Caldecotte Site

**At:** Land at Brickhill Street, South Caldecotte

I refer to your planning application, under Milton Keynes Planning Application Reference 19/01818/OUT, received by the Local Planning Authority on 17<sup>th</sup> July 2019 and the regulations referred to above. The site is identified on the Location Plan in the submitted documentation and you have provided a description of the nature and purpose of the development. We acknowledge a previous EIA screening opinion was issued by the Local Planning Authority on 18th September 2018 in response to a requested submitted. This is addressed in the 'Conclusion' section of this report.

### **Site Location**

The application site 'South Caldecotte' is located on the southern edge of Milton Keynes and comprises a total area of approximately 58.1 hectares. The site is triangular in shape and is currently in agricultural use. Cross Roads Farm is located in the southern corner of the site. The site is allocated under the adopted Plan: MK (2019) policy SD 14 '*Strategic Employment Allocation, Land South of Milton Keynes, South Caldecotte*'. The allocation is for a minimum of 195,000 sq m of Class B2 and B8 ancillary B1 employment floor space.

The built-up area of Milton Keynes lies to the north of South Caldecotte. Immediately to the north is the Marston Vale railway line - Bow Brickhill Station is located adjacent to the level crossing on Brickhill Street. Beyond is Caldecotte, comprising Caldecotte Business Park immediately north of the railway line and then Caldecotte Lake and

residential estates further to the north. To the north-west of the site on the western side of the A5 lies the significant and visually dominant Tesco Distribution warehouse. Agricultural land and the village of Bow Brickhill lie to the east of the site. Immediately to the south-west of the site is the A5 Trunk Road. Beyond the A5, to the west is the Ouzel Valley and Fenny Stratford; to the south is the proposed Eaton Leys housing development.

An ordinary watercourse runs east-west across the site from Brickhill Street under the A5 and onto the River Ouzel. The area to the east of Brickhill Street is identified in the Local Plan as an Area of Attractive Landscape.

There is a Scheduled Monument adjacent to the site, described as Roman town of Magiovinium and Roman fort. Studies have indicated the presence of significant archaeological remains within the application site itself. There are no listed buildings or conservation areas in the vicinity of the site.

Part of the site is designated as a Priority Habitat- Lowland Meadow. The site lies partly within the designated A5 Road Corridor Wildlife Corridors. It is in close proximity to the River Ouzel Wet Corridor to the north and west and the Woburn – Bletchley Rail Corridor which runs in an east-west direction immediately to the north of the site. The site is in close proximity to Greensands Ridge Biodiversity Opportunity Area.

## **Proposal**

The planning application submitted (Milton Keynes planning reference 19/01818/OUT) is for:

*‘Outline application including access for the development of the site for employment uses, comprising of warehousing and distribution (Use Class B8) floorspace (including mezzanine floors) with ancillary B1a office space, general industrial (Use Class B2) floorspace (including mezzanine floors) with ancillary B1a office space, a small standalone office (Use Class B1) and small café (Use Class A3) to serve the development; car and HGV parking areas, with earthworks, drainage and attenuation features and other associated infrastructure, a new primary access off Brickhill Street, alterations to Brickhill Street and provision of Grid Road reserve to Brickhill Street with appearance, landscaping, layout and scale to be determined as reserved matters.’*

The submitted documentation makes reference to a total employment use floor space of approximately 241,000 sq m. Based on ‘Indicative Masterplan 23’ (plan no. 16-048-01-SGP-XX-00-DR-A-1006-P5) submitted with the planning application, the built footprint and associated car parking would a significant proportion of the application site.

## **Assessment EIA Regulations 2017**

The Screening process should consider the development proposals against the criteria and thresholds which are set out within the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (‘the Regulations’) and the guidance contained within the National Planning Practice Guidance in determining whether or not an EIA is required to accompany the submitted planning application.

In considering this, the following tests have been applied:

**Schedule 1 test:**

The proposed development does not fall within Schedule 1 of the Regulations.

**Schedule 2 test:**

The Site is not within a 'sensitive area' as defined by the EIA Regulations

The Development falls within paragraph 10 (a) Schedule 2 of the EIA Regulations 'Industrial Estate Development Projects'. The relevant threshold for which is that the area of the development exceeds 0.5 hectare. The area of the proposed development is approximately 58 hectares which significantly exceeds the threshold. The proposal is therefore Schedule 2 development, indicating that EIA is more likely to be required.

**EIA Appendix: Indicative Screening Thresholds:**

The EIA Appendix: Indicative Screening Thresholds for Schedule 2 10 (a) developments indicates that EIA is more likely to be required when a proposal meets the following Indicative Criteria and Threshold:

- Site area of the new development is more than 20 hectares.

With the Key Issues to consider being:

- Physical Potential increase in traffic, emissions and noise.

As the proposal is on an area of more than 20 hectares, this indicates that EIA is more likely to be required. Furthermore, the supporting text to the EIA Appendix states that in general, the more environmentally sensitive the location, the lower the threshold will be at which significant effects are likely. It is important to note that the site is not a 'sensitive area' as defined under the legislation but it is sensitive in the wider sense of its heritage and biodiversity interest. However, the site is in close proximity to a Scheduled Ancient Monument, which is considered to be 'sensitive' under the legislation. The EIA Appendix considers the physical potential increase in traffic, emissions and noise impacts to be a key consideration. By reason of its size and use, also in connection with cumulative impact of developments in the area the development is likely to result in a significant increase in traffic emissions and noise.

**Schedule 3 Test:**

Characteristics of Development

The development will comprise a 58 hectare site and result in development of employment floorspace of over 241,000 sq m It .would be likely to contain large, flat roofed warehouse buildings, which cover a significant proportion of the site area. In addition to the proposal, there is a site allocation for 3,000 new homes in the South-East Strategic Urban Extension to the north-east of the site and an extant outline planning permission for up to 600 homes at Eaton Leys.

The development is unlikely to result in significant use of natural resources although it will result in the loss of some agricultural land, but it is likely to result in impact on biodiversity assets on the site. The scheme is likely to result in the production of

waste, pollution and nuisances. It is unlikely to result in major accidents or risks to human health subject to appropriate mitigation.

#### Location of development

The site is located on an almost entirely undeveloped site, which has been used for agricultural purposes. It contains a designated Priority Habitat, Lowland Meadow, which covers a significant part of the south-west section of the site. The site is also adjacent to a designated heritage asset, the Scheduled Monument which is a national designation, comprising Roman town of Magiovinium and Roman fort, which lies to the south-west of the site. The site itself contains significant archaeological remains which are related to the Scheduled Monument.

#### Types and characteristics of potential impact

Based on the submitted documentation, the built footprint of the proposed buildings, and associated car parking, are likely to cover the majority of the application site, including the south-west section of the site which contains the important areas of heritage and ecology assets described immediately above. While the impacts could potentially be mitigated to some extent, the development is very likely to have a significant impact on these areas and there is a high likelihood that this would result in significant adverse impacts caused by the development.

In terms of cumulative impact, the development, in conjunction with other large-scale developments in the area, is likely to have a significant impact during the construction/operation phase in terms of noise, vibration and traffic.

It is not considered likely that adverse impacts could be reversed and it is not clear at this stage if all of these impacts could be satisfactorily mitigated.

#### Conclusion

This proposal has been considered in accordance with the Screening Opinion Checklist, as set out in this letter, and takes account of the Key Issues and the criteria outlined in Schedule 3 of the Regulations. From the information provided, the scheme *is* considered to be likely to result in significant adverse environmental impacts during the construction or ongoing occupation of the development.

It is noted that a previous EIA screening opinion was issued on 18<sup>th</sup> September 2018 under Milton Keynes planning reference 18/01760/EIASCRC, following a request from the current applicant in a letter dated 14<sup>th</sup> June 2018. This previous screening opinion found that an Environmental Statement was *not* required. However, there have been a number of changes in circumstances since then which have had an impact on the findings. Firstly the floorspace proposed, at over 241, 000 sq m, has increased significantly when compared to the figure quoted in the previous letter requesting an EIA screening option dated June 2018. Further information has also been made available on the importance of the archaeological assets on the site.

Furthermore, at the time of the request (June 2018), the Plan:MK Inspector had not yet considered or concluded whether the SA/SEA was satisfactory and did not do so until February 2019 and so it is not clear that the scheme would have been screened for EIA in the context of this cumulative impact with other developments. Overall, a Local

Planning Authority is able to re-screen an application where there has been a significant passage of time or changes in circumstances.

In accordance with the above regulations the Council hereby adopts this updated "Screening Opinion" to establish whether the submitted application should be accompanied by an Environmental Statement. Further details, in addition to the above, are provided in the attached 'Screening Opinion Checklist'. The checklist and this letter concludes that there are likely to be significant environmental impacts, and the proposal is therefore considered to be EIA development.

In accordance with the powers contained in the 'Scheme of Delegation to Officers', this letter confirms that the Council is of the opinion that the proposed development is EIA development and an Environmental Statement is **REQUIRED** for the proposal.

Yours Sincerely



David Buckley  
Senior Planning Officer

Jon Palmer  
Head of Planning

Accompanied by: Screening Opinion Checklist