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**BY EMAIL ONLY**

**Environment, Planning and Enforcement**

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4 November 2019

Dear Emma,

**Re: EIA Scoping Opinion for Land to the South West of Birchington, Kent**

Thank you for consulting Kent County Council (KCC) on the request for a Scoping Opinion relating to an outline planning application for the erection of up to 1,600 dwellings, the creation of a new link road between Minnis Road and the A28, and the A28 and B2050 Manston Road, small scale retail provision, a two-form entry primary school and land for expansion of Birchington medical centre, new pedestrian and cycle access, provision of open spaces, sustainable urban drainage systems, associated landscaping, infrastructure and earthworks (all matters reserved apart from access).

The County Council has reviewed the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Scoping Report and sets out its comments below, which follow the chapters set out in the Scoping Report.

**Topics to be scoped in**

*Cultural Heritage (Built Heritage and Archaeology)*

The County Council has responded directly to Thanet District Council on 29 October 2019 as part of its Heritage Advice Service (Appendix 1).

*Ecology and Biodiversity*

The County Council responded directly to Thanet District Council on 21 October 2019 as part of its Ecological Advice Service (Appendix 2).

### *Human Health*

The County Council would like to ensure that the proposal has consideration of how the development can respond to the need to support active lifestyles. There is a clear link between inactivity and physical and mental health so the development should seek to provide a mix of formal and informal areas and open spaces, including walking and cycling routes, where residents can be active. The applicant should also consider Sport England guidance<sup>1</sup>, which focusses on tackling inactivity and encouraging under-represented groups to be active.

### *Socio-economics*

The County Council has also provided an initial assessment of the development contributions required to ensure the necessary infrastructure is in place to support the proposal (Appendix 3).

### *Traffic and Transport – Highways and Transportation*

The scale of the proposed development is such that a planning application will require the submission of a full Traffic and Transport Impact Assessment, which can form part of a separate chapter within the EIA. This chapter should consider the impact that the development would have on the local and wider strategic highway network, including any public transport requirements. Continued pre-application dialogue with KCC as the Local Highway Authority is strongly recommended, including the potential use of the Thanet Strategic Highway Model (TSHM) to inform final outputs of any highway impact appraisals, as outlined within the scoping document. Outputs from the TSHM are likely to require a level of interpretation at a local level, which can be discussed with the County Council as Local Highway Authority in due course.

The criteria for ascertaining significant effect on the highway network capacity should not solely be identified using generic industry guidelines. The breadth of highway network assessment for this purpose will need to be scoped with the Local Highway Authority once the trip impact and distribution of likely development trips has been identified and subsequently agreed.

### *Traffic and Transport – Public Rights of Way (PRoW)*

Public footpaths TM37, TM32 and TM31 would all be directly affected by the proposed development. The County Council recommends that the EIA should consider the following:

- TM37, TM32 and TM31 - consideration must be given to ensure that countryside views from the PRoW are retained as much as possible. For all PRoW, any design

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/planning-for-sport/playing-fields-policy/>  
<https://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/planning-for-sport/aims-and-objectives/>  
<https://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/planning-for-sport/planning-tools-and-guidance/playing-pitch-strategy-guidance/>  
<https://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/planning-for-sport/planning-tools-and-guidance/facilities-planning-model/>  
<https://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/active-design/>

should ensure that routes are accommodated within wide green corridors of open space away from access roads to help mitigate the loss of amenity and countryside views as a result of the development. PRow should not be confined behind rear gardens and adjacent properties should overlook the public areas to ensure natural surveillance.

- TM37, TM32 and TM31 – to help mitigate the pressures from increased use that the proposed development will have on the PRow within and adjacent to the site, KCC requests that the PRow are surfaced with a suitable surface for required use. The developer will also be expected to upgrade the surface to a minimum width of 2m for footpaths and 3m for bridleways.
- TM32 and TM31 – the upgrading of these footpaths to bridleway should be considered, providing links to bridleways in the surrounding area as well as to the Shottendane Road improvements. This will provide shared use pedestrian and cycle access and by extension, provide sustainable access from the site to employment, education and recreation for pedestrians, cyclists and equestrian users. Upgrading footpath TM31 to a bridleway would also connect the network with bridleways TM28 and TM25 to the east of the development site.
- TM37 and TM35 - it is essential that consideration is given to the likely impact of a development of this size on the nearby rail crossing points. Early interaction with Network Rail is imperative to ensure appropriate consideration of the increase in pedestrian, cycle and equestrian use from south of the railway to the well-used coast with its numerous leisure and recreation opportunities for all members of the community.

The County Council would like the applicant to give consideration to the PRow network of the area as a whole, with reference to the connectivity of the site itself, to complement and enhance the surrounding natural environment, improving active travel access to the Viking Coastal Trail and the coastal recreation in close vicinity of the site. KCC would also like to draw the applicant's attention to the proposed England Coast Path, which would follow a large extent of the existing Viking Coastal Trail. This Coast Path is a new long-distance National Trail currently being developed by Natural England, which is expected to open in 2020.

KCC recommends that the applicant considers that the scale of this development and therefore increased population will add to the pressure on and importance of the PRow network, with new residents seeking opportunities for active travel and outdoor recreation. It would therefore be expected that the applicant will consider improvements to the wider PRow network surrounding the proposed development site, to support sustainable growth in this area.

Any proposed work on the surface of the paths must be approved and authorised by the Local Highway Authority - in this case Kent County Council's Countryside Access Service. PRow diversions or extinguishments should be considered at an early stage. Whilst it is

probable that consent will be granted, it is sensible to initiate consultation on proposed alterations to the path network as soon as possible. It is important that Thanet District Council is in a position to make the necessary Orders at the point at which consent is given.

Finally, the County Council requests early and direct engagement with the applicant prior to submission of the planning application to discuss the matters highlighted in this response, including the section 106 matters relating to PRow set out in Appendix 3.

### **Topics to be scoped out**

#### *Water Resources, Drainage and Flood Risk*

The Scoping Report states that a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) will be required and the County Council is therefore satisfied with the scope of the forthcoming EIA from a flooding/drainage perspective.

The Scoping Report references the presence of a potential overland surface water flow path. Any further assessment must evidence the presence of this flow path and its magnitude, and subsequently demonstrate how development will accommodate the flow path without creating or increasing flood risk.

The County Council anticipates that infiltration will be a key drainage technique for managing surface water runoff generated by the development. Although infiltration tests have been undertaken, the implications and application to development are not discussed. Superficial deposits are distributed across the site, but they are expected to be poorly draining and less than 3m in thickness. The ability to discharge to ground may have a significant impact on any proposed development layout and ability to accommodate 1,600 units. It is strongly recommended that the Drainage Strategy submitted with an application is sufficiently detailed to indicate how surface water will be accommodated and discharged appropriately.

Whilst KCC has no preference as to whether the FRA/Drainage Strategy forms part of the EIA or is submitted as a standalone document, it is recommended that the applicant engages with the County Council at their earliest convenience to discuss the surface water management at this site and any associated implications for KCC as Lead Local Flood Authority.

It must be ensured the drainage of the site is considered from the outset (at the masterplanning stage), and that sufficient room is allocated for appropriate drainage features.

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The County Council will continue to work closely with the District Council to help to ensure the delivery of new housing and infrastructure in response to local needs. The County

Council will welcome further engagement with the District Council and the applicant as this planning application progresses.

If you require any further information or clarification on any matter, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K Stewart'.

**Katie Stewart**

Director for Environment, Planning and Enforcement

Encs:

Appendix 1: KCC Heritage Response dated 29 October 2019

Appendix 2: KCC Biodiversity Response dated 21 October 2019

Appendix 3: KCC Infrastructure Assessment