

16th April 2025

REF: ELIV1004

Planning Services
Mid Sussex District Council
Oaklands
Oaklands Road
Haywards Heath
West Sussex
RH16 1SS

Dear Sir/Madam,

Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017: Request for Screening Opinion Pursuant to Regulation 6.

Land at Old Vicarage Field off Church Road in Turners Hill.

I write on behalf of our client Elivia Homes, to formally request the adoption of a Screening Opinion pursuant to Regulation 6 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017, in relation to a proposed residential development of Land at Old Vicarage Field off Church Road, Turners Hill (as defined on site location plan ref. 01 REV C).

A full planning application is to be submitted in May 2025.

As set out in further detail below, it is our view that the proposed development does not constitute Schedule 1 or Schedule 2 development (as set out in the Regulations), as it does not meet any of the thresholds within the relevant categories. Furthermore, the site is not located within a 'Sensitive area' (as defined by the Regulations) either partly or wholly.

Notwithstanding these points, we request a Screening Opinion, for the avoidance of doubt and to provide completeness.

As required by Regulation 5(4), this request is accompanied by a site location plan and proposed site plan.

The Site



The Site is located on the western edge of Turners Hill. It is 5.5km southwest of East Grinstead, 7km east of Crawley and 11.5km north of Haywards Heath. The site spans 3.38 hectares comprising, Old Vicarage Field (the field directly to the rear of the property named 'The Old Vicarage' and facilitating the built form of the development) along with three further fields to the north (which facilitate part of the SuDS strategy). In addition, the site hosts five associated outbuildings/barns and two areas of hard standing, all of which are located just to the rear of Turners Hill Fire Station, also known as the Old Estate Yard.

The site is bounded by Church Road to the south, Lion Lane to the east, and further fields to the north and west. There are mature trees which border the Old Vicarage Field and the area for the proposed drainage ditch, which spans towards the north west of the site, is bound by a small area of Ancient Woodland. The Old Estates Yard is the area to the North of the former Fire Station; this includes the two areas of hardstanding, which are currently used as an informal car park by Lion Lane residents and the various outbuildings. Currently, Old Vicarage Field is accessed via the two existing properties on Church Road. The site lies within the Ashdown Forest 7km zone of influence but outside High Wield Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), the boundary of which is approximately 40m to the south of the site. There are no listed buildings within the site, however the site is within close proximity to seven listed buildings. These include The Old School House (grade II), Forge House (grade II) and The Crown Hotel (grade II). The site is partially within the Turners Hill Conservation Area along the south/southeast boundaries of the site. To the

south of the site is Turners Hill Church of England Primary School. To the East of the site are semi-detached terraced housing and shops.

The site has been identified for residential development within the Turners Hill Neighbourhood Plan (2014 – 2031) under Policy THP2. Further, the site is within the proposed Turners Hill Settlement Boundary as proposed under the Regulation 19 Mid Sussex District Plan 2021 – 2039 which has been submitted for examination.

The Proposed Development

Regulation 6(2) (b) requires a screening request to be accompanied by a description of the development, including the physical characteristics of the development (and, where relevant, demolition works) and the location of the development, with regards to the environmental sensitivity of geographical areas likely to be affected.

Accordingly, the description of the proposed development is as follows:

“Development of 40. no dwellings (including affordable housing) with open space, access, parking, drainage, landscaping and other associated works as well as the creation of a new community car park and replacement parking for Lion Lane residents”.

This is as outlined within the accompanying proposed site plan.

Determining whether Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is required

The determination for whether an assessment is required rests in the consideration of whether the development is:

- Schedule 1 development – in which case EIA is necessary, or
- Schedule 2 development – in which case EIA is necessary only if the development is likely to have significant environmental effects. Guidance on assessing whether a development would have significant environmental effects is contained in Schedule 3 to the Regulations.

The proposed development does not meet any of the categories of development in Schedule 1 of the Regulations for which EIA is mandatory.

In this case, the proposal could fall under category 10 (b) of Schedule 2 – where it could be defined as an “urban development project”. However, the proposal does not meet the thresholds identified for this category, as follows:

- The development does not include more than 1ha of urban development which is not dwellinghouse development or,
- The development does not include 150 or more dwellings; or
- The overall area of the development does not exceed 5ha.

The proposed development does not meet the thresholds identified.

To confirm, the proposed development is not located within or adjacent to a ‘sensitive area’ (which are defined in the Regulations as being SSSIs; land to which Nature Conservation Orders apply; International conservation sites; National Parks; AONBs; World Heritage Sites; and Scheduled Monuments) and neither is it in any other area of known ecological or landscape sensitivity.

Notwithstanding the above and for the avoidance of doubt, an assessment against the selection criteria is provided below.

Assessing if the proposed development would have significant environmental effects

The PPG confirms that *“when screening Schedule 2 projects, the local planning authority must take account of the selection criteria in Schedule 3 of the 2017 Regulations. Not all of the criteria will be relevant in every case. Each case should be considered on its own merits in a balanced way”* (Paragraph: 018 Reference ID: 4-018-20170728 Revision date: 28 07 2017).

The proposal does not exceed the indicative thresholds for sites which have not been intensively developed and thus significant environment effects are unlikely as:

- The area of the scheme is less than 5 hectares;
- It would not provide a total of more than 10,000 m² of new commercial floorspace; and
- The development would not have significant urbanising effects in a previously non-urbanised area (e.g. a new development of more than 1,000 dwellings), in light of the surrounding development.

However, an assessment is made below of the proposed development relative to the criteria set out in Schedule 3.

Characteristics of development

The proposed development is of an appropriate size in relation to its context and surrounding pattern of development and (being standard residential development) its characteristics would not, in cumulation with other existing and approved development, give rise to significant environmental effects. The proposed development will not give rise to the production of excessive waste, or other pollution and nuisances, and there would be no risk to human health or from major accidents or disasters caused by the development.

Location of the development

The site has been identified for residential development within the Turners Hill Neighbourhood Plan (2014 – 2031) under Policy THP2. Further, the site is within the proposed Turners Hill Settlement Boundary as proposed under the Regulation 19 Mid Sussex District Plan 2021 – 2039 which has been submitted for examination.

The context of the site is urbanised, despite itself being greenfield. The eastern and southern edge of the site is located on the boundary of currently adopted Turners Hill Built Up Area Boundary, which contains a significant number of dwellings. As such, the surrounding context is one of an urban area characterised by recent residential development.

Overall, the location of the site cannot be considered to be set in a particularly environmentally sensitive geographical area.

Types and Characteristics of the potential impact

In considering the characteristics of the proposed development and its location, it can be concluded that the proposal represents a relatively modest scale of development.

Regarding transport, it is considered that the number of trips generated will not have a significant impact upon the road network of the surrounding area. No significant transport effects are considered likely.

In terms of ecology, the overall impact of the proposals is considered to be neutral considering retention of trees and adoption of biodiversity net gain will also accompany the full planning application submission. It is not considered likely that the proposed development would lead to significant ecological effects.

The Flood Risk and Drainage Strategy that will accompany the planning application submission will confirm that runoff will be managed on site and will not increase the flood risk for the site or adjoining developments. The proposed development would not lead to significant effects in terms of drainage or flood risk.

In regards to landscape, an LVIA has been undertaken and will accompany the full planning application submission. The LVIA notes that the site is predominantly well-screened and that public views of the site are only possible from the immediate environment along the B211- (south and southeast of the site). Furthermore, views of the site begin to diminish and become difficult to distinguish further away from the local environment due to a combination of intervening vegetation, built form and undulating topography. A landscape plan and strategy will also accompany the full planning application submission and will set out how the proposed development will maintain and enhance existing landscaping features as well as taking opportunities to create additional features to enhance the amenity of the area. Overall, the development is unlikely to have significant landscape effects.

With respect to heritage impact, in accordance with the requirements of the NPPF (2024), the Heritage Statement which will accompany the full planning application submission identifies the heritage assets and their significance. It concludes that there will be 'less than substantial' harm caused by the application proposals to the Turners Hill Conservation Area and the listed buildings along The Bank. Therefore, the proposed development is considered unlikely to result in significant heritage effects.

Furthermore, no other environmental impacts are likely in respect of other technical disciplines, such as archaeology, contamination, air quality, noise, trees etc. The supporting documents to the full planning application submission confirm this. The proposal, and thereby this request, does not rely on unidentified remediation to conclude that the proposal is not EIA development.

Overall, it is not considered that the proposed development would be likely to generate significant environmental effects when considering:

- The magnitude and spatial extent of the impact;
- The nature (including transboundary) of the impact;
- The intensity and complexity, and probability of the impact;
- The onset, duration and frequency of the impact; and
- The cumulation of the impact with other existing / approved development.

This includes an assessment of indirect effects.

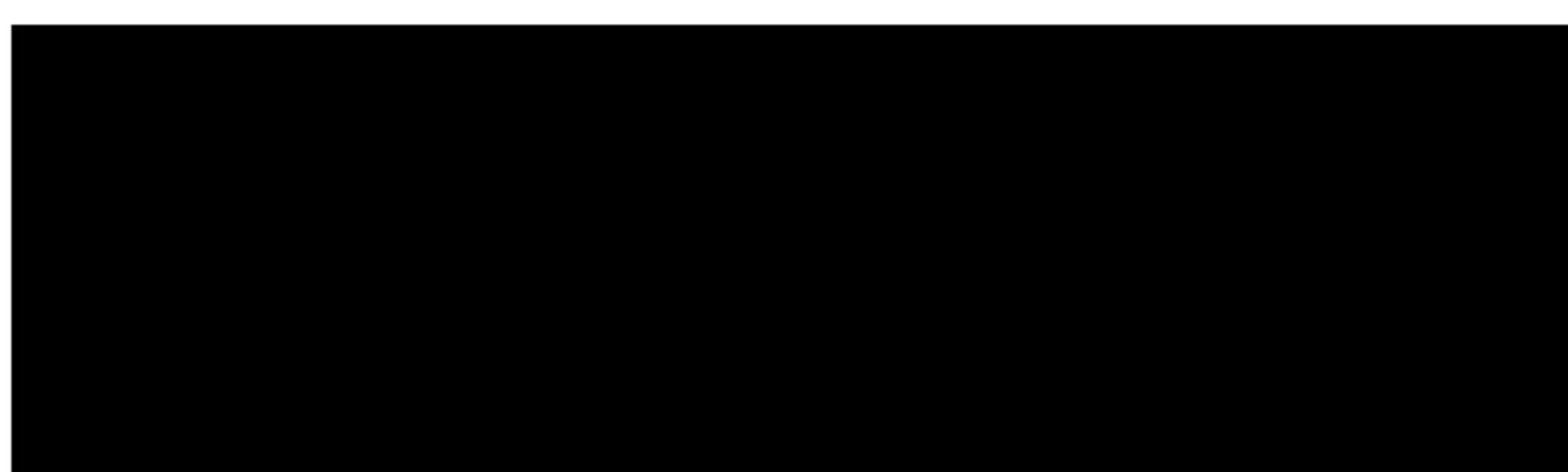
Conclusion

Having regard to the above detailed consideration of the relevant criteria and thresholds set out and explained within the Regulations and the Planning Policy Guidance, it is evident that the proposal does not constitute either Schedule 1 or Schedule 2 development.

We conclude that the proposal is not EIA development. Accordingly, we request that the Local Planning Authority adopts a Screening Opinion to confirm this, and in accordance with paragraph 6. (6) we look forward to hearing from you within the statutory period.

In the meantime, if you require any further information to enable the Council to determine this request, please do not hesitate to contact me using the details below.

Yours Sincerely

A black rectangular box redacting the signature of Jordan Wiseman.

Jordan Wiseman
Senior Planner

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