

Delegated Report

EIA Screening Opinion

Planning Application No: 20250314

Location: Blackthorn Farm Wrotham Road Meopham Gravesend

Description: Request for a screening opinion in accordance with The Town and Country Planning Act (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 in respect of the residential development proposal at Blackthorne Farm, Culverstone Green, Meopham.

Applicant: Icen Projects Limited

Site Visit Date: Not required for a screening opinion application

Proposal

This application comprises a request for a screening opinion in respect of the residential development proposal at Blackthorne Farm, Culverstone Green, Meopham constitutes EIA development.

The proposed residential development to which this screening opinion application relates, is for up to 100 homes comprising of up to two storeys in height.

The development would be accessible from South Street and will provide residential parking and new planting and landscaping, together with a public open space.

Site

The Site extends to approximately 5.5 hectares ('ha') in size. The Site is located to the north of the residential area of Culverstone Green, Meopham. To the north, the Site is bound by small commercial premises along Heron Hill Lane, whilst the south is bound by a country track that appears to provide access to Blackthorn Farm. Beechfield Cottages and Wilsons Way sit to the east of the Site, whilst South Street binds the west of the Site, along which several detached residential properties are located.

The Site predominantly comprises land currently in agricultural (pastoral) use. Field boundaries are demarcated by trees and shrubs.

The site is not within a conservation area and not within a designated archaeological area.

The site is within Flood Zone 1 and has a low probability of flooding.

Satellite Image of the Site



Submitted Documents/Plans

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Screening Request – Prepared by Icen Projects Limited (March 2025); and
Appendix A3 Landscape and Visual Appraisal and Green Belt Review (May 2018).

Relevant Planning History

None.

Consultations, Publicity and Representations

Consultees

External

Dickens' Country Protection Society

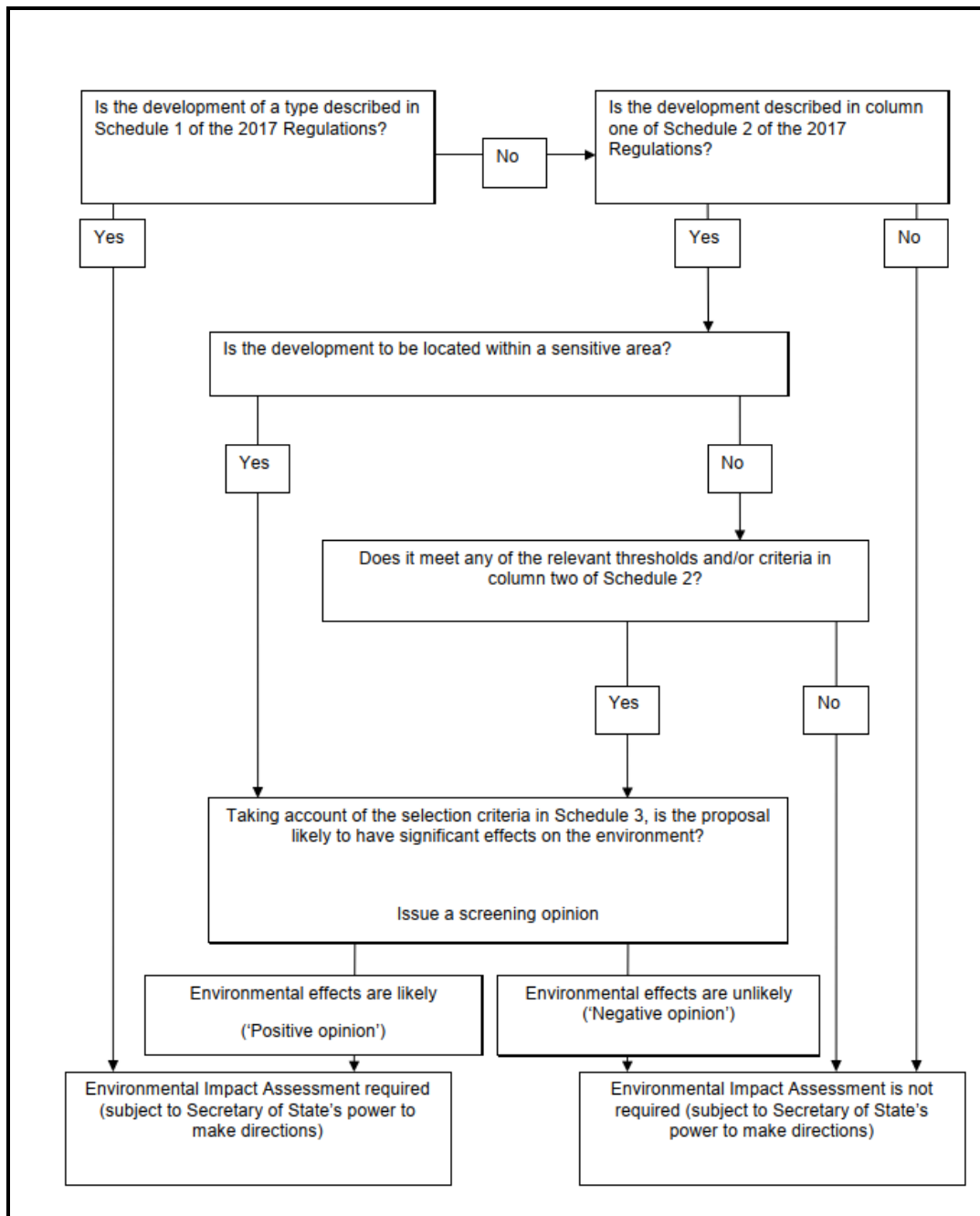
The Society notes the site is in an area which Green Belt Policies apply and is indicated as Grade 2 Agricultural land. The Society would suggest that any Environmental Impact Assessment should include traffic on the A227, taking account of the impact of the Lower Thames Crossing; agricultural land quality (with a local survey); the capacity of the foul drainage system and the protection of mature trees around the site.

Neighbouring properties

Not required for a screening opinion, however 45 letters of objection have been received but these only relate to the proposed residential development and not the current screening opinion and therefore not relevant in this instance.

Procedure

The below flowchart shows how Environmental Screening opinions should be assessed:



Officer's Analysis

The relevant regulations to consider the screening request against is the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (herein after referred to as the Regulations, 2017).

The Council needs to consider if the proposed development is either Schedule 1 or Schedule 2 development and if so whether the development is likely to have a significant effect on the environment and therefore requires an assessment.

Schedule 1

The proposal does not fall within Schedule 1 of the Regulations (2017) that would require mandatory Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA).

Schedule 2

The site is not located within a sensitive area as defined by Regulation 2 (1) of the EIA Regulations, however the proposed development exceeds threshold (ii) as the overall area of the Proposed Development just exceeds 5ha, as the Site is 5.5ha. As such, the proposed development is considered to fall within Schedule 2 of the Regulations (2017).

Schedule 3 Screening Criteria

Schedule 3 of the Regulations (2017) sets out the selection criteria for screening which are:

Characteristics of development

1. The characteristics of development must be considered with particular regard to—
 - (a) the size and design of the whole development;
 - (b) cumulation with other existing development and/or approved development;
 - (c) the use of natural resources, in particular land, soil, water and biodiversity;
 - (d) the production of waste;
 - (e) pollution and nuisances;
 - (f) the risk of major accidents and/or disasters relevant to the development concerned, including those caused by climate change, in accordance with scientific knowledge;
 - (g) the risks to human health (for example, due to water contamination or air pollution).

Location of development

- 2.—(1) The environmental sensitivity of geographical areas likely to be affected by development must be considered, with particular regard, to—
 - (a) the existing and approved land use;
 - (b) the relative abundance, availability, quality and regenerative capacity of natural resources (including soil, land, water and biodiversity) in the area and its underground;
 - (c) the absorption capacity of the natural environment, paying particular attention to the following
 - (d) areas—
 - (i) wetlands, riparian areas, river mouths;
 - (ii) coastal zones and the marine environment;
 - (iii) mountain and forest areas;
 - (iv) nature reserves and parks;
 - (v) European sites and other areas classified or protected under national legislation;
 - (vi) areas in which there has already been a failure to meet the environmental quality standards, laid down in Union legislation and relevant to the project, or in which it is considered that there is such a failure;
 - (vii) densely populated areas;
 - (viii) landscapes and sites of historical, cultural or archaeological significance.

Types and characteristics of the potential impact

3. The likely significant effects of the development on the environment must be considered in relation to criteria set out in paragraphs 1 and 2 above, with regard to the impact of the development on the factors specified in regulation 4(2), taking into account—
 - (a) the magnitude and spatial extent of the impact (for example geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected);
 - (b) the nature of the impact;
 - (c) the transboundary nature of the impact;
 - (d) the intensity and complexity of the impact;
 - (e) the probability of the impact;
 - (f) the expected onset, duration, frequency and reversibility of the impact;

- (g) the cumulation of the impact with the impact of other existing and/or approved development;
- (h) the possibility of effectively reducing the impact.

Assessment

To ensure this is all carefully considered, where relevant, the Government provide an Environmental impact assessment screening checklist which they state can be used when screening for EIA although there is no obligation. This has been included within the submitted Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Screening Request.

The proposed development is not expected to give rise to significant effects. The existing use of the site comprises of agricultural land and is located within the wider context of residential development.

Conclusion

Having assessed the available evidence it is the Local Planning Authority's opinion that the proposal is not EIA development and that accordingly an Environmental Statement is not required to accompany a planning application.

Given the nature of the development, the location and non-sensitivity of the area, it is considered that the proposal would be unlikely to have a significant impact on the environment. Gravesham Borough Council therefore concludes that the development is not EIA development and that an EIA is not required.

Conclusion & Recommendation

The development proposed is for the residential development at Blackthorne Farm, Culverstone Green, Meopham.

It is concluded that **EIA is not required and a negative screening opinion be issued as the development is not likely to have significant environmental effects on the environment.**

The development does not constitute EIA development for the following reasons:

The proposal does not fall within Schedule 1 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) regulations 2017, as amended, (referred to as "the Regulations") that would require mandatory Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA).

The development the subject of this screening request constitutes a 'Schedule 2 development' by reason of paragraph 10(b) of Schedule 2 of the EIA Regulations 2011.

This screening opinion is based on the current regulatory framework and on the information and description of development as set out in the submitted Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Screening Request dated March 2025.

Without the implementation of the various further assessments and mitigation measures, as set out within the report to accompany request for screening opinions by Icen Project Limited on behalf of Esquire Developments dated March 2025, it would be considered that the proposal would lead to result in significant adverse effects on the environments.

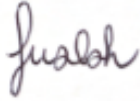
In light of this, the Local Planning Authority considers the following assessments/reports being relevant to the proposal in terms of mitigating significant environmental impacts;

- Transport Assessment;
- Travel Plan;
- Acoustic Assessment/Noise Impact Assessment;
- Flood Risk Assessment;

- Surface Water Drainage Assessment;
- Drainage Strategy;
- Phase 1 Contamination report;
- Phase 2 Investigation/Remediation assessments;
- Air Quality report;
- A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal;
- Planning Statement;
- Archaeology/Cultural Heritage Assessment;
- Landscape and Visual Assessment;
- Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment
- Arboricultural Report and Tree Survey including protection/mitigation
- Construction Environmental Management Plan
- Design and Access Statement

Note: This assessment has considered the issue of whether such a development would require to be accompanied by an Environmental Impact Assessment and not whether such a development would be acceptable in planning terms and is made without prejudice to the future determination of any associated planning application for this development as proposed.

(For detailed conditions / reasons for refusal and informatives, see draft Decision)

Case Officer:	Ms Amanda Cue	Team Leader:	Mrs Faye Walsh
Signed:	A Cue	Signed:	
Dated:	30 th April 2025	Dated:	30 April 2025