

Delegated Report

EIA Screening Opinion

Planning Application No: 20250399

Location: Land At Wrotham Road Meopham Gravesend Kent DA13 0AA

Description: Request for a screening opinion in accordance with The Town and Country Planning Act (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 in respect of an EIA Screening Opinion to determine whether two outline planning applications for residential developments, one for up to 350 dwellings and one for up to 120 dwellings, at Meopham, Wrotham Road constitutes EIA development.

Applicant: Hannah Plant, Wardell Armstrong

Proposal

This application comprises a request for a screening opinion in respect of whether the residential developments proposed at Land at Wrotham Road, Meopham constitutes EIA development.

The proposed residential developments to which this screening opinion application relates, is for one proposed site for up to 350 dwellings (Site A) and one for up to 120 dwellings (Site B), up to two storeys in height.

Site

Both sites are located on the southern edge of Hook Green, north of Meopham. Site A is 15.73 ha in size and comprises two agricultural fields east of Wrotham Road (A227) and south of Green Lane. Site B is a 5.43 ha rectangular shaped plot that comprises part of an agricultural field south of Longfield Road (B260) and 280m west of Site A. Land between the two sites is developed and includes Meopham Community Academy, Helen Allison School, a pre-school, nursery and residential development. Existing development to the north of the two sites is predominantly residential, with a parade of shops on Wrotham Road adjacent to Site A.

A public right of way (PRoW) lies along the eastern site boundary of Site B and follows a southerly direction before crossing east along the southern edge of the two schools. This PRoW then links to the wider footpath network to the east, including links to the south of Site A and Camer Country Park. Site A is bordered by an established row of trees along Green Lane to the south, and Site B is adjacent to an area of woodland on the opposite side of Longfield Road, on the western edge of Hook Green.

To the east and west of the sites land is predominantly arable agriculture, with trees and hedges dispersed throughout. Camer Country Park is located 0.28 km east of Site A at the closest point, and the village of Sole Street 1.83 km east. Other establishments to the south, within Meopham, include: Foxendown Fruit Farm (0.24 km away); New Ifield Cricket Club (1.49 km away); Meopham Village Hall (0.92 km away); Busy Bees at Meopham Nursery school (0.72 km away); Meopham Secondary School (0.61 km away); and Meopham Leisure Centre (0.54 km away). The sites are 4.2km south of the A2 and Gravesend; and 7km north of the M20.

There are no environmental designations within the sites. Both sites lie within Flood Zone 1, and are free from areas of medium or high surface water flood risk with only very small areas of low surface water flood risk at the north western corner of Site A. The Kent Downs National Landscape is located 0.26 km to the east of Site A. The North Downs Woodland Special Area of Conservation (SAC) is located 3km east of Site A.

The Grade I Listed Parish Church of St John the Baptist and the Grade II Listed Church Cottages are located 0.19 km south of Site A, within the Conservation Area (CA) of The Street. To the west of site A is grade II listed Melliker Farm House

Satellite Image of the Site



Submitted Documents/Plans

Covering Letter from Wardell Armstrong dated 22nd April 2025;
Appendix 1 – Screening Matrix; and
Appendix 2 – Site Location Plan.

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 eastern site.

Internal

GBC Environmental Protection

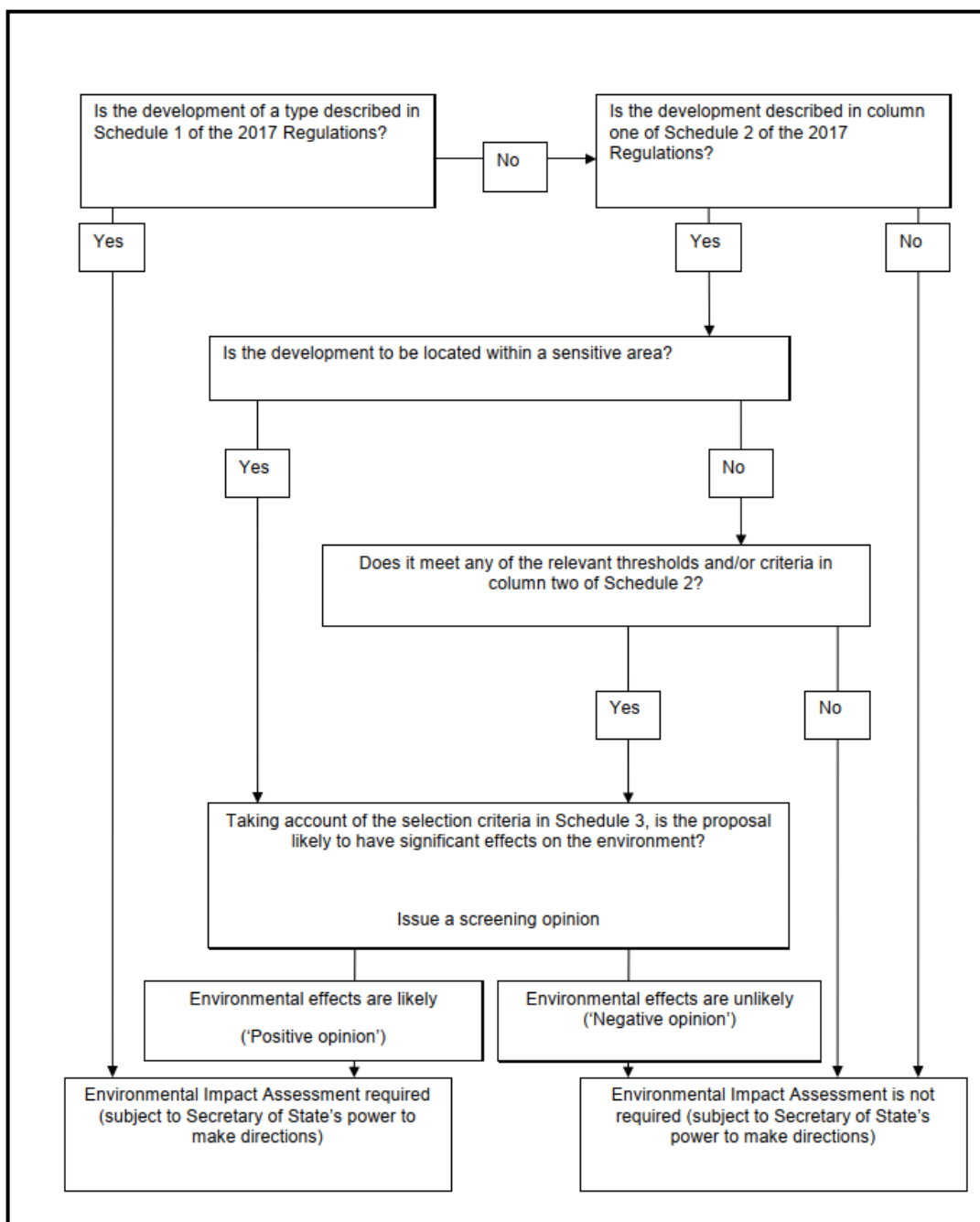
It is considered that matters relevant to Environmental Protection – contaminated land, air quality and noise can be addressed by way of technical reports being submitted with any formal application for these sites. Any matters requiring mitigation or further investigation can be dealt with by conditions at the appropriate stage.

Neighbouring properties

Neighbour consultation is not required for screening opinions. However 443 letters of objection have been received which relate to the proposed residential development and not the current screening opinion. They are therefore not considered relevant in this instance. 225 letters of support for EIA screening opinion were received.

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 residential developments are not expected to give rise to significant effects. The existing use of the sites comprise of agricultural land and are located within the wider context of residential development.

Conclusion

Having assessed the available evidence it is the Local Planning Authority's opinion that the proposals are 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 areas, it is considered that the proposals would be unlikely to have a significant impact on the environment. Gravesham Borough Council therefore concludes that the developments are not EIA development and that an EIA is not required.

Recommendation

The developments proposed are for the residential developments across two sites at Land at Wrotham Road, 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 document dated 22nd April 2025.

Without the implementation of the various further assessments and mitigation measures, as set out within the covering letter to accompany request for screening opinions by Wardell Armstrong on behalf of Richborough dated 22nd April 2025, it would be considered that the proposal would lead to result in significant adverse effects on the environments.

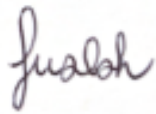
In light of this, the Local Planning Authority considers the following assessments/reports being relevant to the proposal in terms of mitigating significant environmental impacts;

- 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

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:	Richard Hart	Team Leader:	Faye Walsh
Signed:	<i>R Hart</i>	Signed:	
Dated:	26 th August 2025	Dated:	27 August 2025