

1 Introduction

Background

- 1.1 In 2007, Gallagher and English Partnerships (now the Homes and Communities Agency, HCA) submitted an outline planning application for the new town of Northstowe, located approximately 10 km to the north west of Cambridge (application reference S/7006/07/O). Three detailed infrastructure applications were also submitted (application references S/7007/07/F, S/7008/07/F and S/7009/07/F). An environmental impact assessment (EIA) of the proposals was undertaken and an environmental statement (ES) was submitted with the applications.
- 1.2 The consultation and determination process for the 2007 applications is ongoing. The 2007 applications were consistent with the Highways Agency A14 Ellington to Fen Ditton improvement scheme. This was designed to reduce congestion on the A14 through construction of a new dual carriageway between Ellington and Fen Drayton and Fen Ditton, widening the existing A14 between Fen Drayton and Fen Ditton and construction of local access roads alongside the widened A14 to separate local and strategic traffic, but was withdrawn as a consequence of the government's spending review in October 2010.
- 1.3 However, the government's Autumn Statement (HM Treasury, November 2011) now gives a commitment to increasing capacity and improving performance on the A14, which will support proposed housing developments, including Northstowe. The government has stated it will explore innovative ways of financing this work for the longer term, including tolls, and by spring 2012 will have developed proposals with local partners for improvements to the A14 road and the other local transport networks. It launched the 'A14 Challenge' consultation in December 2011 to identify long term ideas for improvements to the A14. For the short term, the government has made an immediate investment of £20 million to reduce congestion on the A14, including measures to improve junctions and increase resilience.
- 1.4 In advance of any longer term measures being confirmed as coming forward in relation to the A14 improvement works, Gallagher is submitting a new outline planning application to South Cambridgeshire District Council for an initial phase of Northstowe (figure 1.1.), comprising up to 1,500 dwellings; a primary school; a mixed use local centre (including a community building, and provision for non-residential institutions, financial and professional services, shops, cafés and restaurants, drinking establishments, and hot food take-aways); leisure, community, residential institutions, cultural, health, and employment provision (business, general industry and storage and distribution) including a household recycling centre; formal and informal recreational space and landscaped areas; and infrastructure works including site re-profiling and associated drainage works, foul and surface water pumping stations, two flood attenuation ponds on land east of Hatton's Road;

and associated works including the demolition of existing buildings and structures.

- 1.5 The proposals were reviewed in the context of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (England and Wales) Regulations 1999 (as amended), subsequently replaced by the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2011 (the ‘EIA Regulations’) and the associated guidance in Circular 02/99. The review concluded that EIA was necessary (pursuant to both the 1999 Regulations (as amended), as well as the 2011 Regulations) because the proposed development falls under schedule 2 of the EIA Regulations and the scale and location of the proposed development mean that there is the potential for significant environmental effects.

Environmental impact assessment

- 1.6 EIA is the process for ensuring that the likely effects on the environment of a proposed new development are fully assessed, understood and taken into account by the determining authority when considering an application. EIA is defined by Circular 02/99 as:

“a means of drawing together, in a systematic way, an assessment of a project’s likely significant environmental effects. This helps to ensure that the importance of the predicted effects, and the scope for reducing them, are properly understood by the public and the relevant competent authority before it makes its decision.”

- 1.7 EIA is integral to the planning process, but it is also a separate and objective assessment of the potential effects of the proposed development, allowing the local planning authority to make an informed decision. The EIA Regulations implement the requirements of EC Directive 97/11/EC, amending the original Directive 85/337/EEC ‘on the assessment of effects of certain public and private projects on the environment’.
- 1.8 To satisfy the requirements of the EIA Regulations, an environmental statement (ES) must address the matters listed in table 1.1. It should also include such of the information set out in table 1.2 as is reasonably required to assess the environmental effects of the development, and that the applicant can reasonably be required to compile.

Table 1.1: Summary of matters that an ES must address

A description of the development, comprising information on the site, design and size of the development
A description of the measures envisaged in order to avoid, reduce and, if possible, remedy significant adverse effects
The data required to identify and assess the main effects that the development is likely to have on the environment
An outline of the main alternatives studied by the applicant or appellant, and an indication of the main reasons for the choice made, taking into account the environmental effects
A non-technical summary of the information provided under rows 1 to 4 above

Table 1.2: Further information that an ES should address where reasonably required to assess the environmental effects of the proposed development

<p>A description of the development, including in particular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A description of the physical characteristics of the whole development and the land use requirements during the construction and operational phases • A description of the main characteristics of the production processes, for instance nature and quantity of the materials used • An estimate, by type and quantity, of expected residues and emissions (water, air and soil pollution, noise, vibration, light, heat, radiation etc) resulting from the operation of the proposed development
An outline of the main alternatives studied by the applicant or appellant and an indication of the main reasons for the choice made, taking into account the environmental effects
A description of the aspects of the environment likely to be significantly affected by the development, including, in particular, population, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, including the architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape and the inter-relationship between the above factors
<p>A description of the likely significant effects of the development on the environment, which should cover the direct effects and any indirect, secondary, cumulative, short, medium and long term, permanent and temporary, positive and negative effects of the development, resulting from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The existence of the development • The use of natural resources • The emission of pollutants, the creation of nuisances and the elimination of waste, and the description by the applicant of the forecasting methods used to assess the effects on the environment
A description of the measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and where possible offset any significant adverse effects on the environment
A non-technical summary of the information provided under rows 1 to 5 above
An indication of any difficulties (technical deficiencies or lack of know-how) encountered by the applicant in compiling the required information

- 1.9 This ES has been produced in accordance with the EIA Regulations, Circular 02/99 and best practice guidance issued by the government and other organisations, such as the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment's *Guidelines for Environmental Impact Assessment* (2004). It has been prepared by Terence O'Rourke Ltd based on information gathered during a formal EIA of the proposed development undertaken between May 2011 and January 2012.
- 1.10 The scope of the EIA was the subject of consultation with planning and environmental officers from South Cambridgeshire District Council and with a wide range of organisations, including Natural England, the Environment

Agency, Cambridgeshire County Council and the Highways Agency (see chapter 3 for full list of consultees). The scoping process is discussed in more detail in chapter 3 and a copy of the report that accompanied the request for a scoping opinion has been reproduced in technical appendix A.

The applicant

- 1.11 Gallagher is one of the largest developers promoting and developing residential and mixed use schemes in Britain. The company undertakes all aspects of the development process, from site assembly through to the construction of strategic infrastructure, and retains responsibility for the delivery of all planning obligations (www.gallagherestates.co.uk). The HCA has been involved in the preparation of the technical work undertaken to prepare the phase 1 outline planning application.

The consultant team

- 1.12 The coordination of the EIA and the assessments of potential landscape and visual, cultural heritage, natural heritage and community, economic and social effects of the proposed development have been undertaken by Terence O'Rourke Ltd. WSP has undertaken the assessments of potential traffic and transport, air quality, noise, ground conditions, water environment, agriculture and lighting effects.

The structure of the ES

- 1.13 This ES is divided into four main sections. Part one (chapters 1 to 3) provides the background to the application site, describes the proposed development and identifies the environmental issues that have been considered as part of the EIA. Part two (chapters 4 to 13) sets out and assesses the potential environmental effects of the proposed development and highlights the mitigation measures that will be employed to reduce the identified environmental impacts. Relevant policy considerations are summarised in these chapters and considered in more detail in the Planning Supporting Statement submitted in support of the application. Part 3 (chapter 14) sets out the potential for cumulative effects with future phases of Northstowe and part 4 (chapter 15) summarises the proposed mitigation measures and the residual effects.
- 1.14 A glossary is included at the back of the document to explain essential terminology used in the text. Technical appendices have been produced providing detailed information on the EIA scoping process and several of the environmental issues. The non-technical summary (NTS) of the ES, which forms the frontispiece of this folder, is also available as a separately bound document.

Other planning application documents

- 1.15 This ES should be read in conjunction with the other documents submitted in support of the planning application:
- Application forms, certificates, notices, covering letter and site location plan (document 1)
 - Existing site plans and parameter plans (document 2)
 - Design and Access Statement (document 3)
 - Planning Supporting Statement (document 4)
 - Local Centre Strategy and Retail Needs Assessment (document 5)
 - Construction Management Strategy (document 6)
 - Strategic Utility Report (document 7)
 - Health Impact Assessment (document 8)
 - Energy Statement (document 9)
 - Waste Management Strategy (document 10)
 - Sustainability Statement (document 11)
 - Tree Survey and Arboricultural Implications Assessment (document 12)
 - Water Conservation Strategy (document 13)
 - Low Emissions Strategy (document 14)
 - Statement of Consultation (document 15)
 - Summary of Supporting Information (document 16)

Further information

- 1.16 Copies of this ES and the technical appendices have been sent to South Cambridgeshire District Council and the statutory consultees. The full ES with its technical appendices may be inspected at:

South Cambridgeshire District Council
South Cambridgeshire Hall
Cambourne Business Park
Cambourne
Cambridge
CB23 6EA

- 1.17 Comments should be addressed to the Head of Development Control at the above address and copied to Terence O'Rourke Ltd at the address below. Additional copies of the ES (paper copy or CD) and any further information about the project may be obtained at a reasonable charge to reflect printing and distribution costs by contacting:

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