

3 THE APPLICATION SITE

3.1 INTRODUCTION

3.1.1 This chapter of the ES provides a description of the Application Site and the surrounding context.

3.2 APPLICATION SITE

3.2.1 The site covers an area of approximately 24.9 hectares of land to the south east of Northampton. The site sits within the District Boundaries of two Local Planning Authorities. The northern section of the site is 6.8 hectares in size and is within Northampton Borough Council (NBC) and the southern section is 18.1 hectares in size and is within South Northamptonshire Council (SNC). The site is made up of an area of arable land (northern section) and a parcel of land, formerly landfill, which comprises of semi improved grassland and a broadleaved plantation (southern section). The whole of the Application Site is part of the Northampton South of Brackmills SUE, as designated by policy N6 of the adopted West Northampton Joint Core Strategy (WNJCS). Part of the Site also falls within Skyline Conservation (Saved Local Plan policy E7). Adopted Policy N6 allocates the Northampton South of Brackmills SUE for development which will make provision for in the region of 1,300 dwellings.

3.2.2 The site is located approximately 0.16km south of Brackmills Industrial Estate and the outskirts of Northampton are separated from the southern boundary of the site by Newport Pagnell Road. The hamlet of Preston Deanery is 1km to the south and the village of Great Houghton is 1.6km north east.

3.2.3 The northern parcel of land, within NBC, is bounded by existing woodland to the north and northwest. The woodland, to the north is subject to a Tree Protection Order (TPO). To the west the parcel is bounded by the agricultural land, which falls within the approved HCA planning application area. This application has a reference of 2013/0338 and was granted Outline Planning consent by PINS in February 2016.

3.2.4 The southern parcel of land, within SNC, currently comprises of an open field with an intermittent belt of hedgerow running through the centre of the site (east to west). To the northwest the site is bounded by 'The Green', beyond which lies the HCA development site referenced above. To the south the site is bounded by Newport Pagnell Road, beyond which lies the Morris Homes development which is currently under construction. Land along the southern boundary has previously be used as landfill.

3.2.5 Current vehicular access through the site is via two access points off Newport Pagnell Road in to the southern parcel of land and then a single access point of a small road called 'The Green' which forms the southern boundary of the northern parcel. This road called 'The Green' is what separates the two sections of this Application Site.

3.2.6 The landform of the Application Site has subtle undulations with landform varying from c96m to c117m AOD in the southern section to c101m to c108m AOD in the northern section. The highest point of the whole of the Application Site occurs in the South East corner of the southern parcel of land.

3.2.7 No Public Rights of Way (PRoW) traverse the site however, there is a Footpath (KM1) which ends on the other side of Newport Pagnell Road. Its location and the other environmental features discussed in this Chapter can be seen on **Figure 3.1 Environmental Constraints Plan**. This plan has considered the environmental constraints within a 3km radius of the Application Site. There are further PRoW within

600m of the Application Site. These are footpaths KM3 and KN4 to the south; KN6 to the north west and KU15 to the east.

3.2.8 The site is not subject to any ecological, landscape or heritage designations.

3.3 APPLICATION SITE CONTEXT

3.3.1 The Application Site is defined to the north by the South of Brackmills Industrial Estate and the west by the City of Northampton. The Industrial Estate is made up of a mix of office and warehouse business, and has direct access off the A45, to the North.

3.3.2 As the Application Site is located within the SUE area, which is allocated for new housing. This SUE Area extends to the northwest and comprises of the HCA planning application (N/2013/338) which was granted planning consent for 1,000 new dwellings, a school, retail space and the necessary infrastructure. Land to the immediate south of the site, separated by Newport Pagnell Road (B526) has also been granted planning consent, this time for a further 300 dwellings and a number of these homes are currently being constructed.

3.3.3 At this time there is an established, but gappy hedgerow along all boundaries of the southern section of the site. There is also hedgerow and trees along the southern boundary and the majority of the western and eastern boundaries of the northern parcel. The northern section of the site is wrapped by a section of established woodland. This woodland offers a buffer strip between the Proposed Development and the South of Brackmills Industrial Estate.

3.3.4 Between the two parcels of land runs a small single carriageway road, known locally as 'The Green'. This road forms the District Boundary between South Northamptonshire Council (SNC) and Northampton Borough Council (NBC). It is proposed within the Application Indicative Masterplan (**Figure 4.6**) and the Access and Movement Parameter Plan (**Figure 4.3**) that the western section of this road will be downgraded to become a pedestrian/cycle link.

3.3.5 There are no Statutory Designated Sites for ecology within the site boundary, however, there is a Statutory Designated Site within 2km. To the north (c.2km) is the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits. This site is designated a Special Protection Area (SPA), Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and a RAMSAR site. This site is made up from disused sand and gravel pits which extend for over 35km along the River Nene floodplain. This habitat is used by over-wintering and migratory bird populations.

3.3.6 Local ecological designations include Barnes Meadow which is a Local Nature Reserve (LNR) and is approximately 1.8km to the north. This site is made up of three meadows either side of the River Nene. Brackmills Small Wood is a non-designated Potential Wildlife Site and is located on the northern boundary of the Application Site. There are a further seven Potential Wildlife Sites (PWS) within a 1km radius of the site. This sites include Brackmills Woods West (1km NW); Coca Cola field (0.2km NW) and Brackmills track (0.6km N). These PWS were considered by Northamptonshire County Council when designating their Local Wildlife Sites and none were considered to contain a wider enough diversity or a rare habitat to warrant a higher level of designation.

3.3.7 The site is not subject to any local or national landscape designations. There are no Registered Parks and Gardens (RG&G) or statutory designations within the vicinity of the Site. Hardingstone Conservation Area is separated from the Proposed Development by the already approved new residential development of 1,000 new dwellings in the HCA scheme. This already approved scheme is anticipated to be in the foreground of any views from the Conservation Area towards the Proposed Development. There are a further four Conservation Areas within 3km radius of the Application Site. Wootton

Conservation is 1.25km away and is separated by, and surrounded by the existing urban and residential development of Northampton. The remaining two Conservation Areas are located to the north east of the Application Site. These are Great Houghton and Little Houghton Conservation Areas. The closer of the two is Great Houghton which is approximately 1.6km away from the Application Site and between it and the Proposed Development is the existing South of Brackmills Industrial Estate.

3.3.8 No Listed Buildings occur within or adjacent to the site. The closest Listed Building is a Grade II property approximately 1.1km to the south east, on the outskirts of the hamlet of Preston Deanery. The nearest Grade I Listed Building is within Wootton Conservation Area and therefore over 1.25km away from the Application Site. The majority of all other Listed Buildings within a 3km assessment area of the Site are located within the Conservation Areas detailed above. Through the Screening and Scoping exercises for this Application, it has been determined by both Local Planning Authorities that it is unlikely that this proposal will have an environmentally significant effect on the local cultural heritage environment. Therefore, this environmental topic is not assessed in more detail within this Environmental Statement.

3.3.9 The majority of the Application Site is underlain by Glacial Till (predominantly cohesive strata). The solid geology underlying the site comprises a sequence of thin Jurassic beds, which vary from west to east across the site and include: Blisworth Limestone Formation, Wellingborough Limestone Member, Stamford Member (interbedded sandstone and siltstone), Northampton Sand Formation (Ooidal ironstone) and Whitby Mudstone Formation. No dip information for the solid strata is shown, although the cross section suggests a shallow dip to the east and south east. The site area is not affected by faulting and the nearest fault to the site area is 139m to the west.

3.3.10 The Groundwater Vulnerability Mapping indicates that the aquifer status varies across the site and includes unproductive strata in the west, secondary aquifers in the central area and principal aquifer along the western boundary. The Application Site is located within a Nitrate Vulnerable Zone.

3.3.11 The site is not located within Zone 2 or 3 Flood Risk areas and is therefore not considered to be at risk of flooding. It is also not within a Source Protection Zone.

3.4 PUBLIC CONSULTATION

3.4.1 A comprehensive programme of public consultation has been undertaken prior to this application being submitted. A detailed report outlining all elements of the consultation process has been submitted as a standalone document and is called the Statement of Community Involvement. The information presented in this Environmental Statement is a summary of the key events that were held and comments generated from them to date.

3.4.2 In June 2016, the Applicants commenced the process of communication with planning officers from both Northampton Borough Council (NBC) and South Northamptonshire Council (SNC). The purpose of these meetings was to agree the principals of the public consultation methodology. Through these meetings the dates and venues for the public events, the nature of the marketing materials and the invite list distribution to these events was agreed.

3.4.3 A tool kit was created that is in line with South Northamptonshire, Northamptonshire Borough and Northampton County Council's own Statements of Community Involvement. This tool kit included the follow items;

- i. Briefings and targeted communications with stakeholders;
- ii. Scheme Postcard – distributed to over 5,600 homes and business in the area;

- iii. Advertisements – in key local papers as well as proactive media relations;
- iv. Exhibition events – at venues in neighbouring communities;
- v. Exhibition panels – for use at exhibition events and downloadable for the consultation website;
- vi. Consultation Website – including an online feedback form
- vii. Project leaflet – available at exhibition events and downloadable for the consultation website;
- viii. Feedback Form – available at exhibition events and downloadable from the consultation website;
- ix. Frequently Asked Questions – available at exhibition events and on the consultation website;
- x. Dedicated telephone helpline and email address
- xi. Posters displayed in prominent community facilities and notice boards.

3.4.4 A Consultation Zone was identified as it contained the communities most likely to be affected by the proposals. This zone is made up of

- The parishes of Hardingstone and Hackleton as the Application Site is within their parish boundaries; and
- The parishes of Wootton, Little Houghton, Great Houghton and Quinton which are the parishes which immediately neighbour the Application Site.

3.4.5 The total number of properties within this Consultation Zone is approximately 5,600 and includes business and residential. The majority of the residential properties are within the parishes of Hardingstone and Wootton. A map of the Consultation Zone can be seen in **Figure 3.2 Consultation Zone**.

3.4.6 For those communities and organisations beyond the defined Consultation Zone, but may have an interest in the scheme, the Applicants sought to make them aware of the consultation predominately through local and regional media channels. Information about the proposals could then be accessed online or by contacting the Community Relations team.

Member Briefings

3.4.7 Prior to information about the Hampton Green proposal becoming publicly available or consultation taking place the Applicants contacted those elected members determined as likely to have an interest in the scheme. These initial meetings were to discuss the emerging masterplan for the Application Site and it was hoped that members could offer comment or advice on local needs and preferences in design prior to the masterplan being presented to the wider local community in the consultation process. A list of the members and clerks from the local parish councils contacted for these member briefings can be found in the Statement of Community Involvement Report.

3.4.8 As a result of this engagement, members of the project team subsequently met with Cllr Phil Larratt (NCC) and Cllr Jonathan Nunn (SBC) on the 20th July 2016 at The Guildhall, Northampton.

3.4.9 The Applicants undertook a further round of engagement with members once the masterplan for Hampton Green had been sufficiently developed for the purpose of presenting it for consultation. Working with the case officer at SNC a formal project briefing session was arranged to take place on the 21st December 2016 as part of a pre-arranged 'Members Sounding Board' meeting. This took place immediately prior to the Full Council Meeting. Notice of the briefing taking place was issued to all Council Members by the SNC case officer in advance to invite them to attend. The individuals who attended were:

- i. Cllr Robert Atkinson (CON – Hackleton);
- ii. Cllr Stephen Clarke (CON - Blisworth & Roade);
- iii. Cllr Roger Clarke (CON - Blakesley & Cote);
- iv. Cllr Sandi Smallman (CON - Blakesley & Cote);
- v. Tracey Hill - Head of Major Projects;
- vi. Daniel Callis – Planning Officer

3.4.10 Representatives for the Applicants provided attendees at this meeting with an overview of the proposals for Hampton Green as well as the process of the upcoming consultation. Attendees were given the opportunity to ask questions about the proposal and its interaction with the local infrastructure.

3.4.11 A similar offer of such an event was made to NBC, however through discussions with the NBC it was determined that offering them the opportunity to attend a closed exhibition preview event was sufficient.

3.4.12 On the 3rd January 2017 a letter was sent to all elected members and the clerks of the Parish Councils within the Consultation Zone informing them of the upcoming public consultation events and the closed preview event to be held on Thursday 26th January 2017. This letter also gave details of the consultation website www.hampton-green.co.uk for those members who wished to learn about the proposal but were not able to attend the closed preview event. A further communication was made to all members and the parish councils on the 19th January 2017 reminding them of these events.

Public Consultation Events

3.4.13 A Consultation Invite in the form of an A5 postcard was sent to all 5,600 properties within the Consultation Zone. This invite includes details of the scheme and how people can submit comments on the proposal. It also included details of the consultation website (www.hampton-green.co.uk), the dedicated telephone helpline (0800 9889 141), email address (info@hampton-green.co.uk) and postal address (Hampton Green Team, Camargue, Eagle Tower, Cheltenham, GL50 1TA). These invites were distributed to homes and businesses between Monday 9th and Thursday 12th January 2017.

3.4.14 In addition to the postcard invite advertisements ran on the Northamptonshire Telegraph on 19th January 2017 and the same advert ran in the Northampton Chronicle and Echo on the 26th January 2017. This later advert was also supported by editorial in the paper to further promote awareness of the event.

3.4.15 Over a 5-week public consultation period the Applicants held two public exhibition events, in Wootton and Hardingstone. These took place on:

Date and Time	Location
Thursday 26 th January 2017- 4-8pm	Wootton Club at The Red Lion, 2, Church Hill, Wootton, Northants, NN4 6LQ
Saturday 28 th January 2017 10am-2pm	Hardingstone Parish Hall, High Street, Hardingstone, Northants, NN4 6DA

Table 3.1 – Dates and Locations of Public Events

3.4.16 In addition to this the closed preview event for elected members, as outlined above, was held on the 26th January 2017 between 3-4pm.

3.4.17 The locations for these events and the venues were identified after seeking advice and input from the case officers at the relevant local authorities. It should be noted that for the event held in Wootton the Wootton Community and Sports Centre was the preferred venue. However, due to the regular programme of events already confirmed for this venue it was not possible to have the consultation event at this location so the Wootton Club was used instead.

3.4.18 In total 130 people attended the closed preview event and the two public exhibitions (66 attended on Thursday and 64 attended on Saturday).

3.4.19 A printed feedback form was available at the events and this form could also be downloaded from the consultation website. In addition to this comments that have come through the telephone line and email account have also been logged to ensure all comments are considered. At the time of drafting this Environmental Statement 47 people had left comments on the telephone line, in writing, using the online feedback form and via the email account.

3.4.20 The Applicants recognise that developments the size of Hampton Green can often be controversial among the local community. However, in their initial response to the proposal stakeholders and members of the public were constructive and broadly positive, before going on to seek clarification on specific areas of concern. This was particularly evident at the exhibition events, where a large number of attendees expressed support or approval of the masterplan, with a significant number also registering their interest as prospective buyers.

3.4.21 This anecdotal evidence is reflected in the observation that the events were relatively well attended, comparatively these figures were not reflected in the number of submissions to the consultation. Of those that did submit feedback, six respondents explicitly expressed their support for the proposals for Hampton Green and/or delivery of additional housing in the area.

3.4.22 In respect of wider issues raised both at events and in the feedback, there were several recurring themes. A summary of these can be seen in Table 3.2 below.

Themes	Feedback summary
Overview	The amount of development in the area was referenced by several consultees, as well as others who noted the need for more housing. Several consultees also questioned the JCS allocation.
Housing	The type and mix of housing was mentioned in several responses, including requests for the development to reflect housing in the immediate vicinity. Consultees also registered their concerns about disruption to the community during the construction phase.
Infrastructure	The state of local infrastructure was referenced regularly as well as the scope for the development to exacerbate these issues. Capacity in local schools and health centres were cited by many consultees, with most questioning how MGH & HD would remedy this.
Environment and Recreation	The loss of green space in the vicinity was referenced by several consultees, as well as the loss of village identity because of the space between villages being built upon. Several respondents also commented on the protection of wildlife.
Traffic and Transport	Traffic and transport was the most commonly referenced theme, both in peoples' feedback and at consultation events. The main concern

	<p>was the already high level of existing traffic on the local road network, particularly Newport Pagnell Road and the A45. Feedback centred on the belief that the Hampton Green development would exacerbate the problems and sought clarification on the proposed mitigation.</p> <p>Other issues raised included requests for additional public transport and improvements to local roundabouts.</p>
Drainage	Drainage was referenced by one consultee who asked about water pressure.
Site remediation	Despite site remediation, and the historical use of the site, coming up during discussions with elected members and members of the public at consultation events, no feedback was submitted on this topic.
Miscellaneous	The name of the site was brought up by one person, who suggested several alternatives.
Consultation	Several respondents provided comments on the consultation materials, the choice of venue for the exhibition event in Wootton, and the level of advertising. We also received feedback about the name of the single carriageway lane between the two parcels called 'The Green', and confusion that may have arisen from our labelling.

Table 3.2 Summary of main themes arising in consultation.