

**Environmental Statement
Volume 3
Non-Technical Summary

Land North of Horsham**

July 2016

Environmental Statement

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on Behalf of Liberty Property Trust UK Ltd

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 An Environmental Statement has been prepared for submission with an outline planning application seeking permission on behalf of Liberty Property Trust UK Limited (Liberty) to develop a mixed use strategic development at Land North of Horsham. This Non-Technical Summary summarises this Statement, in accordance with the requirements of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations.
- 1.2 The purpose of this Environmental Statement is to assess the environmental effects of the development. Any potential significant environmental effects are to be identified, and actions identified to mitigate them. A Scoping Report has been submitted to Horsham District Council by Liberty, which set out to identify the likely significant environmental effects, and the required scope of assessment.
- 1.3 Horsham District Council provided a Scoping Opinion on this Scoping Report, which set out their requirements on the scope of the assessment, as well as confirming the specific environmental aspects which will need to be assessed.
- 1.4 This Non-Technical Summary gives a brief outline of the environmental aspects of this proposed strategic development, and their assessments. Throughout the preparation of this planning application, Liberty has continually engaged with Horsham District Council and the statutory consultees to ensure that environmental considerations have been at the forefront of the masterplanning and overall scheme development.

2. Site Description

- 2.1 The site is adjacent to the town of Horsham on its northern boundary (Appendix A). It comprises a number of fields in arable and pasture use, as well as several small copses and woodland. The majority of the site slopes from north to south, and to the north a ridge of high ground contains significant mature woodland, which forms a strong northern boundary. The site is also contained within clearly defined boundaries on its eastern, western and southern borders, by roads, mature hedgerows and trees. Chennells Brook runs east to south-west through the eastern part of the site. There are only a few properties within this extensive application site.
- 2.2 The site has direct access onto the A264, providing excellent communications not only with Horsham itself, but also with Crawley and Gatwick to the east, and also via the A24 to other towns such as Dorking and Guildford to the north and Worthing to the south.

3. Proposed Development

- 3.1 The proposed development is for the creation of a mixed use strategic development, which will form a key part of Horsham District Council's vision for growth over the period of the Horsham District Planning Framework, which covers the period to 2031. The Indicative Masterplan is provided at Appendix B.
- 3.2 It will make a valuable contribution to meeting the Council's housing and employment needs, by providing up to 2,750 homes, with a mix of house types and tenures, as well as a high quality business park providing approximately 46,450 m² (500,000 square feet) of business floorspace. To meet the needs of this strategic site, a wide range of community facilities and services will be accommodated within the development. These include a secondary school, two primary schools, provision for special needs and 'early years'.
- 3.3 There will be a local centre, which will include retail provision and community facilities. Also at the heart of the scheme will be sport and recreation facilities. All of these will be easily accessible by both the new residents as well as the significant number of employees at the business park.
- 3.4 There will be easy access to significant areas of parkland and open space within the development, through the proposed network of footpaths and cycleways. This network will also provide excellent recreational access to the wider countryside, as well as to Horsham town.
- 3.5 Highway improvements will be provided as the scheme develops, and significant new infrastructure will be delivered in a staged manner. These include improved junctions on the A264 at Rusper Road, Langhurstwood Road, as well as a new access off the A264 to the business park and railway station. A number of off site highway improvements will also be carried out, as the development progresses. In addition, significant sustainable transport provision will form an integral part of this development, including an internal network of bus routes, linking houses with the business park, the local centre, as well as providing excellent access to Horsham town centre. Land is also safeguarded for a railway station and associated uses, which will be able to provide direct access to neighbouring towns, as well as to London.
- 3.6 The development will also incorporate significant environmental improvements, including the creation of a 'nature park', and greenways which will compliment the positive landscape characteristics and biodiversity qualities of the site. Well designed landscape buffers will be created around the site boundaries to provide a robust and long term defensible boundary.

4. Planning Policy Context

- 4.1 This proposed development is in accordance with Government guidance, as sought in the National Planning Policy Framework and Guidance, being a sustainable urban extension. This comprehensive mixed use scheme addresses the economic, social and environmental roles of sustainable development, through the provision of new housing, a high quality business park, schools, retail, community facilities and services, all set in the context of a landscape-led masterplan, which protects and enhances the natural and built environment of the site and its environs.
- 4.2 This application is also consistent with the recently adopted Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF), (November 2015), which includes the Strategic Site of Land North of Horsham, to provide a mixed use strategic development. This planning application incorporates all of the principles of this development, as set out in the HDPF. It will form a high quality sustainable community which will have its own identity and character, and also have strong sustainable connections with Horsham.
- 4.3 In accordance with the HDPF, development will provide significant employment and business opportunities, not only with the new high quality business park, but also with other uses such as schools, retail, sport and recreation, and other community facilities and services. The 2,750 homes will make a significant contribution to Horsham District's housing supply throughout the period of the Plan. The landscape-led masterplanning will provide a wide range of formal and informal recreation, and also ensure that the existing natural environment of the site, such as the areas of woodland, and the existing biodiversity are retained. The creation of greenways, new planting of trees and hedgerows, and the formation of well designed landscape buffers around the site will add significantly to the environmental attributes of the site.
- 4.4 Throughout the development, new transport infrastructure will be delivered, in a phased manner, in accordance with the HDPF. This will include highway improvements along the A264 in the form of improvements to existing roundabouts and a new junction to the new business park and railway station; an internal network of bus services, land safeguarded for a new railway station and associated uses, and improved crossings of the A264 for pedestrians and cyclists as well as providing good connections and routes through the development itself.

5. Socio Economic

- 5.1 Socio economic impacts of the development can be categorised into the provision of new employment, retail and leisure floorspace, and the attraction of new employers to the locality and the provision of new employment.

Other impacts include the provision of new homes, and the associated provision of community facilities.

- 5.2 The assessment considered both the effects in the whole local authority area, and also at a more local level. Characteristics such as levels of population, labour force, earnings, income, travel to work patterns, facilities and services, and levels of deprivation have been addressed.
- 5.3 The potential impacts of the development have been assessed as **major beneficial** at both the construction and the operational phase. The construction phase, will not only result in direct employment in building new homes, offices and facilities and services, but will also have wider spin-off benefits on the local economy through the spending of those involved in construction work. Given an assumed 15 year build programme, this will support around 5,600 full time jobs, or an average around 400 full time constructions jobs throughout the lifetime of the development programme.
- 5.4 The operational phase will have **major beneficial** effects. The 2,750 new homes, many of which will cater for local housing needs, represents almost a fifth of the planned level of housing in Horsham District to 2031. The new high quality business park will result in around 3,900 people working on the business park, with possibly half working part-time. This equates to around 2,900 full time jobs. In addition, around 710 full time jobs will be created through the Local Centre and the Schools.

6. Contamination and Remediation

- 6.1 The likely effects that the development of this site may have on the geology and soils, including groundwater, have been considered. In order to obtain the required information on any potential for land contamination, and to inform the scope and requirement for further investigation, a 'Contaminated Land Desk Study' has been carried out.
- 6.2 The site currently comprises a mixture of farmland, predominantly grazing and crops, meadowland and managed woodland, with a number of residential properties and farms with small commercial units. None of the site is safeguarded for mineral deposits. The majority of the site is underlain by Weald Clay, with some Horsham Stone. There are some minor aquifers on site.
- 6.3 The Desk Study identified that the sources of any contamination on site are limited to the contents of any 'made ground', localised asbestos in farm buildings, any areas used for fuel and oil for farm vehicles and equipment and storage of materials.
- 6.4 During construction, any effects of localised cross contamination of soil, asbestos removal; handling of fuel for plant, tools, equipment, and

maintenance activities, will be mitigated through the implementation of a Quality, Safety, Health and Environment Plan, with competent remediation design, management and supervision. Construction earthwork effects, including stripping of topsoil/subsoil; stockpiling; importing of materials and reprofiling; and construction of foundations, will be mitigated through the implementation of a Construction Environment Management Plan. These measures will result in **negligible and not significant** effects. Once the development is operational, there will be **moderate beneficial** effects, through remediation of any contaminated soil and groundwater, especially in the residential and recreational areas.

7. Agricultural Land

- 7.1 The impacts from the development are to be considered in the light of Government policy for the protection of the best and most versatile agricultural land. An Agricultural Land Classification and Soil Resource has been carried out, to assess the quality of the agricultural land on the site, as well as the soil resources. 174 soil profiles were examined in two surveys, as well as spot checks across the site to validate the survey data.
- 7.2 The findings of the surveys are that the topsoil across the site is predominantly of medium or heavy silty clay loam. The subsoil is typically of silty clay with instances of heavy silt clay loam. The permeability is poor, and the majority of the agricultural land on the site (155.4 hectares) is sub-grade 3b, and not the best and most versatile agricultural land. This forms 95% of the agricultural land. Only 9.1 hectares (5%) is of the best and most versatile, and is limited to the south-east parts of the site, distributed in a piecemeal manner. In addition, 26.5 hectares of the site is non-agricultural.
- 7.3 The effect of this permanent loss of agricultural land is **moderate adverse**. This effect will be mitigated to some extent by the re-use of as much of the surplus soil resources on-site in the detailed design of gardens and green spaces. In addition, mitigation will also be achieved through compliance with DEFRA's Construction Code of Practice for the sustainable use of soils on construction sites, and the preparation of a Soil Resources Plan, to ensure that the quality of the soils retained on site and exported off-site is maintained. This will lead to a **minor adverse** effect in relation to loss of agricultural soils.

8. Landscape and Visual

- 8.1 The landscape issues for this development are the effects on the local landscape character; the impact on specific landscape features; and visual effects on the surrounding area, together with any physical effects, such as changes in topography. In carrying out this assessment, viewpoints for visual impact assessment have been agreed with Horsham District Council.

- 8.2 In making the landscape assessment, a baseline landscape and visual appraisal has been carried out, both through desktop studies and field surveys. The landscape context of the application site and surrounding area is predominantly open farmland, subdivided by field hedgerows. Lines of mature trees and woodland blocks occupy the gently undulating floor of the Chennells Brook valley, and the shallow valley of Boldings Brook. The Land rises to the north of the application site. The farmland uses consist of medium to large irregular shaped fields in arable and pasture uses, with smaller regular shaped fields located close to scattered farmsteads and residential properties within the landscape.
- 8.3 There is good tree cover within the site, which contributes to good enclosure and containment within the wider landscape. These restrict views of the site to short distances from local roads and sections of public footpaths/rights of way within the area. The extensive tree cover and rising topography to the north of the site curtails middle and long distance views.
- 8.4 Some landscape and visual effects would be caused during the construction period. However, whilst the construction period will extend over fifteen years or so, each area of construction is likely to be relatively short, so the effects would be temporary. Mitigation measures throughout the construction period would further reduce this effect, the result of which would be **minor adverse**. As the development progresses, there will be notable changes to the current rural landscape character of the application site. However, the landscape led masterplanning, with its sensitive layout and design, and the creation of substantial new areas of natural green space and open space, including new tree, shrub and hedgerow planting will result in the achievement of overall **moderate beneficial** effect as the development matures to completion.
- 8.5 With regards to the agreed receptor viewpoints within and near to the application site, about half of the visual effects are predicted to be **moderate adverse** during construction phases. As the development progresses, these are predicted to be significantly reduced, resulting in beneficial effects in the majority of viewpoints. This is primarily due to the establishment and maturing of landscape planting which will increase tree cover and habitat directly within and throughout the development, including strong landscape buffers to provide robust and long term defensible boundaries to the development, and to avoid any perception of coalescence and maintain separation between Horsham and Crawley. The overall resultant effects as the development progresses will therefore be **minor beneficial**.

9. Ecology

- 9.1 The application site, and the wider ecology study area, is dominated by agricultural fields intersected by mature hedgerows, trees, ponds, and a number of watercourses, including Chennells Brook. It also contains a

number of woodland areas, including Graylands Copse, Bush Copse, Castle Copse and Holbrook Plantation. The site is not subject to any international or national ecology designations.

- 9.2 Initial ecological studies were undertaken to inform the early stages of the masterplanning, and identify ecological opportunities and constraints. These have been complemented by further targeted specialist ecological surveys to further inform the masterplan.
- 9.3 Within the application site, the potential effects relate to the ancient woodland, the Brookhurst Wood and Gill and Morris's Wood SNCI; the hedgerows and trees; waterbodies; and species habitats. The sensitive masterplanning will result in the retention of these ecological features. These will in turn secure the majority of the existing highest quality foraging habitat, and the creation of green infrastructure/linkages, which will allow for the continued movement of species within the overall application site.
- 9.4 The construction effects mainly relate to disturbances from noise, dust and lighting, and potentially effects of waterbodies and watercourses, as well as the limited removal of hedgerows and trees. These works will be subject to a Construction and Environmental Management Plan. These measures will result in **negligible and not significant effects** on the majority of ecological matters, with only a few **minor adverse** effects.
- 9.5 The development, as a result of the recognition of the ecology of the site, will result in a number of ecological benefits. Any loss or changes or fragmentation of habitats will be minimised, and the ancient woodland, wooded gills, the SNCI and waterbodies will be protected by means of landscape buffers and the careful design of access and circulation routes. There will also be the creation of a nature park, as well as an ecological network throughout the site, through the incorporation of green infrastructure. This will ensure that wildlife can continue to use these features. There will also be significant new landscape features, including tree and hedgerow planting and the creation of new areas of natural greenspace. These will provide additional ecological benefits within the site. These combine to result in varying levels of beneficial effects, including the **major beneficial** effect of the creation of the nature park.

10. Archaeology and Heritage

- 10.1 The scope of the assessment of archaeology and heritage within the site comprises the potential for disturbance to buried archaeological deposits and historic landscape features within the site, and effects on the settings of designated heritage assets around the site.
- 10.2 To inform this assessment, a Heritage Statement has been prepared, which includes both a desk-based assessment and a walkover survey. This work

informed the masterplanning of the development. It identifies all of the heritage assets within the site and in close proximity, including listed buildings, scheduled ancient monuments, as well as historic hedgerows and ancient woodland. The assessment considers not only these heritage assets, but also their settings.

- 10.3 The site itself contains two designated heritage assets, a Scheduled Monument, Homestead Moat near Graylands Copse, and a Grade II listed building (The Moated House). In addition there are a number of listed buildings and two Scheduled Monuments near to the application site.
- 10.4 Through sensitive masterplanning, all of the heritage assets within and near to the site will be retained, and their settings respected. During the construction phase there will be an archaeological watching brief during groundworks. The scheme itself ensures that any partial loss of the rural setting of the listed buildings is mitigated, including taking advantage of retaining and enlarging existing green areas, as well as creating new green areas around these buildings. The result is that the impacts are **negligible/not significant**, either during the construction or operation phases.

11. Transport

- 11.1 The transport effects of this development have been informed by a Transport Assessment and a Site Wide Framework Travel Plan. A number of potential effects are considered, including driver delay, severance, pedestrian and cyclist delay and amenity.
- 11.2 This development includes significant new transport infrastructure. These include improvements to a number of roundabouts along the A264 to the south of the site; a new secondary junction into the development east of Rusper Road; closure of the existing junction of Langhurstwood Road with the A264 to be replaced with the construction of a new roundabout junction. In addition, creation of new pedestrian and cycle crossing points on the A264 including a new pedestrian/cycle bridge, as well as a comprehensive network of roads to accommodate bus routes to serve the development, will ensure easy access across the strategic site, linking all of the key facilities as well as providing excellent access to Horsham town centre. Land is also safeguarded for the provision of a new railway station and related car parking.
- 11.3 The construction of these transport measures will result in mainly **minor adverse** effects. They will be localised and temporary, with the main effect being on the A264 during the construction of the new site accesses, which will result in temporary moderate adverse effects. There will also be an element of temporary disruption to pedestrian and cyclists due to these roadworks, including temporary diversions. However, mitigation measures will minimise delays, so the impacts will be negligible/not significant.

- 11.4 As this new transport infrastructure is completed, there will be a number of **major beneficial** effects, such as the closure of the southern part of Langhurstwood Road to through traffic. There will also be a number of improved links in the transport network, which will result in a significant decrease in driver delay in the peak hours. Overall, the development will have a **negligible/not significant** effect on driver delay, and a **major beneficial** effect for pedestrians and cyclists, through the creation of safer at-grade crossings of the A264, as well as a new foot/cycle bridge, and improvements to the underpass adjacent to the railway. In addition, these works will ensure that the effects of the new development on road safety and accidents will be **negligible/not significant**.

12. Air Quality

- 12.1 The potential effects on air quality of new development primarily relate to increased traffic; increasing population being exposed to air pollutants; impacts such as dust during construction, and biodiversity impacts.
- 12.2 In assessing the potential effects of this development, information was obtained on existing air quality, and consideration of any construction and operational effects. The receptors used to assess impacts were located adjacent to the road network where traffic impacts would be largest.
- 12.3 The main impacts on local air quality will be during the construction works. Dust measure controls will be carried out in accordance with a Construction Environment Management Plan, in order to minimise dust and air quality effects. The site layout for construction work will be arranged to ensure that machinery and dust causing activities such as construction traffic are located as far away from sensitive receptors as possible. A Construction Environment Management Plan will set out detailed measures to manage construction activities, so the resultant effects will therefore be **negligible/not significant**.
- 12.4 The air quality effect of road traffic from the new development on the identified receptors will be minimised as a result of sensitive masterplanning, with residential areas kept at appropriate distances from transport routes by appropriate landscaping and buffering. As a result, the air quality effects of road traffic generated by the proposed development is considered to be **negligible/not significant**.
- 12.5 There may be some impacts on woodland habitat within the scheme, but the masterplanning will ensure that this will only have some **minor adverse** effects, where changes in oxides in nitrogen concentrations and nitrogen deposition impact on woodland habitat and ponds close to the A264 and A220. Elsewhere in the development, however, the effects of such changes will be **negligible/not significant**.

13. Noise and Vibration

- 13.1 The noise and vibration effects of the construction and operational phases of this proposed development relate to both the site itself, and the surrounding area. In particular it considers the existing and future noise from the proposed uses of the site; the effect of construction noise, and the vibrations to existing and proposed noise sensitive receptors.
- 13.2 The methodology for the assessment was agreed with Horsham District Council's Environmental Health Officer, including the study area and locations of receptors. A baseline environmental noise study was carried out, and a noise model prepared to predict the likely noise impact arising both from the construction and operation stages of the development.
- 13.3 During the construction phases, the likely effects relate to site levelling, and clearance, ground excavation, concreting, building and road construction, and related traffic movements. These will be reduced in accordance with a Construction Environment Management Plan, and will include such measures as locating any noisy equipment away from existing dwellings, screening plan to reduce noise, and work only carried out during agreed operational hours. Regular noise monitoring will also be carried out at sensitive receptors. The resultant effects will range from **minor to moderate/adverse** pending on receptor locations.
- 13.4 The development will incorporate appropriate noise mitigation measures, including earth bunds, buffer zones, and acoustic barriers. For all operational potential affects from the proposed development at the agreed noise receptor locations including existing dwellings the change in noise levels on the roads such as the A264 has been assessed, and any increase will be **negligible/not significant**. In addition, the noise and vibration effects on proposed uses within the site, including schools, the business park, and housing, has also been assessed. Again, with the incorporation of earth bunds, buffer zones and land use distribution, the resultant effects will be negligible/not significant.

14. Hydrology and Flooding

- 14.1 This assessment considers any potential environmental impacts of the proposed development on flood risk and surface water drainage within the site and the surrounding area. It was undertaken in conjunction with the Environment Agency, Horsham District Council and West Sussex County Council.
- 14.2 The assessment relates to both the construction and operational phases of the development. As part of the baseline work, a detailed hydrological and hydraulic modelling of the study site was carried out, which confirmed that

the floodplain within the site, for Chennells Brook and its tributaries, is narrow, and does not extend far from the watercourses.

- 14.3 With regards to surface water flood risk, the majority of the site is at a 'very low' risk. The masterplanning of the scheme avoids any development in the flood plain. Therefore there is **negligible/not significant** risk of flooding, either during construction or the operation of the development.
- 14.4 During construction works, any effects on either existing properties or on the A264 downstream of the site will be mitigated through measures set out in a Construction Environment Management Plan. These include avoiding any works whenever possible, and safe storage of plan and contaminants. This Management Plan will also address potential effects such as protecting the water quality from sediments or pollutants, and protecting existing properties from any increase in run-off rates. Construction effects will therefore be **negligible/not significant**.
- 14.5 The masterplanning of the development ensures that any development in the flood plain is avoided, and development will be restricted to Flood Zone 1 areas, which is the lowest category of flood risk.
- 14.6 In relation to surface water run-off, the proposed drainage scheme and attenuation system will limit the development run-off rates and volumes to existing greenfield levels, or lower. All rainwater falling on the site will pass through at least two treatment stages, and the Sustainable Drainage System (SuDS) will use different drainage techniques in series to change the flow and quality characteristics of the run-off in stages. Where the proposed land use could result in reduced water quality, such as roads and car parking areas, more treatment stages will be incorporated. The potential impacts of the development of hydrology and flooding will therefore be **negligible/not significant**.

15. Cumulative Effects

- 15.1 In considering overall environmental effects of this development, assessments have been carried out on cumulative effects. These include the cumulative effects from different developments, and also cumulative effects from environment features.
- 15.2 In assessing the in-combination effects of the proposed development, other committed developments have been identified, and agreed with Horsham District Council. These include developments in the vicinity which are recently completed; approved but not completed; applications which are under consideration; and plans and projects which a planning application has not yet been submitted, but are likely to progress before the completion of the development.

- 15.3 Cumulative effects have been considered for each of the potential environmental effects. These are described in each of the technical chapters of the Environmental Statement, but on nearly every matter, the impacts will be negligible/not significant. Only minor negative cumulative effects will occur with the loss of agricultural land. Any potential negative effects from construction activities, such as noise, air quality, and transport, and hydrology and flooding, will be mitigated within each of the schemes themselves, including such measures as construction environment management plans. The resultant cumulative effects will be **negligible/not significant**.
- 15.4 At the operational stage of the development, there will be some **positive cumulative effects**, including ground conditions; landscape and visual; transport and air quality and noise. These are explained in detail in the technical chapters of the Environmental Statement.

16. Conclusions

- 16.1 This application for a mixed use strategic development is compliant with the proposals in the adopted Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF), the details of which are set out in Policies SD1 to SD9.
- 16.2 This Environmental Statement has been carried out in accordance with the procedures as set out in chapters 1 to 3, and in particular in accordance with the Scoping Report, sent to Horsham District Council on 22 July 2014, and the Scoping Opinion provided by the Council on 9 September 2014.
- 16.3 The preparation of this outline planning application, including the masterplanning, has been carried out in parallel with the environmental assessment work in order to assist in minimising any adverse environmental impacts. In addition, there has been on-going consultations between those involved in the technical work and their respective statutory consultees, all of which are listed in paragraph 3.2.4 of this Environment Statement.
- 16.4 As each of the technical chapters were completed in draft, and then sent to Horsham District Council, who have provided valuable comments, as well as obtaining inputs from other statutory consultees, as considered appropriate. The applicant, together with its representative specialists have considered all comments received, and have taken them into account in the finalising of this Environmental Statement.
- 16.5 As a result of this process, we consider that this Environmental Statement accurately identifies the potential significant environmental effects which could occur with this scheme, and demonstrates how these can be addressed, both through proposed inherent mitigation, and also through proposed additional mitigation measures. Each chapter identified these

effects, and they are also summarised in this chapter, which shows any residual effects.

- 16.6 The design of this proposed development, as well as the proposed construction phasing programme, and the incorporation of the mitigation measures, has resulted in a scheme which has successfully minimised any significant environmental effects. The residual effects are almost exclusively beneficial or not significant, with very few adverse effects. It is therefore policy compliant with the HDPF, by being in accordance with the Land North of Horsham Concept Masterplan (HDPF Appendix 2), and also the site specific policies SD1 to SD9 and all other relevant policies in the HDPF. It will result in compliance with Horsham District Council's Spatial Development Principles by ensuring that this development is based on sustainable development principles that strike the correct balance between economic, social and environmental priorities, and delivers a living, working and balanced community which overall provides significant beneficial environmental effects.