Stambridge Mills, Rochford

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Introduction

This document summarises the findings of an Environmental Statement (ES) which accompanies a planning application for the redevelopment of Stambridge Mills, Rochford, Essex, submitted on behalf of the Inner London Group. The development proposals comprise 96 residential units set within a landscaped framework, together with parking, infrastructure, and includes land for building improved flood defences. The new development would be accessed via the existing site entrance off Mill Lane.

This document provides a non-technical summary (NTS) of the ES. The ES presents the findings of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) which was undertaken in conjunction to the design process for the proposed development and various supporting studies, which have informed the design.

Purdeys Industrial Estate (on south bank of the river)
For each of the environmental subjects examined in the ES, the likely significant effects resulting from the development proposals have been identified and assessed, followed by an explanation as to how the proposals have been developed to ensure that no harm would result. The detailed descriptions and analysis of the impact assessments that have been undertaken are described in the ES and its appendices.

As the proposed development is likely to have some effects upon the environment, an environmental impact assessment has been undertaken in accordance with relevant Regulations and guidance.

Stambridge Mills
Application Site

The application site lies to the east of Rochford town, adjacent to the northern bank of the River Roach. It consists of the disused complex at Stambridge Mills and some adjacent strips of land to the immediate east and west of the site which extend along the frontage of the River Roach estuary, to accommodate proposed flood defence improvements. In total, the site extends to 4 hectares. Between the site and the built edge of Rochford to the west lies pasture and playing fields associated with the nearby college. To the east of the site lies the Broomhills residential care home and grounds and to the northeast lies a cricket ground. The Mills complex is surrounded by the Essex Green Belt. A small section of the northern part of the site and the land where the flood defence improvements are proposed is within the Green Belt.

The Mill complex itself currently consists of disused industrial buildings and silos, as well as large areas of hardstanding, a weigh bridge and a residential dwelling. Fuel and oil tanks in enclosed storage areas also remain. Little vegetation currently exists at the Mills complex and is confined to the boundaries.

The Crouch and Roach Estuaries Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) lies approximately 350m to the south-east of the Mills complex and adjacent to the furthest eastern extent of the proposed flood defence improvements, which is also designated as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and a Special Protection Area (SPA) due to the saltmarsh and grazing marsh habitats present and the internationally and nationally important species of wildfowl and waders this supports.
Development Proposals

The proposed redevelopment will entail the demolition of the existing structures, the construction of new residential dwellings and implementing areas of open space and landscape. To the east and west of the area where the premises are proposed, improved flood defences in the form of new bunds are to be constructed along the river banks on the footprint of the existing but inadequate bunds, and the existing wharfside which forms the southern boundary of the site is to be replaced with a new sheet piled edge. Within the Mills complex, as a continuation of the defence provided by the new bunds a flood wall will be constructed along the southern portion of the site, set back from the water’s edge.

The proposed redevelopment comprises the construction of 96 residential units comprising 17 one bedroom and 34 two bedroom apartments and 17 two bedroom 23 three bedroom and 5 four bedroom houses.

In addition to the redevelopment proposals, part of the scheme involves improvements to the flood defences along the estuary banks to the east and west of the Mills complex. Although earth bunding does currently exist in these locations, this is considered insufficient in height to adequately protect against tidal flooding from the estuary. The proposed improvements will involve the restyling and reforming of these mounds to a crest height of 6.3m AOD along the banksides. It is proposed to reuse some of the demolition material from the Mills complex for the core of these structures.

Landscaping proposals for the site include the retention of the vegetation along the boundaries of the site wherever possible, bolstered by additional native planting across the site to provide an attractive living space for new residents.

It is proposed that vehicular access to serve the proposed development would be from the existing entrance at the southern end of Mill Lane.

Links with the existing public rights of way in the vicinity of the site are proposed to provide sustainable access to Rochford town and amenity open space in the locality. In addition the existing Bridleway to the west of the site will be retained and diverted over the bund via 1:20 ramp.

Ground floor plan with bridleway
The EIA has considered the cumulative effects of the proposed development in combination with other schemes within the vicinity. The schemes which have been considered within the assessment of cumulative effects are as follows:

- **Hall Road** – Planning application for 600 dwellings, a new primary school with playing fields, new public open space, two access points onto Hall Road, and new pedestrian and cycle links to Rochford town centre;

- **Brays Lane** – Planning application 100 dwellings, new access, new bus turning facilities, associated infrastructure and landscaping;

- **Rectory Road, South Hawkwell** – Planning application for 176 dwellings submitted in April 2011.
Although the Rochford District Replacement Local Plan seeks the retention of Stambridge Mills as an employment site, the prospect of such use coming forward is highly questionable in light of the purpose-built nature of the existing mill buildings. This original use ceased some years ago. A resumption of business use would generate commercial traffic on the local road network, and would require the clearance of the existing buildings and the construction of modern business premises. The site is currently vacant and derelict, and the re-use of the site for employment purposes would seem highly unlikely.

The emerging Rochford Core Strategy (RCS) recognises that Stambridge Mills is no longer suited to employment use, and allocates the land for alternate use including residential development subject to the incorporation of adequate flood mitigation measures. The site is recognised by the RCS as a key element in the district’s five year residential land supply. The East of England Plan recognises that surplus employment may be released housing. The site falls within an area at risk of flooding, and the application scheme incorporates proposals for the improvement of existing flood defences. These improvements will offer collateral benefits in the form of improved protection for existing vulnerable residents in the vicinity of Stambridge Mills.

The development of Stambridge Mills would not conflict with Green Belt policy because the developable part of the application site falls outside the Green Belt. Although additional housing development could be physically accommodated in the northern part of the main plot, adjacent to the site entrance, this area lies within the Green Belt and its development for residential purposes would be inappropriate. Continued use of this land for parking, with associated new landscaping measures, could be justified on the basis of very special circumstances.

The proposal needs to be assessed against the Government’s policy objectives for achieving sustainable development. In this regard, the re-use of previously developed land, the re-use of existing on-site materials, the removal of contamination, the enhanced protection from the risk of flooding of existing residents, and the visual enhancement of the site and the setting of adjoining listed buildings can all be regarded as benefits deriving from the proposed development. The proposals also incorporate measures which seek to encourage sustainable transport choices.
Socio-Economic Issues

Introduction
The socio-economic impacts arising from the proposed development have been considered based upon an examination of population, employment and socio-economic characteristics. Impacts to health services, education provision, leisure services, open space, community facilities and social inclusion were assessed, both in the immediate locality and the town of Rochford and the wider District.

Likely Effects of the Proposed Development
The development proposes areas links to the existing footpath network to provide improved access to areas such as the new Cherry Orchard Jubilee Country Park for informal recreation opportunities.

Although the proposals would lead to slight loss of potential land for employment development within the District, this is not considered to be significant and new jobs will be provided for the area during the construction phase. New residents may also create additional demand for the existing facilities of the town centre, increasing viability of the existing services by providing additional footfall, and an increased local customer base with additional available expenditure. In turn, this may encourage new investors to the town and lead to a regeneration of the area’s services.

It is anticipated that there is likely to be a positive local effect at both primary and secondary education levels arising from the surplus school capacity present in the District being utilised by new pupils arising from this proposed development, increasing the efficiency of the education resource in the district.

There is sufficient surplus capacity forecast by 2015 to also accommodate predicted pupil numbers should the Brays Lane, Rectory Road and Halls Road developments all proceed.

It is anticipated that there is likely to be a neutral local effect in respect of primary health care services arising from the surplus GP capacity present in the area being utilised by new patients arising from this proposed development, increasing the efficiency of the health provision resource in the district.

There is sufficient surplus GP capacity to also accommodate predicted patient numbers should the Brays Lane, Rectory Road and Halls Road developments all proceed.

Should the need for further community facilities, emergency services, library services, youth services or social services be demonstrated by the Local Authority once the Council has undertaken its assessment of the application, these can potentially be funded via developer contributions if justified by a sound evidence base.

New Situation
It is considered that the proposed development will have a beneficial effect on the socio-economic circumstances at the site and surrounding area, providing a range of housing contributing towards social inclusion, contributions to open space for future residents, and positive effects at both primary and secondary education levels through the utilisation of existing surpluses. If justified, developer contributions towards the provision of off-site services such as health and community facilities will offset increase in demand resulting from the proposed development and will improve these facilities for all users.
Landscape and Visual Issues

Method of Assessment
A comprehensive landscape and visual assessment has been conducted to establish how the visual amenity of the settlement and the surrounding landscape of Rochford would be affected by the development proposals. The assessment considers how the landscape infrastructure of the study area would be altered in terms of character and appearance.

Existing Situation
The study area has an open and expansive landscape to the north and east beyond the application area, with settlement to the west at Rochford, and industrial development to the south beyond the River Roch. The site currently comprises a disused brownfield site, formerly used as a Mill, and sections of farmland accommodating existing flood defences.

The majority of views within the study area are limited to close and medium range viewpoints from within 500 metres to 1.5 kilometres of the site, with few longer distance views available due to the flat topography and lack of elevated viewpoints.

Potential Effects of Proposed Development
Visually, the proposals to develop the site for residential use would relate well to the existing settlement pattern, and would provide an enhancement of the site through the reduction of the built form's scale and massing within the site, and the use of vernacular building materials to improve the aesthetics of the structures at the site. The north-western portion of the site which falls within the Green Belt would be retained and related planting would be enhanced between the surrounding Green Belt and the new development.

The use of good design and high quality materials would bring about a positive enhancement of the site and the local area, with the addition of landscape features such as tree and hedgerow planting, which would lead to a beneficial effect upon the character of the site and surrounding area.

Mitigation Measures
The proposals do not aim to totally screen the development from view by dense planting, as this would be at variance with the local character of the landscape. The design strategy looks to improve the appearance of the area with partial filtering and softening of the development edge, thereby providing an attractive setting for those who currently reside in the area, and improving the existing views of the derelict industrial site.

It is considered that the good design and use of high quality building materials would form an enhancement and improvement at the site from the existing situation.

Conclusion
The assessment on character, landscape features and visual amenity of the site and surrounding area concludes that the site is well situated to accommodate the proposed development without detriment to the local area and with beneficial effects on the views of the site compared to the existing scenario.
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Ecology and Nature Conservation

Overall, it is considered that the majority of the Site is of low ecological value, although part includes a LoWS and a very small section of the SPA/SAC/Ramsar. The new flood defences proposed provide the opportunity to enhance the ecological interest of the existing bunds (including areas within the designations) through creation of flower-rich grasslands and appropriate management.

The integrity of the SPA/SAC will remain unaffected by mitigating/avoiding potential adverse effects; e.g. to avoid disturbing activities during the more sensitive winter months in terms of noise and visual disturbance and standard measures to avoid air quality, light pollution and hydrological impacts. Significant adverse recreational impacts are considered unlikely due to a number of factors outlined including the inclusion of flats within the scheme, the presence of alternative recreational resources in the vicinity, provision of interpretation boards to highlight sensitivities of the SPA/SAC and encourage recreational enjoyment at other locations and the circular nature of the existing link with the SPA/SAC.

All works for the proposed flood defences will be undertaken from the landward side to avoid direct adverse impacts on the LoWS habitats adjacent with measures to avoid indirect effects (e.g. air quality etc) on the SPA/SAC also serving to protect this receptor. Further, existing adverse pressures on the LoWS, such as horse overgrazing, would be removed following the development proposals. As such, overall it is considered there would be net gains in ecological terms for the LoWS.

The loss of habitats such as trees and hedgerows would be offset by compensatory planting with that being retained protected from accidental damage during construction such that following development the value of planting to wildlife would be enhanced.

No bat roosts are present within the site and only very limited foraging activity has been recorded within the site. The inclusion of an appropriate lighting scheme should avoid any adverse impacts with regard to foraging bats, although species recorded are relatively tolerant to lighting. The provision of new landscape features/gardens and provision of bat boxes would provide enhanced opportunities (resting and foraging) for this group.

Badgers are known from the vicinity and licensing may be required for the flood defence construction activities due to presence of a main sett. Conversion of hardstanding areas to soft landscaping/gardens and incorporation of fruiting and other beneficial species in the landscape planting scheme should enhance foraging resources for this species.

Measures have been put forward to avoid impacts on nesting birds and to enhance foraging and nesting opportunities post –development whilst having regard to potential birdstrike risk.

Presence of Slow-worms on the existing flood bunds and Common Lizard in the adjacent Coombes Farm site would require appropriate strategy of mitigation to avoid killing or injury during site clearance and construction.
With the mitigation proposed, the proposed development would not result in any adverse residual impact on habitats or species of any significance and there will be no net loss of features of ecological importance.

Where it is considered that there is a reduction in potential habitat for protected species, the proposed development will ensure that these are compensated for by replacement habitat of either equal size or greater quality.

Following mitigation and enhancement measures, the overall impacts are considered to be positive at the local to county level and of minor - moderate significance and insignificant at the international level. The measures will ensure no net loss in Biodiversity terms.
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Transport

Introduction
Although the development proposals will generate a number of trips to and from Stambridge Mills, the environmental effects of these trips will be minimal, other than the environmental effects arising from their mode of travel. In the main, people will travel by car, but facilities for sustainable modes of travel including travel by public transport, walking and cycling will be enhanced to encourage these modes and this is reflected within the Travel Plan (TP) document, also submitted as part of this application.

Baseline Conditions
The local road network generally consists of semi-rural and urban roads. The key roads surrounding the site and Rochford town centre are:

- Mill Lane;
- Stambridge Road;
- East Street;
- North Street;
- South Street;
- West Street;
- Southend Road; and
- Sutton Road.

Vehicles can access the site through Mill Lane, which connects the proposed development site to Stambridge Road and which provides links to Rochford town centre.

The site is bounded by Mill Lane to the North, a care home to the east, the River Roach to the south and agricultural land to the west.

The main access to the west is via the A127 Southend Arterial Road south of Rochford. The A127 provides links to the wider Essex area via the A130 and the A13 and a direct connection to the M25 (Greater London).

A series of Manual Classified Counts and Automatic Traffic Counts were undertaken to determine current traffic levels.
Transport

The AM and PM peak hour traffic flows have been used to determine the baseline conditions of the local highway network against which the future scenarios are assessed.

Rochford railway station is approximately 1.6 km west of the development site. Rochford station is accessed via Bradley Way. Southend is situated approximately 7 km to the south of the site.

Train services from Rochford are operated by National Express East Anglia, providing links to Southend, the wider Essex area and London. Bus services in the local area are provided by Arriva and Stephensons of Essex. The nearest bus stop to the site is situated in Stambridge Road, at the junction with Mill Lane, approximately 380 m from the site. This stop is served by route 60, which travels between Rochford to Southend and Pakesham via Rochford.

Stambridge Road has a dedicated footway, is subject to the national speed limit and connects the site with Rochford Town Centre approximately 1.4 km to the west. Mill Lane has an adjoining footpath to the west providing a direct link via Rocheway to the town.

To the south of the site is a footbridge over the River Roach, which links via a footpath to the Purdeys Industrial Estate.

There are two cycle routes in the area: 1) Shoebury Circular Route and 2) the Ashingdon to Manningtree Reservoir cycle route. Both cycle routes pass through Rochford.

Likely Effects and Mitigation

This assessment shows that the impact of changing traffic volumes and patterns associated with the Stambridge Mills development would typically not result in an impact greater than slight/minor. However, this excludes an analysis of accidents, although the small increase in vehicular flows and their residentially related nature would mean there would likely be little difference to the base.

Impacts in terms of severance, driver delay, pedestrian amenity, and fear and intimidation are mainly negligible to minor throughout, with the exception of severance and pedestrian amenity on Mill Lane, largely as a result of the low existing vehicular flows. However, with the introduction of a shared foot/cycleway on Mill Lane, the residual impact on Mill Lane would be reduced to moderate.

Conclusion

Due to mitigation measures, none of the impacts are considered to result in a long term significant environmental effect.
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Air Quality

The air quality impacts associated with the construction and operation of the proposed residential development at Stambridge Mills have been assessed. Existing monitoring within the study area shows good air quality, with measured concentrations all below the UK's air quality objectives.

The operational impacts of increased traffic emissions arising from the additional traffic on local roads, due to the development, have been assessed. Concentrations have been modelled for twenty-two worst-case receptors, representing existing properties where impacts are expected to be greatest. In addition, the impacts of traffic from local roads on the air quality for future residents have been assessed at six locations within the new development itself.

It is concluded that concentrations of nitrogen dioxide and particulate matter (PM10 and PM2.5) would remain below the objectives in 2012, whether the scheme is developed or not.

The proposed scheme would only increase traffic volumes on local roads by a small amount. Any increase in concentrations of nitrogen dioxide, PM10 and PM2.5 would be imperceptible, and the impacts are judged to be insignificant.

The impacts of local traffic on the air quality for residents living in the proposed development have been shown to be acceptable at all locations within the proposed development site, with concentrations being below the air quality objectives. The impacts of emissions from the surrounding sources on new receptors being introduced within the development are therefore judged to be insignificant.

It is concluded that road traffic emissions do not provide any constraints to the proposed scheme.

In addition, the cumulative impact of increased traffic emissions from the Stambridge Mills, Brays Lane, Hall Road and Rectory Road, South Hawkwell development proposals on local roads have been assessed. Concentrations have been modelled for the same twenty-two worst-case receptors, representing existing properties where impacts are expected to be greatest. In addition, the impacts of traffic from local roads on the air quality for future residents have been assessed at the six locations within the Stambridge Mills development.

It is concluded that concentrations of nitrogen dioxide, PM10 and PM2.5 would remain below the objectives in 2012 at all existing and future receptors, even if all four schemes are developed.
Air Quality

The increase in traffic volumes on local roads associated with these developments is predicted to bring about an imperceptible increase in concentrations of nitrogen dioxide, PM10 and PM2.5 at the majority of receptors, with a slight adverse impact predicted at one receptor. The overall impacts are judged to be insignificant.

The construction works have the potential to create dust. During construction it will therefore be necessary to apply a package of mitigation measures to minimise dust emission. Even with these measures in place, there remains a risk that a small number of existing off-site properties might be affected by occasional dust-soiling impacts. Any effects will be temporary and relatively short lived, and will only arise during dry weather with the wind blowing towards a receptor, at a time when dust is being generated and mitigation measures are not being fully effective. The overall impacts during the construction phase are judged to be slight adverse.
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Noise and Vibration

Introduction
A noise and vibration impact assessment has been carried out for the proposed development to assess the suitability of the site for residential development.

The assessment has taken account of potential impacts on existing receptors during the construction of the development and associated with the operation of the completed development.

Baseline Conditions
Noise surveys have been carried out to determine the existing noise environment within the proposed development.

Noise levels within the development and surrounding area were found to be principally associated with aircraft flying into London Southend Airport and the industrial uses on Purdey’s Industrial Estate to the south.

Noise levels were monitored on the site on two occasions, which indicated that period day and night-time noise levels remained relatively low. It is not anticipated that the noise environment would change significantly at this location with the proposals for the airport expansion.

Likely Effects
The redevelopment of the site and construction of the improved flood defences has the potential to give rise to impacts at Broomhills care home and other properties on Mill Lane close to the development, particularly during the construction of the flood defences, raising of the site levels, the onsite demolition works and piling activities.

Noise and vibration levels would be controlled through best practice measures on site and the reuse of existing mill buildings and foundations where possible.

Aircraft flying over the development into the airport have the potential to cause disturbance to future occupants of the development, in particular during the night-time period. The impact assessment concluded that the noise levels would be acceptable, as the assessment indicated that the site was within Planning Policy Guidance 24 Noise Exposure Category A/B, which is suitable for residential development.

Consideration of the aircraft movements, would however, be taken into account during the design and appropriate measures incorporated into the design to minimise any potential impacts.

The operation of the industrial estate has also been identified to have the potential to give rise to adverse impacts upon occupant of the development. Again, measures would be taken during the design to ensure any potential impacts were minimised.

Traffic accessing the development has the potential to give rise to adverse impacts upon existing noise sensitive receptors. The assessment indicated that there would be moderate adverse impact at dwellings along Mill Lane due to the change in noise levels experienced.
Noise and Vibration

However, the impacts were not considered to be significant, as the overall noise levels associated with the traffic would be low, either equivalent to or below the noise levels associated with the aircraft flying overhead and anticipated to be lower than those associated with the HGV traffic which previously accessed the mill whilst operational.

Mitigation
During the construction phase, the contractors would be required to adopt best practice measures during the works to minimise potential impacts, which would include careful plant selection, control of working hours and monitoring of levels whilst working close to potentially affected receptors. With appropriate measures adopted, potential adverse impacts would be minimised.

Appropriate noise mitigation measures would be incorporated into the design of the development to protect future occupants against noise from aircraft flying overhead and the operation of the industrial estate. With appropriate measures implemented in the design, which could be secured through a suitable planning condition, potential impacts would be minimised.

Conclusions
In summary, with appropriate mitigation and control measures adopted during the construction and design of the development, potential noise and vibration impacts would be minimised, thus ensuring the site was suitable for residential development.
Hydrology, Flood Risk and Surface Water Drainage

The Mills site is located on the River Roach which flows east from the town of Rochford, to join the River Crouch at Wallasea Island, east of Burnham-on-Crouch. Key influences on the hydrology and drainage are the permeability of the sands and gravels underlying the site at a shallow depth, which are likely to be hydraulic continuity with the River Roach. In addition, the Environment Agency has confirmed that the site is located within Zone 3a High Probability area. Where the risk of flooding is from a tidal source, a Zone 3a High Probability is defined as where the annual probability of flooding is 0.5% or greater. This is referred to as the 1 in 200 year event.

The chemical water quality is compliant with the required standards, however, the biology results indicate that the watercourse in this location is subject to pollution tolerant species and levels of nitrates and phosphates are very high and excessively high respectively. There are two license discharge consents on the site and one to the south. The discharge consents located on the site are a result of the former Mill workings and relate to the discharge of trade waste and the discharge of treated sewage effluent.

The Crouch and Roach Estuary is an integral component of the phased Mid-Essex Coast SPA. The estuaries are also designated as SAC's and Ramsar sites under the EC Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds (Directive 79/409/EEC) and the Habitats Directive (Directive 92/43/EEC).

Effects on the water environment during site clearance and construction of the development, include potential discharges of silt or contaminants to the public sewers.

These effects are assessed to be no more adverse than minor negative effects provided industry-standard environmental good practice is followed.

Effects on the water environment during the lifetime of the development are assessed to be no more adverse than minor negative effects. The effect of the development upon the risk of flooding to adjacent properties, including the nursing home, is assessed to be a major positive effect through the delivery of the improved flood defences.

Mitigation measures have been recommended for both the construction and operation stages. During the construction stage impacts would be mitigated by adopting site management controls in accordance with recognised industry good practice. During the operation stage the control of runoff will be the key issue, with the preferred method for discharge being infiltration to the ground.

Overall the redevelopment of the Mills site will have no more than minor negative effects in relation to hydrology, flood risk and surface water drainage. The effect of the development upon the risk of flooding to adjacent properties, including the nursing home is considered a major positive effect and therefore of high environmental benefit. The proposed mitigation measures will ensure that residual effects are minimised during both the construction and operation of the proposed development.
Contaminated Land and Geotechnical Issues

Introduction
Potential effects from contamination on receptors in the soil, geological and hydrological environments have been identified and mitigation measures recommended.

Baseline Conditions
It has been identified that with the exceptions of the Minor Aquifer within the Alluvium under the site and the nearby tidal estuary of the River Roach there are no sensitive ecological receptors on the vicinity of the site. Human receptors in the vicinity include residents of houses located along Mill Lane to the north of the site, which is the only vehicular access to the site.

Intrusive investigation of the site has not detected significantly elevated concentrations of contaminants either in the site soils or the underlying groundwater, although it should be noted that additional investigation of previously inaccessible areas and further investigation of fuel storage areas has been recommended.

Likely Effects
Potential effects in relation to ground conditions are wide ranging and can include ground instability, ground contamination, alterations of groundwater levels and flow and the physical alteration of geological features.

Many construction activities have the potential to adversely affect both soils and groundwater for example through contamination and compaction. This can include the potential for buried waste to be present and the potential for wind blown dusts to be generated.

Potential risks to the ground and soil environment include accidental spillages of chemicals, oils or fuels stored on the site or used in cleaning or maintenance, which could migrate into the ground and cause widespread pollution.

Demolition and construction works along the wharfside, adjacent to the River Roach may provide the potential for the direct run-off of contaminants into surface waters.

The operational stages constitute the normal day-to-day use of the buildings and roads associated with the proposed scheme.

Mitigation
Effects on the ground environment during site clearance, construction and operational phases of the development have been considered.

Through the implementation of appropriate mitigation measures, including proper storage of potential contaminants, adoption of best practice construction methods, monitoring of water quality and inspection of any fill material brought to site, these effects are assessed to be neutral.

Conclusions
The site is considered to be of relatively low environmental sensitivity in terms of land contamination. Provided that the further environmental investigations recommended are undertaken and the outcomes acted upon, and the mitigation measures described above are implemented then it is not anticipated that the proposed development will have any significant adverse environmental impacts. Impacts may possibly be positive in the long term, in as much as potentially contaminating material, if detected by further investigation and during the demolition and construction phases, will be remediated as part of the development.
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Conclusions

The ES demonstrates that there are no overriding environmental constraints or planning policies which would preclude the development of the application site. All aspects of the design have taken full account of the likely significant environmental issues and, where necessary, mitigation measures form an integral part of the proposals to ensure that the environment is suitably protected. This comprehensive assessment demonstrates how the proposed scheme would bring about significant benefits to the local environment, whilst providing much needed housing for the town of Rochford in a sustainable location.