



UNIVERSAL DESTINATIONS & EXPERIENCES UK PROJECT

Former Kempston Hardwick Brickworks
and adjoining land, Bedford

Environmental Statement Volume 1

Chapter 1 - Introduction and Site Description

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1.1. This chapter has been prepared in support of the planning proposal for the construction and operation of an Entertainment Resort Complex and associated development. A full description of the Proposed Development is set out in **Chapter 2: Description of the Proposed Development (Volume 1)**.
- 1.1.2. **Site Location Plan (Document Reference 1.6.0)** shows the site boundary for the Proposed Development. All land within the site boundary is hereinafter referred to as the Site. The Site extends to 268 hectares (ha) and is centred on Ordnance Survey Grid Reference co-ordinates TL029445.

1.2. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT

- 1.2.1. Whilst the planning proposal for the Proposed Development is not covered by the bespoke provisions in respect of other types of orders at Part 7 of the *Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017* (the *EIA Regulations*; **Ref. 1.1**), this Environmental Statement (ES) has been prepared on the basis of compliance with the requirements of the *EIA Regulations* relating to the carrying out of an EIA. “EIA” has the meaning given by *Regulation 4* of the *EIA Regulations*.
- 1.2.2. The aim of EIA is to ensure that when a decision maker (in this case the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG)) decides to grant planning permission for a project which is likely to have significant effects on the environment, they do so in the full knowledge of the likely significant effects and take this into account in the decision-making process. The *EIA Regulations* set out a procedure for identifying those projects which should be subject to an EIA, and for assessing, consulting on and coming to a decision on those projects which are likely to have significant environmental effects (**Ref. 1.1**).

1.3. SCOPE OF THE EIA

- 1.3.1. A formal EIA scoping process has not been undertaken in support of the preparation of this ES. However, each environmental topic has undertaken specific environmental technical assessments in line with best practice guidance, ongoing consultation with MHCLG (formerly the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities) and statutory bodies, and using professional judgement. A review of consultation comments received from statutory bodies to date and how they have informed the EIA process is presented in each technical chapter of this ES.

1.4. STRUCTURE OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT

- 1.4.1. The findings of the EIA are presented in this ES. The ES has been prepared in accordance with the *EIA Regulations* as well as Planning Practice Guidance – Environmental Impact Assessment (**Ref. 1.2**). The ES is provided in four parts:
- Volume 1: Main Text: The main text of this ES including all the technical topic assessments;
 - Volume 2: Figures: The plans, drawings and visualisations which support and inform the assessment presented in Volume 1;

- Volume 3: Technical Appendices: All technical data required to support the assessment set out in Volume 1; and
- Volume 4: Non-Technical Summary: A brief description of the Proposed Development, a broad summary using non-technical language of potential significant environmental effects likely to arise, and where required, mitigation measures identified to reduce those effects.

1.4.2. **Appendix 1.2: Location of Required Information Within the ES (Volume 3)** provides a breakdown of the information presented in this ES in accordance with the requirements set out in *Regulation 18 and Schedule 4 of the EIA Regulations* and its location within this ES.

1.5. COMPETENT EXPERTISE AND THE PROJECT TEAM

1.5.1. In accordance with *Regulation 18(5)(a) – (b) of the EIA Regulations*, the ES and technical assessments which inform it have been undertaken by a suitably competent project team. **Table 1-1** presents the Project Team and their associated roles. The Project Team is responsible for the scope, content and assessment of potential significant environmental effects of their respective technical chapters (where relevant). All technical assessments have been subject to a thorough technical review, to assure technical credibility. A statement outlining the relevant expertise/qualifications in relation to the ES is provided as **Appendix 1.1: Relevant Expertise and Competency (Volume 3)**.

1.5.2. WSP is responsible for the coordination, compilation and procedural review of the ES. WSP is registered under the EIA Quality Mark operated by Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA) which recognises WSP's commitment to excellence in EIA activities. WSP was one of the original eight pilot organisations in the UK that trialled the process in 2011 and developed the EIA Quality Mark scheme from the former Corporate Registered Assessor process. WSP has continued to maintain its EIA Quality Mark registration, following annual examination by IEMA in relation to ongoing products, staff, innovation and promotion of EIA within the industry. WSP has and continues to support and lead nationally recognised guidance for EIA in the UK.



Table 1-1 - Project Team

Team Members	Role
UDX	Design Energy Sustainability
DWD	Planning Consultant
WSP	EIA Coordination Ecology and Nature Conservation Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Air Quality Noise and Vibration Cultural Heritage Ground Conditions, Soils and Agricultural Land

Team Members	Role
	Water Resources Greenhouse Gases Climate Resilience Major Accidents and Disasters Energy Sustainability Utilities
Volterra	Socio-Economics Population and Human Health
Vectos	Traffic and Transport

1.6. ACCESS TO DOCUMENTS

- 1.6.1. The ES is part of a suite of documents which together provide information to enable MHCLG to consult on and consider making a decision on a planning proposal for the Proposed Development. It is understood that following receipt of the proposal, MHCLG will carry out consultation which will meet the requirements of *Regulation 19* of the *EIA Regulations*.

1.7. DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE

- 1.7.1. As referred to previously, the Site extends to 268 ha and is divided into the four main distinct Zones of land, as shown in **Zonal Plan (Document Reference 1.8.0)**:
- Core Zone (96.7 ha);
 - Lake Zone (101.2 ha);
 - West Gateway Zone (42.8 ha); and
 - East Gateway Zone (27.6 ha).
- 1.7.2. The Site (**Site Location Plan (Document Reference 1.6.0)**) is wholly located within the Bedford Borough Council (Bedford BC) Local Planning Authority (LPA) area and is broadly defined on all four sides by existing road and rail infrastructure. The A421 passes from northeast to southwest along the western side of the Site, with local access provided by Woburn Road running in parallel on the A421's eastern edge. Ampthill Road runs from north to south to the eastern edge of the Site. Broadmead Road connects from Woburn Road, running west to east along the southern edge of the Site.
- 1.7.3. The Marston Vale Railway Line bounds the western edge of the Lake Zone and Core Zone and bisects the Site (north to south) between the Core Zone and West Gateway Zone. The Midland Main Railway Line runs from north to south to the east of the Site, parallel to and west of Ampthill Road.
- 1.7.4. Elstow Brook, a tributary of the Great River Ouse, follows the line of Marston Vale Railway Line along the western boundary of the Lake Zone, then diverges slightly to cross through the West Gateway Zone. Existing waterbodies bound the Site to the north, east and southeast, while warehouse units bound the Site to the northwest. The Site is primarily surrounded by agricultural land and open fields to the west and south.

- 1.7.5. The Site is situated in a semi-rural location, split by Manor Road which connects the village of Kempston Hardwick to Woburn Road on the west and Ampthill Road to the east. There are a small number of residential properties with direct frontage along Manor Road, in addition to the CEMEX Bedford Concrete Plant and BCA (British Car Auctions) Bedford car auction site. The Lake Zone is located to the north of Manor Road, part of which is a brownfield site whose former uses include brickworks, clay pits and an electrical substation. The Lake Zone also comprises an area of unused hard standing, associated with the former Kempston Hardwick Brickworks along with stockpiles of former demolition waste. The previous clay extraction pits are now either in-filled or flooded semi-permanent waterbodies. The Lake Zone also includes areas of grass scrub and arable farmland used to grow crops. The Core Zone, located to the south of Manor Road comprises primarily arable fields, hedgerows and drainage ditches.
- 1.7.6. Four public rights of way (PRoW) cross the Site as shown on **Parameter Plan - Active Travel Routes (Document Reference 1.12.0)**. One links the eastern end of Manor Road to Woburn Road, crossing the Core Zone and the Marston Vale Railway Line at a footpath level crossing near the centre of the Core Zone. A second PRoW runs from north to south through the Core Zone (and across the other PRoW) from Manor Road to Broadmead Road. The third and fourth PRoWs skirt the northeastern boundary of the Lake Zone following along field edges from Ampthill Road, meeting the field's edge to cross under the A421 adjacent to the Marston Vale Railway Line.

1.8. REFERENCES

Ref. 1.1: HM Government (2017) *The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017*. [The Town and Country Planning \(Environmental Impact Assessment\) Regulations 2017 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2017/1003/contents/made).

Ref. 1.2: Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (2020) *Planning Practice Guidance, Environmental Impact Assessment*. [Environmental Impact Assessment - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/planning-practice-guidance-environmental-impact-assessment).



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