

SHELAA Ref: 149/1210

SITE: Land Southwest of Ghyll Road, Tilsmore, Heathfield

SUSTAINABILITY OBJECTIVE		Effects				Site No: 149/1210	Name: Land southwest of Ghyll Road, Tilsmore, Heathfield, TN21 0LU
		S	M	L	Overall	Commentary	
SO1	CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The site comprises three grassland fields. • The site is 4.49ha in size and proposed for residential development of 105 (net) dwellings by the applicant. • The site is located to the south and west of the built up area of Heathfield and to the south of Ghyll Road, with medium density residential development to the north-east and south-east, Jubilee Park to the north and open countryside to the south-west. The site is peripheral to Heathfield. • Heathfield is classed as a sustainable settlement within the settlement hierarchy due to it acting as a service centre to a wide rural catchment of a number of small villages and hamlets as well as containing extensive services and facilities (including retail, education, leisure and employment). • The site lies approx. 220m from the nearest bus stop, which is located on Leeves Way to the east of the site. The bus stop is accessible via a footpath albeit the existing pedestrian connectivity to the bus stop is poor. • However, the bus service from this stop only operates 2 days a week (Tuesdays and Thursday) with a journey time of approx. 7-minutes. • There is no train station at Heathfield, the closest being in Uckfield approx. 8 miles west of the site. This is accessible via the bus service from Heathfield, with an hourly service and journey time of approx. 23 minutes. • The site is within a 10-minute walk of the High Street in Heathfield with its services and amenities however there are no footpaths along Tilsmore Road. Pedestrians would have to walk up Ghyll Road to Mill Road where there are footpaths. • Development will result in an increase in greenhouse gas emissions in both the construction and operation of any development and mitigation measures will need to be identified to minimise the impacts through sustainable methods of construction and design, energy efficiency and the use of renewable/low carbon energy. • The site complies with the overall Spatial Strategy for the district as it is located within short distance of a sustainable settlement which can be accessed via public transport. 	

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						<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • However, development of the site is still likely to result in some degree of increase in car use to reach other settlements (i.e. Hailsham, Eastbourne), increasing emissions, although mitigation measures such as EV charging infrastructure could address this. • Any development will need to comply with the most up to date Building Regulations, as relevant to the development, and take account of the Future Homes and Building Standards. • Other policies within the Local Plan will address matters of energy efficiency in new buildings, embodied carbon and sustainable design and construction and any development will need to be in compliance with the relevant policies. • All development will result in an increase in greenhouse gas emissions and therefore a minor negative impact is expected overall. Mitigation measures will need to be identified to minimise the impact as far as possible, although a residual minor negative impact is likely to remain. 	
SO2	CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The site lies within Flood Zone 1 as defined by the Environment Agency mapping and the Wealden Strategic Flood Risk Assessment. • There is no risk of surface water flooding. • The site is greenfield and development of the site would introduce impermeable surfaces, which could make the site vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, specifically surface water flood risk and overheating. • Other policies within the Local Plan will address the provision of climate change adaptation measures such as green and blue infrastructure and any development will need to be in compliance with the relevant policies. • The specific climate change adaptation measures for the site will need to be identified and the impact on this SA Objective is therefore uncertain at this stage over all timeframes. 	
SO3	FLOOD RISK					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The site lies within Flood Zone 1 as defined by the Environment Agency mapping and the Wealden Strategic Flood Risk Assessment. • There is no risk of surface water flooding. • The site is outside of an area of groundwater concern and therefore not at risk of groundwater flooding. 	

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						<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The proposed development is therefore suitable for the flood risk zone identified and the site passes the sequential test. Mitigation measures will need to be provided for the site in terms of surface water runoff as development will introduce impermeable surfaces. Other policies within the Local Plan will cover the provision of SuDS and the management of flood risk from all sources, and any development of the site will need to comply with these policies. Given the site is not at risk of fluvial, surface or groundwater flooding, and that policies within the plan will provide for suitable mitigation for surface water flood risk, the impact on this SA Objective is likely to be major positive over all timeframes as future residents and property would not be at risk. 	
SO4	WATER RESOURCES & QUALITY					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wealden has been identified as an area of serious water stress. The development of this site will increase the demand for water consumption and wastewater treatment. There are no watercourses within the Site or in close proximity. The site is not within a groundwater source protection zone. Other policies within the Local Plan will address the protection of the water environment, water infrastructure and water efficiency and any development will need to be in compliance with the relevant policies. Development will also need to comply with the most up to date Building Regulations, as relevant, and the requirements of the Environment Act 2021. Given the size of the site, it is considered there would be minor negative effects on this SA Objective. Impacts could be mitigated through good design and compliance with local plan policies. 	
SO5	SOIL, LAND & MINERALS					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The site is a greenfield site The site is not safeguarded for minerals or waste operations. There are no known issues with contamination of land. Development of the site is unlikely to result in land contamination. However, the disturbance of soil from development could lead to increased soil compaction as well as the release of CO₂ emissions. 	

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						<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mitigation measures will need to be identified, which safeguard the soils health, particularly during construction. Other policies within the Local Plan will address matters of soil health and protection as well as biodiversity and land contamination, and any development will need to be in compliance with the relevant policies. Therefore, the impacts on this SA Objective are considered to be uncertain at this stage 	
SO6	WASTE					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Suitable mitigation measures will need to be identified to reduce the impact of waste as far as possible in both the construction and operation of any development. Policies within the Local Plan will address matters of waste management and any development will need to be in compliance with the relevant policies. The impact on this SA Objective is likely to be minor negative in both construction and operation of any development 	
SO7	POLLUTION					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The proposed quantum of development is likely to introduce light pollution to the area. However, the site is within an area classed as being 'brighter' by CPREs light pollution mapping and therefore impacts may not be significant and mitigation possible. There are currently no areas of the district where air pollution is in excess of national air quality targets and there are no Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) within the district. This does not mean that air pollution issues won't arise in future as a result of development, but Local Plan policies will provide mitigation. It is expected that an increase in housing will result in a degree of increase in air pollution during the construction phase and also through the use of energy in any completed development. The increase in air pollution from construction is likely to be in the short to medium term. The development of the site will result in an increase in traffic during construction, with a potential increase in air pollution, however any negative effects are likely to be in the short to medium term as well. Whilst the site is within close proximity of a bus stop, the service only operates 2 days per week and the existing pedestrian connectivity to the bus stop is poor. This would require improvements. The site is within a 10 minute walk of Heathfield High Street via existing footpaths on Ghyll Road and Mill Road. 	

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						<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Other policies within the Local Plan will address matters of air, noise and light pollution and any development will need to be in compliance with the relevant policies. However, given the scale of development proposed, a degree of car use is likely to remain with the potential to impact on air pollution. Other policies within the Local Plan will address matters of air, noise and light pollution and any development will need to be in compliance with the relevant policies. The impacts on this SA Objective are likely to be minor negative in the short to medium term as a result of increases in air pollution from construction. In the longer term effects are considered uncertain due to the lack of detail over whether access to and the provision of bus services can be improved. 	
SO8	GREEN & BLUE INFRASTRUCTURE					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The western part of the site comprises of trees, shrubs, semi-improved grassland and informal paths. There are also a few trees near the eastern border, in the gardens of the residential properties on Wayside Walk, that are covered by TPOs. These features contribute to the site's green infrastructure network as well as the wider area. Any development would need to seek to retain, protect and enhance these features to maintain the green infrastructure network. Other policies within the Local Plan will address matters of the retention, protection and creation of green and blue infrastructure and a green and blue infrastructure network, and any development will need to be in compliance with the relevant policies. Given that there is connectivity to the wider area to the south and the potential for development to adversely affect the trees shrubs, semi-improved grassland and informal paths, but acknowledging other Local Plan policies will help to protect these, it is considered the effect is uncertain at this time. 	
SO9	BIODIVERSITY					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are no designated biodiversity sites, BOAs, Priority Habitats or irreplaceable habitats within or adjacent to the site. Development of the site is therefore unlikely to impact on any of these features. Any development would need to provide a minimum of 20% biodiversity net gain (BNG) on site and/or off-site which will have a positive effect on biodiversity. 	

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						<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The trees, shrubs and semi-improved grassland make a significant contribution to the site's biodiversity. Development is likely to involve the loss of these features, wholly or in part, although it is acknowledged BNG would need to be provided. The effect on this SA Objective is considered to be minor negative. 	
SO10	LANDSCAPE & TOWNSCAPE					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The site is considered to be of moderate to high sensitivity to development in the Landscape Sensitivity Assessment 2023 as the rear (western part) of the site is very attractive comprising trees, shrubs, semi-improved grassland and informal paths and is considered to be of moderate to high biodiversity value. Additionally, there are some long distant views in certain locations within the site towards the wider High Weald NL. Development in the western part of the site would likely have an adverse impact on the wider landscape. The site is wholly within the High Weald NL and development of the scale proposed would likely have an adverse impact on the designated landscape. Given the lack of detail as to scheme design and any landscape mitigation, but acknowledging the site is wholly within the High Weald National Landscape and that any development in the western part of the site would adversely affect biodiversity and the wider landscape, the effect is considered to be minor negative at this time. Any development proposals would be required to meet the requirements in paragraph 177 of the NPPF. 	
SO11	HISTORIC & CULTURAL HERITAGE					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The site is not within a conservation area and there are no listed buildings within the site or in close proximity. The site is not affected by an Archaeological Notification Area (ANA). No significant effects are expected on this SA Objective. 	
SO12	DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Due to Wealden's rural infrastructure the district broadband service lags behind national levels, with only 47% of all premises (residential and business) covered by at least one broadband operator for a fixed download speed. 	

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						<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Other policies within the Local Plan will address matters of digital infrastructure provision and any development will need to be in compliance with the relevant policies. The impact on this SA Objective is currently uncertain. 	
SO13	SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL & ACCESSIBILITY					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The existing access in the southern corner of the site is unsuitable for the provision of a vehicle access due its location on a bend along Pook Reek Lane with poor visibility in either direction. Additionally, these western fields comprising of trees, shrubs, semi-improved grassland and informal paths, and therefore not suitable for development. However, the potential exists for a new vehicle access from Ghyll Road. Further off-site works would be required to alter the existing, or introduce new, traffic calming measures along Ghyll Road and potentially improve capacity at other local junctions. Pedestrian connectivity to the bus stop would also require significant improvement. The site is within a 10-minute walk via existing footpaths along Ghyll Road and Mill Road to Heathfield High Street. Given the current lack of appropriate pedestrian access to public transport but acknowledging the site is within a short walk of the High Street in Heathfield, the effects on this SA Objective are considered to be uncertain at this time. Improvements may be possible as part of development. 	
SO14	HOUSING					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The site is proposing 105 (net) dwellings which will make a significant contribution to meeting the district's housing need within a sustainable location. There are no details as to the type and tenure mix of housing though. However, given the scale of proposed development, significant provision should be achievable via S106 agreements. The impact on this SA Objective is expected to be a major positive effect if the site is brought forward and makes a positive contribution to meeting the district's housing needs. This will be enhanced by the provision of affordable homes, accessible/adaptable homes and self-build and custom build plots if they are to come forward. 	
SO15	HEALTH & WELLBEING					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The site will require a Health Impact Assessment as part of any development as it is proposed for more than 10 (net) dwellings. 	

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						<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The nearest health services are at Heathfield Surgery in the High Street, approx. 0.4 miles (a 8-minute walk) from the site via Ghyll Road and Mill Road. The High Weald Lewes Havens CCG has not identified any issues with GP surgery capacity within Cross in Hand or Heathfield. The development of this site may have some impact on GP capacity. The Wealden Open Space Study 2022 concludes that there is a deficit in parks and gardens, amenity greenspace and play provision within Heathfield & Waldron Parish and prioritises the enhancement of lower quality sites where possible, with any opportunities for new provision to focus on existing quantity shortfalls i.e. provide play equipment at sites and ensure the high quality of Heathfield Recreation Ground. The Wealden Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Assessment identifies that there is small shortfall in 3G pitch provision in the Heathfield and Rural South area and an overall insufficient supply of rugby pitches. The site is not a designated Local Green Space nor is it a formal or informal recreational or play space. The site is not proposing improvements to sport and recreation provision or to health service provision. Given that the site is in close proximity of health services and that the scale of development is likely to mean some form of contributions towards and health and wellbeing improvements could be achieved, the effect is considered to be major positive. 	
SO16	QUALITY OF LIFE & PLACE					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The effect on this SA Objective will largely depend on the scheme brought forward and its implementation in line with relevant Local Plan policies. Other Local Plan policies will address matters of design, quality of life within the district as well as the district's Design Code and the development proposal will need to be in compliance with the relevant policies. Due to the lack of information on scheme design and affordable housing provision, the effect is considered to be uncertain at this time. 	
SO17	SOCIAL DEPRIVATION					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The development of the site could provide both market and affordable housing, and this is likely to address issues of deprivation, disadvantage and poverty. 	

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						<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Much will depend on the implementation of any development scheme in accordance with relevant policies within the Local Plan. • Due to the lack of detail on the provision of design and affordable housing, the impact on this SA Objective is considered to be uncertain at this stage. 	
SO18	ECONOMY & EMPLOYMENT					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proposed development is for housing only and therefore jobs may be created in the short term in relation to construction, having a minor positive effect. • However, as the site does not offer any employment provision, it is considered that the site would have no significant effect in the medium to longer term on this SA Objective. 	
SO19	TOWN & VILLAGE CENTRES					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The site is not proposing any retail floorspace. • The site does not contain any existing retail floorspace so there is no loss. • The site is within a short journey time by public transport and walking of services and facilities in Heathfield. • Given the scale of the proposed development and the sites proximity to the services and facilities in Heathfield, but acknowledging that improvements in pedestrian connectivity to the bus stop are required, a minor positive effect is expected on this SA Objective. 	
SO20	EDUCATION & SKILLS					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There may be the potential through local job creation during construction to improve skills and training in construction related apprenticeships. • The nearest primary is Cross in Hand primary, approx. 0.2 miles (a 4-minute walk via Ghyll Road) to the north-east of the site. Heathfield Community College is approx. 1.9 miles to the east. There is a bus service to the college with a journey time of approx. 30-minutes from Heathfield High Street. • Information from East Sussex County Council, as the education provider for state schools, indicates local educational provision and capacity is currently adequate to meet the needs of new development in this area. • The impact is likely to be minor positive in the short term in regard to skills and training in construction, however over the longer term a development of this size may place 	

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					pressure on education infrastructure and further investigation will be required. Therefore, effects are considered uncertain at this time over the longer term.	

SUMMARY OF RESULTS:

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SA EFFECTS	SO1 Climate Change Mitigation	SO2 Climate Change Adaptation	SO3 Flood Risk	SO4 Water resources/Quality	SO5 Soil, Land & Minerals	SO6 Waste	SO7 Pollution	SO8 Green & Blue Infrastructure	SO9 Biodiversity	SO10 Landscape & Townscape	SO11 Historic & Cultural Heritage	SO12 Digital Infrastructure	SO13 Travel & Accessibility	SO14 Housing	SO15 Health & Wellbeing	SO16 Quality of Life & Place	SO17 Social Deprivation	SO18 Economy & Employment	SO19 Town & Village Centres	SO20 Education & Skills
Major Positive																				
Minor Positive																				
Not Significant																				
Minor Negative																				
Major Negative																				
Uncertain																				

COMMENTARY:

Duration/Reversibility	Short term adverse impacts are likely during construction or before the mitigation measures are implemented
Mitigation Measures	<p>Further information is required for the issues identified as uncertain. No mitigation measures are proposed at present as there are no detailed plans for the site. Other policies within the Local Plan will cover mitigation measures and any development will need to comply with the relevant policies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate change adaptation and mitigation • Biodiversity creation, protection and enhancement • Flood risk – including surface water flood risk / drainage. • Landscape and townscape • Health and wellbeing • Sustainable transport

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infrastructure
Cumulative Effects	<p>The site does not currently benefit from planning permission nor any application for development. Heathfield is classed as a sustainable settlement in the Settlement Hierarchy and there are a number of potential sites put forward for development in and around the town. Should this site come forward for development, together with other land within the area, further work will need to be undertaken to understand the impact on the transport network (through a county-wide transport model) and other infrastructure such as education, health services and community facilities. However, it is acknowledged that development of this site, in combination with other sites, will result in pressures on infrastructure, built and natural.</p>
Summary	<p>The site is located on the edge of Heathfield, which is considered a ‘sustainable settlement’ according to the settlement hierarchy and has a proposed development boundary. The eastern part of the site lies within proposed development boundary for Heathfield, the western part of the site lies adjacent. The site does, therefore, conform with the overall spatial strategy for development within Wealden as a whole as it is within a sustainable settlement and has access to the services and facilities in Heathfield on foot and via public transport.</p> <p>Major positive effects: SO3 Flood Risk; SO14 Housing and SO15 Health & Wellbeing</p> <p>The site is in Flood Zone 1 and there is not risk of surface water or groundwater flooding. Therefore, the proposed development is suitable for the flood zone identified.</p> <p>The development of the site for housing will significantly contribute to the district’s housing need however details are lacking as to any affordable housing provision, although the proposed quantum of development would make this highly likely.</p> <p>The site is in close proximity of health services and the scale of development is likely to mean some form of contributions towards and health and wellbeing improvements can be achieved.</p> <p>Minor positive effects: SO19 Town & Village Centre</p> <p>The scale of the proposed development and the sites proximity to Heathfield will place future residents within easy reach of the town’s services and facilities, albeit pedestrian connectivity to the bus stop nearby is required.</p> <p>Major negative effects: None</p> <p>Minor negative effects: SO1 Climate Change Mitigation; SO4 Water resources/Quality; SO6 Waste; SO9 Biodiversity and SO10 Landscape & Townscape</p> <p>All development will result in an increase in greenhouse gas emissions and waste production, although the application of Local Plan policies should mitigate any negative impact.</p>

	<p>The district is an area of serious water stress and whilst water efficiency measures should help to mitigate some impacts, the proposed scale of development will still place significant pressure on water resources and wastewater infrastructure.</p> <p>The western part of the site comprises trees, shrubs and semi-improved grassland and is considered to be of moderate to high biodiversity value. Notwithstanding BNG provisions, there will still be a residual adverse impact through site clearance.</p> <p>Given the lack of detail as to scheme design and any landscape mitigation, but acknowledging the site is wholly within the High Weald National Landscape and that any development in the western part of the site would adversely affect biodiversity and the wider landscape, negative effects are expected.</p> <p>No significant effect: SO11 Historic & Cultural Heritage and SO18 Economy & Employment</p> <p>The type of proposed development and the site's location means no significant effects on these SA Objectives.</p> <p>Uncertain: for the remaining objectives, more information is required to determine the effects.</p>
<p>Selected / Rejected for allocation</p>	<p>The site is taken forward for allocation but only for 35 (net) dwellings and only the eastern part of the site (within the proposed development boundary of Heathfield) is allocated. This is in line with the recommendation of the Landscape Sensitivity Assessment 2023 which stated that if development was to come forward, it should be at the eastern most field that sits along Ghyll Road and better relates with the existing settlement edge. The rear (western part) of the site is very attractive comprising trees, shrubs, semi-improved grassland and informal paths and is considered to be of moderate to high biodiversity value. Given the above, it is only considered that the field fronting onto Ghyll Road is suitable for residential development.</p> <p>Any development of this site will need to take into account its High Weald NL location, as well as seek to protect and enhance the sites biodiversity value include appropriate surveys and mitigation as appropriate. Given the site's location within the High Weald AONB, any development proposals would be required to meet the requirements of paragraph 177 of the NPPF.</p> <p>Further off-site works would be required to alter the existing, or introduce new, traffic calming measures along Ghyll Road and potentially improve capacity at other local junctions as well as improve pedestrian connectivity to bus stops.</p>