

# ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT 2011

Proposed Urban Extension  
WEST DURRINGTON, WORTHING

## NON TECHNICAL SUMMARY



This is a Non Technical Summary (NTS) of the findings of the 2011 Environmental Statement (ES) for the outline application for residential development with associated works and facilities at West Durrington.

## *The Proposal*

Plans are for up to 700 houses of various sizes and styles with some 30% as affordable properties. The focus is mainly on providing homes suited to families. Land and/or finance would be provided for new schooling, community and library facilities, health provision, youth facilities, open space, playing pitches, children's play areas, offsite highways' measures, bus service and cycle way improvements.

The main vehicular access to the development would be via Fulbeck Avenue. Tasman Way would allow cars to reach the community facilities only; buses, cycles and pedestrians would be able to reach the main development beyond these. Cherwell Road would be for pedestrians, cycles and emergency vehicles only. Improvements to three junctions along Littlehampton Road are included. A scheme including some traffic calming measures would seek to slow down and improve hazard awareness of drivers using Titnore Lane.

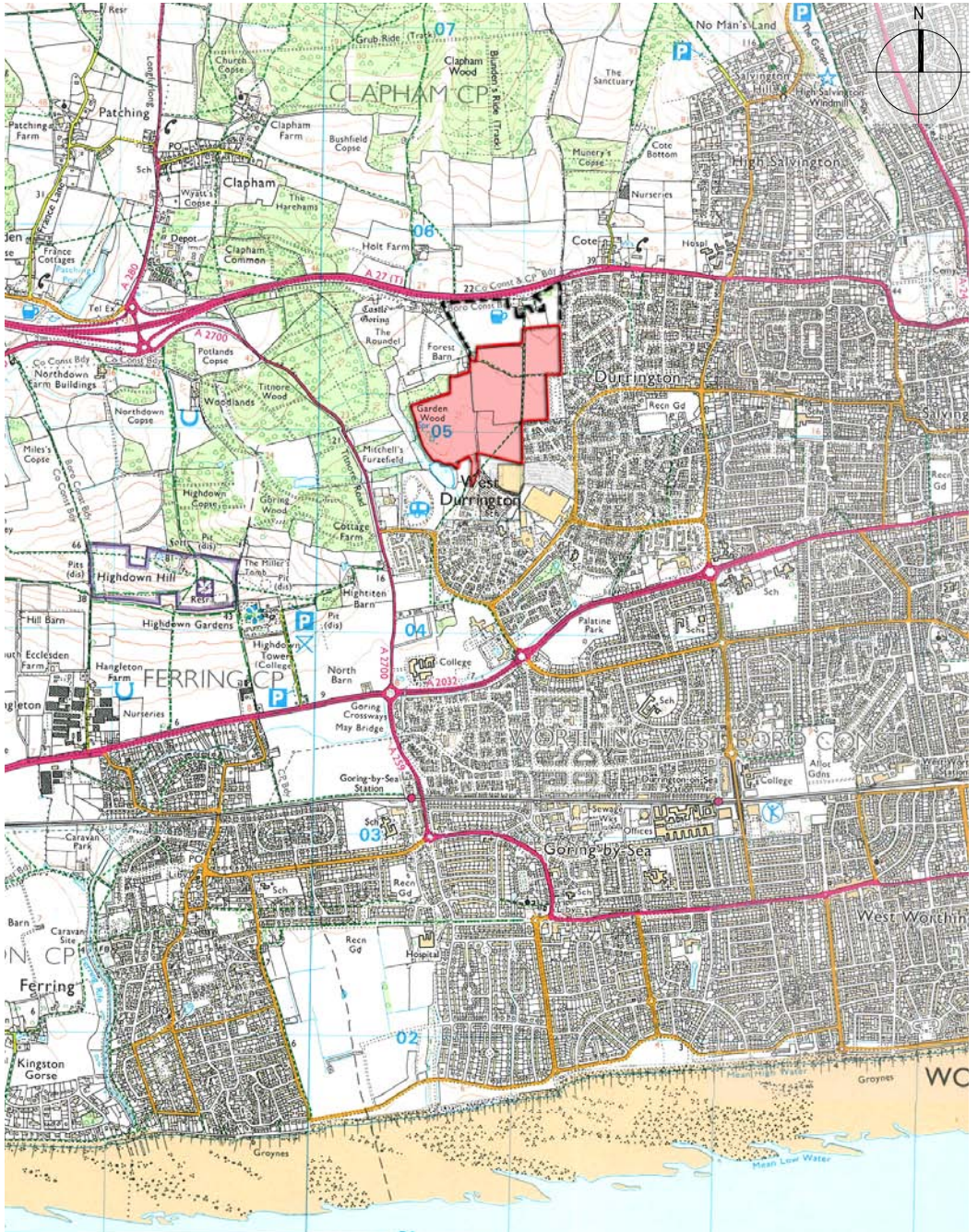
Surface water drainage would be via sustainable means including swales and balancing ponds. There would be modest changes to existing ground levels on parts of the site to aid this. A small area of the site is to have the ground stabilised by grout or other means. Within the development area there would be planting of street trees, parkland trees, shrubs and hedges, landscape buffers formed to the edges and areas of habitat created for wildlife.

The present outline application accords with Worthing Borough Council's (WBC) planning policy for the area. A key policy document is the Core Strategy (CS) which was published last Spring and 'examined' by an independent Inspector towards the end of 2010. The Inspector reported on 1st March 2011. She found the CS as a whole to be 'sound' and the inclusion of about 700 new homes at West Durrington as "a key component of the spatial strategy".

## *Comparison with 2008 scheme*

The 2011 scheme enhances design and sustainability over the 2008 proposal and involves a smaller site area. It provides a higher percentage of family homes within the reduced overall total, down from 875 to 700 properties. However the main change in the plans is the omission of housing on land to the west towards Titnore Lane and not providing any new access to this road. This follows the lead of WBC's refusal of planning permission for the 2008 scheme in March 2010. WBC pointed to the impacts on woodland and habitat for protected species. The Council felt this was not outweighed by the need for any houses in the two fields nearest Titnore Lane, which have trees around them, or for direct access out from the development site to this road itself. The submitted scheme now safeguards all trees in the whole sector to the west beyond the large open fields set for development.





- Application Site
- Second Phase

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## THE APPLICATION SITE AND THE POTENTIAL SECOND PHASE

The application site is about 31 hectares (77 acres), with the great majority being agricultural fields. It generally slopes gently from the north. Main features around the edge of the site are the woodland towards Titnore Lane, the parkland south of Castle Goring and nearby properties, the residential development to the east, and the District Centre (Tesco), and a sports club and caravan site beyond Titnore Lake to the south.

There is an area of about 10 hectares (25 acres) to the north east of the application site, located

next to the A27, the Coach and Horses pub and Adur Avenue. This land is not included in the application. It may come forward in the future depending on housing needs and planning policy; it is considered by the Council as part of the settlement but is not allocated for development in the present Core Strategy. As there is a possibility of this land coming forward in the years ahead, to give the full picture, the ES includes assessment of potential impacts from its development. It has been termed the second phase. The WBC Core Strategy refers to it as the potential future development area (PFDA).

## POLICY CONTEXT

The proposals are consistent with Government guidance, particularly on the wish to see urban extensions in locations that would be highly accessible and for development to be sustainable. The site has long been earmarked for extensive housing. It is identified in, for example, the relevant saved policy (H4) from the 2003 Local Plan. Most recently it features for about 700 homes, with ancillary facilities and environmental protection measures, in Policy 1 of the Core Strategy. This CS is expected to shortly be formally adopted by WBC. An

Inspector's mandatory report dated 1st March 2011 stated: "it is concluded that there is justification for a strategic site for development at West Durrington". The land is not within the South Downs National Park, an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, a Strategic Gap or any area of nature conservation designation such as a Site of Nature Conservation Interest.

The proposals comply well with the objectives of existing and emerging planning policies at national, regional and local level.

## NEED AND ALTERNATIVES

The ES sets out the general need for houses to be built and also considers the shortage of affordable homes in Worthing. It considers whether there are other means to provide sufficient houses. Building within the urban area is explored, as is using employment land or other greenfield areas around the edge of the town. Many alternative sites have environmental or planning policy problems or are many years from happening. None can provide the overall scale of housing numbers needed, deliver family housing in any significant quantities and get started in the near future. 700 homes would meet a substantial part of WBC's need over the short and mid term.

Relying fully on 'windfall' housing, for example building in gardens or replacing a house with flats, is not feasible as production is unpredictable and such schemes, in contrast to the application site, rarely contribute properly to regeneration, facilities, infrastructure or affordable housing. The CS Inspector summed up matters when she stated that the West Durrington application site was "an essential component of the Borough's housing land supply as a clearly deliverable site that will provide homes within the next 5 years and beyond"





Important issues to be considered by the ES were agreed with WBC and expert organisations; these form the next ten headings of this NTS. The ES also sets out the main concerns raised during the long running process of policies being formed for West Durrington and previous schemes being considered. Many of those comments, along with more recent exhibitions and meetings, have shaped the present proposals. As stated

above, in responding to the most significant complaints against the 2008 scheme there is now to be no development in the two fields nearest Titnore Lane or an access from that road. This virtually removes any question of tree loss or direct impact on sensitive wildlife or habitat. The Council will be consulting local people on the application. The Consortium will be undertaking publicity and keeping in dialogue with key local stakeholders too.

AERIAL PHOTOGRAPH



-  Application Site
-  Second Phase

NOTE: The new West Durrington District Centre is shown indicatively on the Aerial Photograph

## COMMUNITY EFFECTS

The West Durrington scheme would lead to a sizeable increase in the population of this part of Worthing. However, as outlined in the second paragraph of this NTS, land, buildings or funds would be made available for a range of community facilities. Many of these would be of benefit to existing local residents. Local materials and employees would be used where possible and

there would be significant numbers of jobs during construction and the new residents could help to sustain local businesses for the long term. The development would be a place with a sense of community linked with the existing area of West Durrington. About 30% of the homes would fall within the WBC affordable definition and most of these and the market properties would be suited to families.

## ECOLOGY

Extensive appraisal has been undertaken in liaison with the West Sussex County Council ecologist, the Environment Agency and Natural England. With the change in plans away from the west the development is now restricted to arable farmland of relatively low ecological interest. Habitats of identified value are almost entirely retained within green corridors for wildlife movement. Fencing, generous landscape buffers and alternative green areas would help to keep people, and cats, out of sensitive ancient woodland to the west which supports dormice. Improving the woodland habitat should help the dormouse population and other woodland wildlife. Some great crested newts are found on parts of the application site and would need to be moved before construction works. A new pond and breeding habitat is to be created which overall would have a positive effect on this species. The effect on farmland birds would inevitably be negative whilst other bird species, reptiles, a rare dragonfly and bats should gain from the habitat planting, wetland sustainable drainage systems and other works, such as bird and bat boxes, all of which would be maintained and monitored by means of an agreed management plan. There would be minor lengths of hedge lost, more than made up for by new stretches; wetlands and wildflower meadow would increase biodiversity.

The potential second phase land, mainly arable and grazed pasture, is generally of low ecological value and impacts here would be of low significance. Similar nature conservation measures would take place as those on the application site.







Assessment of the application area and the second phase has considered the effects on landscape character, the effects on views in and out, and impacts on woodland, trees and hedgerows. Heights and positions of buildings have been carefully considered. Designing around existing landscape features, creating woodland buffers and strengthening hedgerows all help to minimise impacts. New wetland features, tree planted areas and amenity / recreation areas would be created along with play areas, allotments and a playing field.

As with virtually any greenfield proposal, the most obvious effect from the completed development would be the change in views. This would apply from on-site footpaths and

the change in views (day and night time) from existing adjacent homes. These effects have been assessed to be of some limited significance largely due to the change in character from predominantly rural to urban in nature, even though the developed edge is alongside. They reduce as planned landscape grows and overall the sensitive landscape of the South Downs National Park would be protected. Keeping development away from Titnore Lane and its woodland has clearly helped to greatly reduce landscape and visual impacts compared to the 2008 scheme.

The additional impacts arising from the second phase would be limited due to its location. Whilst this development area would be visible from a number of points it would often be against the backdrop of the larger scheme.

## TRANSPORT

The scheme aims to minimise car use by the mix of uses and layout. Opportunity for a high level of pedestrian and cycle use have been built in with very good links to recreation, education, retail, jobs and community facilities. There would be improvements to local public transport and the cycle and pedestrian network. The proposed Pulse bus service would include the site in its circuit via Tasman Way and Fulbeck Avenue.

A Transport Assessment is an appendix to the ES. The scheme would have some implications for the local highway network with increased flows on roads including, amongst others, Fulbeck Avenue, Romany Road, Columbia Drive, Durrington Hill, Titnore Lane and Titnore Way. Fulbeck Avenue would be the most obvious as it is the principal site entrance. Cars on Tasman Way would only be able to reach the community facilities from that site entrance. Even on Fulbeck Avenue there would be no long queues

at junctions and at rush hour the road would run very much below its design capacity.

A speed management and hazard awareness scheme for Titnore Lane (to include traffic calming) would encourage slower speeds and is intended to reduce accidents. Improvements to three junctions along Littlehampton Road are planned. There would be no significant residual adverse traffic impacts when the scheme is fully developed. There would be some temporary adverse effects due to construction traffic, most noticeably on Fulbeck Avenue.

The second phase would increase transport demand in West Durrington. However this has been factored in to the Transport Assessment tests to roads and their junctions; no further works would be needed on those fronts. Amended public transport services may be needed to improve proximity of bus stops and routes.



The site is generally of low archaeological potential, although restricted areas of locally important sub-surface remains were identified in the SW and SE corners. Four phases of works were agreed with the County Council. Two of these areas of open excavations were satisfactorily completed in January 2007. A third one applies to Titnore Lane and is no longer relevant. The fourth one would see subsoil deposits south of Forest Farm being investigated and recorded.

Archaeology does not cause a concern for the application site. The assessment has also shown that the proposed development would have a

negligible impact upon the settings of the listed buildings. The proposed development would also have a negligible impact upon the setting of the Conservation Area due to woodland and field boundaries.

The potential second phase lies in closer proximity to a number of listed buildings and the Conservation Area. It will be important to ensure sympathetic development with a high standard of design, enhancement of hedgerows and a landscape buffer. The archaeological assessment indicated there were no known features of archaeological interest in this area.

## AGRICULTURE

Much of the farmland close to Worthing is of the highest quality, Grades 1 and 2. There is no Grade 1 or 2 on the application site. About 13 hectares of Grade 3a (which falls within the official category of 'best and most versatile' land), and 17 ha of Grade 3b, would be lost through development. There would be a minor adverse impact upon the national resource of better quality agricultural land. Loss of agricultural land has to be balanced against

other planning objectives such as the strategic need for housing. Soil would be retained for beneficial use on the scheme including gardens and open spaces. Only a small part of a large farming estate would be removed, not affecting viability. This would be of low significance. The development of the potential second phase would result in about a further 3 ha of Grade 3a and about 7 ha of Grade 3b being lost, both small amounts in the wider picture.

## AIR QUALITY

The ES includes detailed assessment of the existing air quality situation, the potential impacts during construction, and the situation after the development has been completed. Emissions from plant, construction vehicles and traffic are not an issue. During the construction period there would be likely, at a number of locations, to be a temporary minor to moderate adverse impact on local air quality due to dust from construction. Wind and rainfall have the potential to influence the transportation of dust; nearby houses may experience isolated dust annoyance during

unfavourable weather conditions. The developers would take measures to minimise this. Measures would include, for example, hoardings, damping down and regular wet cleaning, careful sealing and siting of stockpiles, considerate routing of haul roads, sheeting lorries and cleaning wheels, and removing rather than burning waste. The second phase would have similar dust issues.

The completed development is expected to have a negligible impact on local air quality and the same would apply to the second phase.

## DRAINAGE

The principles of sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) have been applied. This would use swales and ponds to provide a sound technical solution to reduce the risk of flooding downstream from its present level. It would also be environmentally friendly with improved water quality and natural habitats. To enable the system to all drain by gravity there would need to be some land raising: by about 0.5 m north of the new Tesco building, near the head of Tasman Way and in an area well within the application site. The system would be constructed to control runoff resulting from up to the 1 in 100 year rainfall event plus additional storage dealing with climatic change of up to 30% increase in rainfall.

Surface water drainage in the potential second phase would take a similar approach with a self contained SuDS system ensuring no flood risks.

Foul drainage would not present problems. Both the application site and the second phase could discharge into the existing adopted sewer network in Varey Road. There would be no need for a pumping station. It is understood that capacity exists at the treatment works and there are rights to make the connection. In any event the local water company receives an Infrastructure Charge from the new development which can be spent on any strategic network or treatment works upgrades which it deems necessary.

## GROUND CONDITIONS

An area of the site (about 80 x 100 m towards the south east) has poor stability and would require stabilisation by grouting or other means together with the use of special foundations. At the detailed stage the best approach would be considered with WBC and the Environment Agency. Some other parts of the site have less pronounced lack of stability but may need specific foundation design. There are no works which would threaten to cause groundwater

contamination. More detailed analysis would be done at the next stage but if there is a requirement for gas or radon protection measures to the new buildings they would be included.

The second phase area is closer to a former landfill across the A27 and further investigation into the potential for soil contamination and ground gas would have to be undertaken to design mitigation for these properties.

## NOISE AND VIBRATION

During construction works there would be some increase in noise and, less likely, vibration. This would be a short term minor adverse effect for some local people. These noise impacts could be during temporary works of, for example, earth moving or road making. The developers would follow Considerate Contractor's procedures and do what they reasonably could to minimise this. For the completed development, traffic flow predictions have been used to assess whether additional noise would be apparent on local roads. The ES sets out the calculations used. At Fulbeck Avenue there would be an increase of

2.8dB(A) which would be a negligible impact. This would rise to 3.6dB(A) with the second phase, which is deemed a minor adverse impact. In reality the build out would take place over a number of years so impacts are likely to be less than predicted.

The second phase would need some shielding from the A27 traffic noise and this could be a bund or a fence. As with the application site there could be some temporary increase in noise to local people from certain construction activities.



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|--|---|---|---|
|  Application Site                         |  Potential Expansion Area for School |  Existing Vegetation |  Existing Public Footpaths to Site Boundary                |
|  Second Phase                             |  Community Centre Site               |  Proposed Vegetation |   |
|  Proposed Housing and Important Frontages |  Site for Potential Doctors Surgery  |  Balancing Ponds     |  BG Bus Gate: Access for buses and emergency vehicles only |
|  Second Phase Housing                     |  Allotments                          |  Swales              |   |
|  School Site                              |  Shared Surfaces                     |  Existing Ditch      |   |



## CONCLUSION

The West Durrington scheme has evolved over a considerable period during which a substantial amount of environmental assessment work has been undertaken and important refinements incorporated. Several elements of mitigation are 'built into' the scheme. Numerous more detailed additional measures are also proposed which are summarised in the concluding chapter of the ES. As explained in the NTS Introduction, this 2011 scheme does not have the tree removal of earlier proposals.

The ES has found that, taking into account mitigation, almost all of the impacts of the scheme would be of low or no significance. The only impacts of a significance level above this are an inevitable consequence of developing agricultural land as a site for housing - most obviously the visual change from close by. Additionally, habitat for farmland birds would be reduced and there could be dust from construction.

The potential second phase being added would not cause any substantially greater impacts than would arise with the development of the application site alone.

The application proposals comply with planning policy objectives and would provide required new homes and facilities in a sustainable form. The development could be constructed without over-riding harm taking place to the environment.

As the Core Strategy Planning Inspector concluded in her report of 1st March 2011 this "essential" development would bring many benefits to Worthing and the Durrington and Northbrook locality over coming years.

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