

Our ref: DC/JD/CC/COL/101/06/SO  
Your ref: 733339/P/001A  
Date: 14 September 2006

**PLEASE QUOTE REFERENCE ON ALL CORRESPONDENCE**

Dear Sir

**TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 (as amended)  
TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT)  
REGULATIONS 1999 – SCREENING OPINION**

**Proposal: Construction of a 660 space Park and Ride car park and transport interchange with associated access road and siting of a bus terminal building.**

**Location: Land north east side of A1124 Halstead Road, Eight Ash Green, Colchester.**

**Application No: CC/COL/101/06/SO**

I refer to the above application received on 10 July 2006.

Because the proposal relates to "Schedule 2" development as defined in the Regulations, the Authority is required to adopt a Screening Opinion under Regulation 7.

The formal decision of this Authority is that the effects of the development would be so significant as to require formal Environmental Impact Assessment. The justification for this view is set out in the attached Appendix.

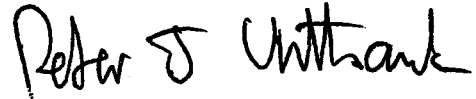
I can confirm that in accordance with the Regulations a copy of this decision will be:

- placed with the submitted planning application on Part 1 of the Planning Register held by Colchester Borough Council;
- sent to the Secretary of State via the Regional Government Office.

Cont./...



Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Peter J Unthank". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'P' and 'U'.

**for Head of Development Control**

c.c. Mr P McLean, ECC Highways & Transportation Major Schemes

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## **APPENDIX**

### **TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT)(ENGLAND & WALES) REGULATIONS 1999 – SCREENING OPINION**

**CONSTRUCTION OF A 660 SPACE PARK AND RIDE CAR PARK AND  
TRANSPORT INTERCHANGE WITH ASSOCIATED ACCESS ROAD AND  
SITING OF A BUS TERMINAL BUILDING.  
LAND NORTH EAST SIDE OF A1124 HALSTEAD ROAD, EIGHT ASH  
GREEN, COLCHESTER  
CC/COL/101/06/SO**

#### **JUSTIFICATION FOR SCREENING OPINION THAT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT IS REQUIRED**

##### **Schedule 1**

The proposal does not fall within Schedule 1 of the Regulations that would require mandatory Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA).

##### **Schedule 2**

It does fall within Column 1 of Schedule 2 under section 10(b) – urban development projects.

##### **Sensitive Area**

The site does not appear to lie within an environmentally sensitive location as defined in the Regulations. The only environmentally sensitive location, in the broader context of the guidance in Department of the Environment Circular 02/99, in the immediate vicinity of the site is the County Wildlife Site (formerly Site of Importance for Nature Conservation –SINC) COL/W35, a woodland area, situated 130 metres to the east of the site at its closest point.

##### **Criteria for Column 2 of Schedule 2**

The proposal is considered to come within the scope of Section 10(b) of Schedule 2 in that it is urban development similar in many respects to a car park serving a shopping or leisure centre. In Column 2 of Schedule 2 the proposal is identified as Schedule 2 development in that the area of the development exceeds 0.5 hectare. The guidance provided in Circular 02/99 is that, in addition to the physical scale of the development, particular consideration should be given to potential increases in traffic, emissions and noise. Developments of more than 5 hectares site area are more likely to require EIA.

It is also the Secretary of State's view that EIA will, in general, be needed only:  
(a) for major developments which are of more than local importance;

- (b) for developments in particularly environmentally sensitive or vulnerable locations;
- (c) for developments with unusually complex or potentially hazardous environmental effects.

The development proposed has a total site area of 5.68 hectares and thereby exceeds the threshold (5 hectares) at which the guidance provided by the Secretary of State suggests it is more likely that formal EIA will be necessary.

## **Significant Environmental Effects**

### Characteristics of the development

The proposal would not be of national importance but would be of local importance in the context of north-east Essex. The proposal would, however, have the potential to give rise to significant increases in traffic on the local road network and to localised increases in air pollution, noise and light pollution.

### Location of the development

The proposals would be located on agricultural land and vacant land and is countryside land shown without any other notation on the Eight Ash Green – Fordham Heath Inset of the Adopted Review Colchester Borough Local Plan, March 2004. Eight Ash Green has two principal concentrations of housing and one is adjacent to the site to the west and north-west. There are also two short ribbons of frontage properties on Halstead Road, one opposite the proposed site entrance and one to the east of the site entrance and south of the site. There is a County Wildlife Site approximately 130 metres to the east of the site and the land to the north of the site is in a Countryside Conservation Area on the Adopted Local Plan.

In this context, the following impacts need to be considered:

### Scale

The proposed constructed development, comprising the hard surfaced parking and circulation areas and the access road would occupy approximately 2.1 hectares of the site, although account should also be taken of the reservation of land within the site for a possible second phase extension that would add a further area of hard surfaced development of approximately 1 hectare. The total developed area of the site would be approximately 60% of the total site area and would be predominantly development of an open character but does represent a substantial urban type of development on rural land adjacent to a village.

The site for the proposed terminal building, which would need to be the subject of a further planning application, has a "footprint" of approximately 185m<sup>2</sup> and would represent a small element of built development in a predominantly open site.

### Traffic

The proposals will result in a significant increase in traffic on the local road network which needs to be fully assessed.

### Emissions

The site is not located in an area identified as an Air Quality Management Area where air pollution is a current concern. It is, however, considered that the potential additional traffic generated by the proposals warrants an air quality/air pollution impact assessment, which has not been submitted with the application. An air quality impact assessment, based primarily on the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) Air Quality Assessment Model to take account of the impact of additional traffic on roads in the vicinity of the site and an assessment in respect of air pollution from the car park itself are therefore required.

The issues of energy efficiency and expected CO<sub>2</sub> emissions need to be considered.

The proposals include arrangements for surface water drainage, and foul drainage from the proposed future terminal building, to prevent/minimise pollution of adjoining land and watercourses but no reference is made to "grey water" usage.

### Noise

The proposed development would introduce an element of traffic noise into a previously undeveloped area, in addition to incremental increases in traffic noise **caused by additional traffic on A1124 Halstead Road over a prolonged period throughout the day.** Account needs also to be taken of noise from construction works.

### Light Pollution

The proposals would introduce exterior lighting to an area which is at present unlit, being agricultural land and vacant land. The impact of lighting on the countryside and nearby residential properties needs to be assessed.

### Historic Environment

The archaeological significance of the historic environment in this area is such that an EIA should be undertaken. The historic environment element of an EIA would require a desk top assessment, field evaluation (probably involving trial trenching) and a mitigation strategy.

### Landscape and Ecology

Preliminary landscape and wildlife assessments have been submitted with the application but there is a need for further detailed surveys to enable the impact of the proposals on the landscape and natural resources to be properly assessed, as follows.

- A tree survey, carried out in accordance with BS5837:2005.

- Badger survey.
- Great Crested Newt survey.
- Reptile survey.
- Bat survey (of any mature trees proposed to be removed).

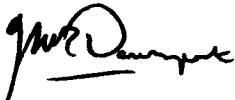
### Security

Issues arising from site security, both within and outside the hours of operation, need to be considered. Inappropriate site security would have the potential to impact on the local environment and community by reason of air pollution, noise and litter/waste from unauthorised uses and the perceived threat of crime.

### **Conclusion**

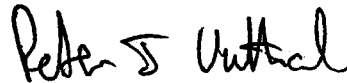
On the basis of the issues outlined above, it is considered that the proposals will have a significant effect on the human, natural and historic environments and it is therefore concluded that **a formal Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is required.**

Produced by  
John Davenport  
Planner



Date: 14 September 2006

Audited by  
Peter J Unthank  
Principal Planner



Date: 14 September 2006