EIA Quality Mark  
Case Study

Land south of Sutton Road, Maidstone

<table>
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<th>Key Issues</th>
<th>Purpose of the project</th>
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| - The site is located in proximity to a grade II* listed Church which lies immediately adjacent to the south east corner of the site. The church is visible from long distance views to the north and south and located within a rural agricultural/horticultural setting.  
- The site lies south of Sutton Road which forms an aerial route into the town from the south and experiences congestion during peak hours.  
- The cumulative impact of allocated residential development in Maidstone on the local highway network. | In October 2015 Countryside Properties Ltd submitted an outline application to Maidstone Borough Council for residential led development on land south of Sutton Road, Maidstone.  
The development was subject to a draft allocation in the emerging Local Plan and will significantly increase the supply of market and affordable homes in the borough. |

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<th>Description of the project</th>
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| The site is approximately 43ha in size, comprising arable land, land used for the cultivation of roses and a small golf driving range.  
The development will provide up to 800 dwellings, land for a primary school and residential care home, public open space in the form of natural green space, allotments/community orchards, children’s play facilities and informal open space and a mixed use local centre. |
Lessons learnt

The site was subject to a draft allocation early in Maidstone’s local plan process and upon inception of the planning application process. Within a subsequent later draft the site was removed from the plans draft allocations over concerns on the setting of the grade II* church and congestion along the A274 Sutton Road. Following studies led by the EIA, evidence was compiled that could demonstrate that these constraints could be adequately overcome and resultant effects minimised and avoided where appropriate. Consequently the site was re-allocated in the final submission version of the local plan and received consent in July 2016. The following were considered key matters in the sites success:

The importance of baseline studies and iterative design

The key site constraint related to the proximity of the listed church. Early baseline studies through collaborative working between the heritage consultant and the landscape architect identified the views of the church from the wider landscape that were considered of greatest significance. Various iterations of the site layout followed and informed discussions with Historic England over the acceptability of built development in proximity to the listed building. This collaborative and evidence first approach provide invaluable in receiving bespoke advice on the proposals.

Lessons learnt cont. –

Engaging with statutory consultees

Engaging with Historic England early in the application process proved vital in both focusing the scope of the assessment required but also in providing comfort to the planning authority than a design solution could be provided. Forming a good working relationship with Historic England was a fundamental success of the project.

Mitigating cumulative effects

The transport assessment identified the requirement to provide additional measures to mitigate cumulative effects over and above those required for the scheme alone. The cumulative effects assessment identified locations on the highway network where mitigation measures were required to mitigate the cumulative effect of residential development in south Maidstone.

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