

<b>Committee:</b>	<b>Development Control</b>	<b>Agenda Item</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>19 March 2008</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Title:</b>	<b>UTT/0262/08/SO Scoping Opinion relating to proposed development at Boxted Wood, Stebbing</b>	
<b>Author:</b>	<b>Michael Ovenden - Interim Head of Development Control: (01799) 510476</b>	Item for decision

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### **Summary**

The Council has received a request for a Scoping Opinion concerning a proposed new settlement in Stebbing parish. This report and the attached assessment and recommendation sets out the circumstances and concludes by recommending that the developer be informed that when submitted an Environmental Statement concerning the proposed development it should cover the stated issues. Members are asked to consider whether there are any further matters to require to be covered in the Environmental Statement.

### **Background**

All parties will be aware that this authority is required to find new sites for 4200 homes over those previously planned for. These new sites will be identified through the Local Development Framework (LDF). In its preparation of the Core Strategy the Council has set out a number of options for allocating the housing numbers and indicated its preferred option which is for the majority of the new homes to be provided in a new settlement to the north east of Elsenham. The LDF procedure encourages parties to propose alternative options and a number of large sites have been put forward including the site being promoted by Galliard Homes at Boxted Wood. Work on the Core Strategy is still ongoing and the Council has yet to make its final decision on how the housing requirement will be met. It is unlikely that will be made until next year. This scoping report is for a development of 4500 dwellings. Current information indicates that approximately 3000 dwellings would be sited in Stebbing parish, with the balance proposed in Braintree District. Although the scoping report is limited to 4,500 homes it is intended by Galliard Homes that the community would have the capacity to grow to 10,000 dwellings at a later stage.

Development proposals may have a significant impact on the Environment and to judge the impact of large schemes developers are required to submit an Environmental Statement (ES) with the planning application. The Regulations provide a procedure which allows a developer to ask the local planning authority about the scope of an Environmental Statement. This procedure is known as a Scoping Opinion. A response must be given within 5 weeks (in this case 25 March 2008).

All parties should be aware that by offering advice in response to a request for a Scoping Opinion the local planning authority is not prejudging, supporting, agreeing or in some other way condoning the development. It is merely setting the terms for the work which will inform the Environmental Statement that will be required if an application is made. Such an Environmental Statement is likely to take a significant period of time to prepare. Therefore an application if it comes is unlikely to be received for many months. Members should bear this information in mind and confine comments to suggesting what information should be in the Environmental Statement and not discuss the merits of the overall scheme or those of other proposals. In this sense this report should be treated in a similar way to the Major applications which are reported to Members under the advanced reporting procedure – commenting on the issues to be covered and not the proposal itself. Members last dealt with a request for a Scoping Opinion in October 2007 relating to a group of wind turbines in the north of the District and South Cambridgeshire. So far no application has come forward for that development.

### Recommendations

Members are asked to note the content of the report and consider whether there is further information which the developer should be asked to include within its submission for an Environmental Statement.

### Background Papers

Attached report & application UTT/0262/08/SO.

### Impact

Communication/Consultation	The submission has been publicised including notifying residents, the Parish, statutory consultees and Braintree District Council.
Community Safety	None
Equalities	None
Finance	None
Human Rights	None
Legal implications	None
Sustainability	See report
Ward-specific impacts	To the Parish affected by the proposal and further a field within the District and to Braintree District.
Workforce/Workplace	None