8th February 2012

Group Manager Planning and Building Control
City Services and Development Directorate
Civic Centre 4
Much Park Street
Coventry
CV1 2PY

By email: planning@coventry.gov.uk

Dear Sir

RE: Keresley, Coventry

Proposed Residential Development – Request for a Screening Opinion
(Town and Country Planning Act (Environmental Impact Assessment)
(England & Wales) Regulations 2011, Regulation 5)

Under Regulation 5 of the Town and Country Planning (EIA) (England & Wales) Regulations 2011 Lioncourt Homes requests a Screening Opinion for the above site.

The site is approximately 17.6 hectares in size and is located in Keresley parish on the north-west fringe of Coventry, approximately 3 miles north west of Coventry City Centre. The site is currently farmland with small areas of residential development lying adjacent to the site boundaries.

The land is defined to the east by Bennetts Road and/or the properties which front this road; and to the south by Sandpit Lane, Cottage Farm and a golf driving range adjacent to Royal Court hotel. This driving range also forms part of the sites western boundary, in addition to farmland land which extends out to Tamworth Road. Further farmland also lies to the north of the site, with Manor Farm lying to the sites northeastern boundary, beyond Hall Brook which runs along the sites northern boundary. A public right of way also runs along this northern boundary. Please refer to the enclosed Site Location Plan.

It is the intention of Lioncourt to submit an outline planning application to develop the site for residential development, incorporating the necessary infrastructure and public open space.

Regulation 5 states that a request for a screening opinion shall be accompanied by:

a) a plan sufficient to identify the land;

b) a brief description of the nature and purpose of the development and of its possible effects on the environment; and
c) such other information or representations as the person making the request may wish to provide or make.

This information is provided within this letter and enclosed site location plan.

Proposed Development

The proposals are likely to consist of a predominantly residential development up to 400 dwellings, in addition to community uses, public open space, landscaping and associated infrastructure. The site is likely to be accessed from Sandpit Lane and/or Bennetts Road South, with pedestrian and cycle permeability also being provided to link with the surrounding urban area, creating sustainable links for users.

EIA Requirement

The proposed development can be categorised as a Schedule 2 development within the regulations, falling within section 10 ‘Infrastructure Projects’, subsection b ‘Urban Development Projects’.

Within this category the applicable thresholds/criteria for defining a development as Schedule 2 is ‘The area of the development exceeds 0.5 hectare.’ The site exceeds this threshold and subsequently could provide a need for an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) to be carried out.

Schedule 2 developments, however, only require an EIA to be completed if they are considered ‘likely to have significant effects on the environment by virtue of factors such as its nature, size or location’ (Part 1-2b). As the development site exceeds the 0.5 ha threshold, it is appropriate to Screen the proposals with the Local Planning Authority to determine whether there are any ‘significant effects’ likely to arise from the proposed development.

In addition, paragraph 33 of Circular 02/99 states that an EIA will be needed for Schedule 2 developments in three general cases;

‘a) for major developments which are of more than local importance (paragraph 35);

b) for developments which are proposed for particularly environmentally sensitive or vulnerable locations (paragraph 36-40); and

c) for developments with unusually complex and hazardous environmental effects (paragraph 41-42)’

This screening request considers the need for an EIA to accompany a planning application, identifying relevant criteria defined in the EIA regulations, and the accompanying Circular (02/99) and assessing whether a site warrants an EIA to be completed. Schedule 3 (Regulation 4(6)) of the Regulations identifies the ‘selection criteria for screening Schedule 2 development’, which are categorised under three general headings: characteristics of development, location of development and characteristics of the potential impact.
For section 10(b) development paragraphs A18 and A19, of Circular 02/99 provide ‘Indicative thresholds and criteria for identification of Schedule 2 development requiring EIA’. Paragraph A18 states that consideration should be given to the potential increase in traffic, emissions and noise, further stating that ‘EIA is unlikely to be required for the redevelopment of land unless the new development is on a significantly greater scale than the previous use, or the types of impact are of a markedly different nature or there is a high level of contamination’. Paragraph A19 states that sites that have not previously been developed are more likely to require an EIA if:

- ‘the site area of the scheme is more than 5 hectares; or
- It would provide a total of more than 10,000m² of new commercial floorspace; or
- The development would have significant urbanizing effects in a previously non-urbanised area (e.g. new development of more than 1,000 dwellings)’

Whilst the site is over 5 ha, the development sits well within the landscape, and the proposals will reflect density and development patterns of the surrounding area. In addition, the site will not provide commercial development of more than 10,000m² and would provide significantly less than 1000 new dwellings. Similarly due to the urban influences in the surroundings, including the residential and employment development along Bennetts Road, Sandpit Lane, Tamworth Road and roads nearby, it could be considered that the site will also not have a significant urbanizing effect.

Potential environmental impacts as a result of development on the site are discussed below to aid the council’s decision to whether this constitutes EIA development.

**Landscape and Visual Issues**

There are no specific landscape designations on the site, although areas of woodland in the sites context are designated Nature Conservation Sites for their ancient woodland characteristics. Given the distance from the site however, it is not envisaged there will be significant adverse effects. With regards planning designations, the site lies within the greenbelt.

There are no public footpaths or cycleways crossing the site, although a public footpath does run along the northern boundary which leads from Bennetts Road adjacent to Manor Farm on the northeast corner of the site, to Fivefield Road northwest of the site. There is therefore the opportunity to provide increased pedestrian/cycle access into and across the site, linking to the wider public rights of way network.

Major views of the site are limited by a combination of the surrounding undulating ground, mature treed landscape, tall hedgerows and intervening built form. For example, views from Tamworth Road are restricted due to the vegetation aligning this routeway, the dense woodland to the east of Tamworth Road, in addition to the built form of the Royal Court Hotel. Similarly vegetation along Sandpits Lane and along field boundaries on the edge of the site restricts views from the south.
Built form along Bennett's Road South also forms an effective screen of much of the site, in tandem with the existing woodland.

The vegetation onsite (which is predominantly hedgerow field boundaries) will be retained in the proposed development where possible and form part of the landscape proposals for the site. There is also the opportunity to enhance the landscape resources through provision of planting and useable public open space. The masterplan and landscape proposals detailed as part of any planning application will also give consideration to the adjacent residential form and surrounding context.

**Ecology**

The site and surrounding area comprises predominantly lowland farmland with habitats created or influenced by agricultural practice. Low density residential, commercial and recreation land surrounds the sites periphery. There are no statutory nature designations found within 2km of the site.

At the time of a Phase 1 Survey, the site itself comprised of improved grassland, which was most likely managed for grazing and silage production. This is considered to be of low botanical value and nature conservation interest and the proposals provide an opportunity to enhance this habitat. The hedgerows across the site, which act as field boundaries, are recognised for their value to wildlife, and may exhibit some ecological value. However, it is likely that this will be largely retained and enhanced within the development proposals. There is similarly the potential for other enhancements, including development of a green infrastructure strategy to include native planting infrastructure which could provide green corridors across the site, linking habitats. Hall Brook on the northern boundary of the site and two small pond onsite, also provide some ecological value and will seek to be retained and enhanced in proposals where feasible.

Within any planning application a Phase 1 ecological survey will be undertaken to identify and mitigate any likely adverse effects with respect to flora and fauna, and submitted alongside the planning application.

**Transportation and Accessibility**

The location of the site in the existing urban area supports the sites suitability for residential development and offers the opportunity for sustainable access in terms of walking, cycling and accessibility by public transport to the surrounding facilities, including those within Coventry city centre. The site is within easy reach of employment and retail facilities, in addition to bus services which provide access to Coventry city centre and Coventry railway station, which provide links further afield.

The site is likely to be accessed by Bennett's Road South and / or Sandpit Lane, which provide quick and accessible links to the wider area. Within any outline application, further transport and accessibility information will be provided as part
of the submission, including a Transport Assessment detailing any impacts on the road network and access arrangements, in addition to a Framework Travel Plan.

**Flood Risk and Drainage**

The site lies within Flood Zone 1 (low risk, less than 1 in 1000 risk of flooding) as defined on the Environment Agency Flood Zone Maps. There are no streams or rivers within the site itself, however Hall Brook lies on the northern boundary. Two ponds are also evident within the site area.

A Flood Risk Assessment will be carried out in line with the requirements of PPS 25 and be submitted alongside any outline application. Given the sites location within Flood Zone 1, the FRA will primarily focus on providing a suitable drainage strategy, so to ensure that there is no flooding threat to existing or proposed homes. As part of this the Hall Brook will be investigated and the opportunity to utilize Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems examined.

**Conclusions**

This Screening Request considers the relevance of providing a complete EIA alongside an outline planning application for the site at Keresley, Coventry, taking into consideration the appropriate criteria and thresholds, as outlined in the Regulations and the accompanying Circular 02/99.

As set out in this letter, it is acknowledged that there is the potential for impacts to affect the environment which will be minimized through the design and masterplanning process, and the submission of supporting documents. These supporting documents are likely to include: a Transport Assessment; a Flood-Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy; an Ecological Assessment; a Landscape Assessment; and a Design and Access Statement which will include an illustrative masterplan.

We look forward to receiving the Council’s response to this Screening request within the designated 3 week timeframe on receipt of this request (as stated in the EIA Regulations, Part 2-5(5), Screening).

Should you have any queries, or require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

SARAH CLARKSON
Senior Environmental Planner

cc. Chris May – Pegasus Planning Group
    Andy Faizey – Lioncourt Homes