

Environmental and Social Data Sheet

Overview

Project Name:	THFC GREENER HOUSING – ALLOCATIONS UNDER FL
Project Number:	2013-0033
Country:	United Kingdom
Project Description:	Large housing schemes (capex between EUR 50 and 80m), notably in Bicester and Barnet, separately appraised under FL THFC GREENER HOUSING (2012-0237)
EIA required:	multiple scheme operation

Summary of Environmental and Social Assessment, including key issues and overall conclusion and recommendation

Relevant EU Directives were transposed into nation/regional legislation (EIA Directive, Birds and Habitat Directive, Energy Performance Directive). The housing schemes to be financed will be part of detailed urban development plans and urban renewal concepts. Strategic Environmental Assessments are carried out at Local Development Framework level which sets the general context for the housing schemes. The 2012 Cherwell Local Plan, including a Strategic Environmental Assessment, sets the spatial development framework up to 2031 for the wider area in Bicester. The 2012 Barnet Local Plan sets the spatial development framework for the wider urban regeneration area in the borough.

Significant positive net environmental, social and economic externalities are expected to result from implementing the two high energy efficient housing schemes in Oxfordshire and London under this sector Framework Loan. They will provide good quality housing to expand the social housing stock throughout England, aiming at creating integrated, sustainable communities and bringing back into use an urban Brownfield site.

Environmental and Social Assessment

1. Energy efficiency and renewable energies:

The social housing schemes to be financed under the sector Framework Loan operation have to comply with high environmental standards and will significantly contribute to the improvement of the urban environment. The EU Directive on Energy Performance of Buildings (EPBD) was implemented into UK legislation on a regional basis as amendment to the Building Regulations. The UK legislation meets the requirements from the EPBD (2010/31/EU) as regards housing.

The NW Bicester eco-development housing will achieve Level 5 of the national Code for Sustainable Homes which is higher than required under the EIB Framework Loan requiring at least Level 4 (Level 6 is the highest category and a zero carbon home). The Northwest Bicester eco-development includes energy production from a small scale district heating plant (gas fired combined heat and power plant), low-energy use street lighting and the use of renewable energy sources (PV panels on all homes) which shall ensure a highly energy efficient, sustainable urban community. Overall, the housing investment is expected to achieve the true zero carbon status – which means that it includes regulated and unregulated energy components – by building exemplary energy efficient homes, large scale use of rooftop photovoltaic panels and a district heating plant and network. All houses are designed to be future proof against Climate Change, e.g. via protection against overheating.

The Plot 61 London-Barnet urban regeneration scheme will achieve Level 4 of the national Code for Sustainable Homes.

2. Environmental impact assessment:

The Plot 61 London-Barnet urban regeneration scheme was screened out by the Competent Authority; no environmental impact assessment was required.

The Northwest Bicester eco development's first phase 'Exemplar' scheme required an EIA under the EU Directive 2011/92/EU which was carried out in 2010 (Environmental Statement 10 May 2010). Public consultation took place from 26 November to 22 December 2010. The non-technical summary of the Environmental Statement was submitted to the EIB and demonstrates correct practice when dealing with environmental issues: Impacts were assessed, including alternatives; mitigation measures and a monitoring programme were defined; planning permission was granted in 2011.

The NW Bicester eco-development is expected to lead to a net gain in biodiversity, as required by statutory planning policies for eco towns (this will be ensured by retaining existing features of value to wildlife and by creating additional new habitats). As regards visual impact, landscape effects are expected to be neutral. As regards flood risk and hydrology: There is low risk of flooding from fluvial sources. A sustainable drainage system will be created with no anticipated increase of the flood risk elsewhere by maintaining surface water runoff at or better than Greenfield rates. During construction there will be slight adverse impact from construction dust affecting housing close to the development. No permanent residual impact associated with traffic and no exceedences of the relevant Air Quality Limit Values were predicted. No mitigation measures will be required for road traffic noise. As regards the built heritage and archaeology, within the development site no buildings of historic value exist. The overall development will change the landscape from a rural setting to an urban environment. No contaminated soil or groundwater was discovered; contamination risks are considered very low. A considerate construction approach will be used to minimise potential impacts on the existing agricultural enterprise (a beef suckler cow farm). The environmental impact assessment concludes that the eco development will have no direct or indirect effect on designated sites of nature conservation importance. Positive human health effects are expected during construction (potential employment opportunities). After completion of the eco development, i.e. during operation, indirect positive health effects are predicted (job creation via investments). A site waste management plan has been prepared to plan, implement, monitor and review waste minimisation and management during construction. A sustainable waste and resources plan has been prepared to set targets for residual waste levels, recycling levels and landfill diversion. As regards traffic and transport, the development is expected to have a negligible impact. Potential cumulative effects with other developments in the vicinity are likely during construction on traffic and transport. No likely cumulative effects are anticipated during operation.