21st June 2013
Our Ref: JW/RW/13.154

Head of Planning
Planning Department
Torfaen County Borough Council
County Hall
Cwmbran
NP44 2WN

Dear Sir/Madam,

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT) (ENGLAND AND WALES) REGULATIONS 1999; REGULATION 10

SCOPING OPINION

PROPOSED RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT LAND AT SOUTH SEBASTOPOL, CWMBRAN

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Asbri Planning Ltd. have been instructed by Taylor Wimpey Plc. to prepare a revised outline planning application for residential development of approximately 1200 units on land at South Sebastopol, Cwmbran.

1.2 The application follows the refusal and subsequent appeal in respect of an outline application on the site for ‘Residential Development and ancillary retail and community development, landscaping and highways (1200 dwellings approx.)’ at Land West of Cwmbran Drive, South Sebastopol, Torfaen (Reference No. 01/P/05525).

1.3 This revised scheme similarly proposes an outline application for residential development of up to 1200 dwellings, retail centre and playing fields together with associated highways and landscaping work. In this respect the revised scheme is broadly similar to the previous application scheme however, in response to the objections raised by local residents during the appeal process, the scheme will be subject to the following amendments:

- The ‘northern’ and ‘southern’ accesses (onto Oaklands Road and Lowlands Crescent respectively) will be available for pedestrian and cycle (and possibly bus) access only.
- Further consideration has been given to the relationship between the development and the Canal Conservation Area.
- The Masterplan for the site will be updated to reflect the design evolution, including the amendments identified above and the landscaping and other principles established as part of the appeal process.

1.4 The site is currently being promoted as a Strategic Action Area in the emerging Local Development Plan to enable the development of an urban village comprising a sustainable new community consisting of 1200 dwellings.

1.5 It is accepted the development of the site would be subject to an Environmental Impact Assessment in under the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (England and Wales) Regulations 1999, Regulation 5 (1) however a scoping opinion is
requested in order to inform us as to what information should be included in an Environmental Statement (ES).

2.0 Scoping Opinion

2.1 Please accept this letter as a formal request for a scoping opinion in accordance with Regulation 10(1), to confirm the level of information to be contained within an ES to accompany the forthcoming planning application. As required by Regulation 10(2) this letter:
   - Encloses a plan identifying the land the subject of the application;
   - Gives a brief description of the development applied for; and
   - Comments on matters which the applicant considers will be relevant to the scope of the EIA to be undertaken.

2.2 Clearly, as yet the formal scope for the EIA has yet to be established but we have assumed that the main headings as set out in the Regulations will be required to be covered in any formal submission and referred to the past ES prepared in relation to the application site.

2.3 Schedule 4 of the Town & Country Planning (EIA) (England and Wales) Regulations 1999 (as amended), sets out the information to be included in an ES. The Directive and Regulations requires that an ES should include at least the following information:
   - Description of the development, comprising information about the site and the design and size of the project;
   - Outline of the main alternatives considered and an indication of the main reasons for the chosen scheme;
   - Data necessary to identify and assess the main effects which the project is likely to have on the environment;
   - Description of the likely significant effects of the project on the environment;
   - Description of the measures envisaged in order to avoid, reduce or remedy any significant adverse effects;
   - Indication of any difficulties encountered in compiling the required information; and
   - Non-Technical Summary of the above information.

2.4 In order to ensure the above information is included in the ES the following structure will be adopted.

3.0 The Structure of the Environmental Statement

3.1 The assessment described in the ES will relate to the design of the scheme as it stands upon submission. The ES would be published in three volumes:
   - Volume 1: Non-Technical Summary
   - Volume 2: Environmental Statement to Main Report
   - Volume 3: Figures and Appendices to Main Report

3.2 A summary of the ES would be provided in Volume 1, the Non-Technical Summary. Using non-technical language, this will provide a summary of the proposed development, the main likely environmental effects, the proposed mitigation measures and the predicted residual effects of the proposed development.
3.3 Volume 2 would contain preliminary chapters and technical chapters for all issues addressed in the EIA. The following displays the structure of this volume.

Chapter 1 Introduction
Chapter 2 The EIA Process
Chapter 3 Planning Policy Context and Need for Development
Chapter 4 Site Context
Chapter 5 Project Description
Chapter 6 Ecology
Chapter 7 Water (Drainage, Flood Risk and Water Quality)
Chapter 8 Landscape, Townscape and Visual
Chapter 9 Archaeology and Cultural Heritage
Chapter 10 Traffic and Transport
Chapter 11 Noise and Vibration
Chapter 12 Air Quality
Chapter 13 Land Contamination
Chapter 14 Socio Economic & Community Assessment
Chapter 15 Cumulative Impacts
Chapter 16 Conclusion and Summary

4.0 Draft Scope of Technical Chapters

4.1 Chapter 3: Planning Policy Context and Need for Development

4.1.1 The South Sebastopol site has been identified for development in adopted development plans since the 1980s. A part of the application site was originally allocated for residential development for 500 dwellings in the South East Pontypool Local Plan which was adopted in 1984. A much larger site for 1200 units was allocated as a General Development Area (Policy S2/2) within the Torfaen County Borough Council Local Plan that was adopted in 2000. (The Local Plan forms part of the Development Plan for Torfaen, along with the Gwent Replacement Structure Plan, which will remain in force until the adoption of the Local Development Plan). A Development Framework for the site was adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance by Torfaen Council in 2004. The emerging Local Development Plan also allocates the site for a 1200 unit residential development under policy SAA6.

4.2 Chapter 4: Site Context

4.2.1 The site extends to 102.4 hectares and occupies sloping hillside on a mixture of pasture, hedgerows and woodland belts. The site is located between Cwmbran and Pontnewydd to the south, and Sebastapol to the north. To the west open countryside and a golf course rise steeply to the ridge line of Mynydd Twynglas, whilst to the east, is the route of the A4051 and undulating countryside.

4.2.2 The site is roughly square, sloping gently from Mynydd Twnglas in the west, to the Afon Llwyd Valley in the east. The site is divided roughly evenly into four by the Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal running north-south bisecting the site, and the large, mature woodland belt running east-west. The Canal is an important recreational and ecological resource, in particular as part of the Sustrans national cycle route runs along a section of the towpath.
4.2.3 South Sebastapol has a distinctly rural character with undulating land and landscape views. The site occupies a prominent location, being dominated by the mountain backdrop. The canal and towpath from Five Locks through to the bridge on Bevans Lane have been extensively restored and improvements made in recent years by Torfaen County Borough Council, the WDA and Gwent Land Reclamation.

4.3 Chapter 5: Project Description

4.3.1 The proposals will be the subject of an outline planning application, with the basic components included on a master plan with sufficient detail so as to facilitate the preparation of an Environment Impact Assessment.

4.3.2 The proposals will comprise predominantly residential uses but with a mix of public and commercial uses. The number of residential, public, commercial and other buildings will be stated, and the range, size and types of units described in the Environmental Statement. The location and size of other uses, such as open space, will also be shown on the master plan.

4.3.3 This scheme will be developed on predominantly greenfield land (i.e. land which has not sustained building development previously) which comprises mostly agricultural land with small pockets of woodland, a number of detached properties and the Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal, which bisects the centre of the site in a north to south direction.

4.3.4 The proposed development comprises up to 1200 dwellings, a village centre and playing fields.

4.4 Chapter 6: Ecology

4.4.1 Various ecological surveys of the site were undertaken in 2007 and these were updated and supplemented by a suite of habitat and protected species investigations completed by RSK Carter in 2010. These 2010 surveys formed the baseline of the refreshed outline planning application submission and EIA of January 2011. The 2010 survey baseline comprised Extended Phase I, National Vegetation Classification (NVC) of selected grasslands, badger, otter, common reptile, breeding bird and terrestrial/aquatic invertebrate surveys. Investigations of the canal and stream watercourses for White-Clawed Crayfish and emergence/activity surveys for bats were also undertaken.

4.4.2 In order to inform the appeal and now the new outline application, the 2010 baseline surveys were all updated between June & September 2012 by Soltys Brewster Ecology. The surveys in 2012 were designed so as to update rather than repeat the 2010 baseline. For the purposes of the proposed application, the ecological baseline has been informed by 2012 surveys but with clear reference to the work in 2010. This approach was considered appropriate as the nature and scale of the development remains broadly comparable between the 2011 application and the current development proposal – i.e. residential development of circa 1200 Units within a strategic landscape framework. The scope of the 2010 baseline surveys was agreed with Torfaen CBC and Countryside Council for Wales\(^1\) and the updates undertaken in 2012 were discussed with the ecologist at Torfaen CBC prior to commencement.

\(^{1}\) Natural Resources Wales from 01 April 2013
4.4.3 **Ecological Surveys**

The Ecological Surveys undertaken at the site (2010 & 2012) comprised the following – the results of which will be used to inform the EIA for the new planning application in 2013.

4.4.4 **Birds**

Breeding bird survey methodology is based on a jointly devised methodology (BTO, RSPB, JNCC). Three survey visits are carried out between March and June. Each visit begins no earlier than one hour after sunrise to coincide with the period of peak bird activity. All birds seen or heard are recorded onto field maps along with notes of behaviour that may indicate breeding activity. Survey results are assessed against the European ornithological atlas committee’s criteria for classification of breeding bird status.

4.4.5 **Surveys in 2010** were undertaken by RSK in April, May and June. The 2012 surveys completed by Soltys Brewster adopted a comparable survey methodology based on walked transects across the site by a team of 3 surveyors. Two surveys visits were completed in, June & July 2012.

4.4.6 **Great Crested Newt**

The requirement to undertake surveys for Great Crested Newt was ‘scoped out’ of the 2011 EIA through consultation with Torfaen CBC and CCW. In the absence of any new desk study records or identification of new habitat features (i.e. ponds) at the site, no requirement to survey for this species in 2012 was identified. It is therefore not proposed to undertake any further survey work or to assess the impact on Great Crested Newts as part of this latest ES.

4.4.7 **Dormice**

As described for Great Crested Newt, surveys for Dormice were ‘scoped out’ of the 2011 EIA. In the absence of new desk study records, no requirement to update these surveys in 2012 was identified. Again it is not proposed to assess the impact on Dormice as part of this latest ES.

4.4.8 **Badgers**

A walk-over survey to record evidence of Badger activity and determine the status of existing setts at the site was completed by RSK in 2010 and by Soltys Brewster in 2012. For the purposes of the EIA in 2013, the 2012 survey data – particularly as regards sett status – are considered the most relevant.

4.4.9 **Reptiles**

Small numbers of Common reptiles (Slow Worm and Grass Snake) were identified in selected parts of the site (mainly along the northern boundary) during surveys in 2010. Update surveys in 2012 did not identify any additional reptile records and the presence of small numbers/low population of both these species is likely to persist within potentially suitable habitat across the site. For the purposes of the EIA in 2013, the 2010 survey data are considered of most relevance and the continued presence of reptiles would be assumed.

4.4.10 **White Clawed Crayfish**

Surveys in both 2010 and 2012 identified the presence of this species along Stream 6 (Lower) in the eastern part of the site. The 2012 surveys additionally identified smaller numbers within Stream 1 (Lower) in the north eastern part of the site. No evidence of Crayfish was recorded in streams to the west of the Canal or in the Canal itself during the 2010 and 2012 surveys. No further survey is required to inform the 2013 EIA, with the presence of this species identified in 2 no. streams.
4.4.11 **Otters and Water Voles**
The requirement to undertake surveys for Water Vole was ‘scoped out’ of the 2011 EIA through consultation with Torfaen CBC and CCW. In the absence of any new desk study records or identification of new habitat features at the site, no requirement to survey for this species in 2012 was identified. It is therefore not proposed to undertake any further survey work or to assess the impact on Water Voles as part of this latest ES.

4.4.12 As described for Badgers, the walk-over habitat surveys in 2010 & 2012 incorporated a search for any evidence of Otters along the Canal corridor and riparian woodland corridors across the site. Surveys in 2012 did not identify any evidence of use by Otter although this may have been attributable to the well-documented heavy rainfall over summer 2012. Surveys in 2010 identified evidence of use by Otter along the Canal and on 3 of the stream corridors across the site. For the purposes of the 2013 EIA, no additional survey work would be undertaken but the continued occasional/irregular use of these features by Otters would be assumed and the assessment of likely impacts/mitigation considered on this basis.

4.4.13 **Terrestrial Invertebrates**
Terrestrial and aquatic invertebrate surveys were undertaken in 2010 and repeated (with the exception of the Golf Course land to the west) in 2012. Survey scope and coverage was comparable and the same specialist surveyor undertook the work in both 2010 and 2012. Accordingly, the baseline information for the 2013 EIA would be informed by the results of these works and no further survey is proposed.

4.4.14 **Bats**
Surveys in 2010 and 2012 both incorporated walked activity transects across the development site as well as emergence/re-entry surveys at The Hay Barn and Canal Tunnel – both these features having been identified as roosts in 2010. Survey in 2012 confirmed this status. Transect routes adopted for the activity surveys in 2010 were replicated in the 2012 surveys albeit with some minor amendments in the west of the site to take account of the revised land ownership/application boundary.

4.4.15 As described for other species, the baseline to inform the 2013 EIA would comprise information gathered during 2010 and 2012 – results from both sets of surveys were broadly comparable in terms of the number of species and pattern of bat activity across the site, with the Canal corridor and associated woodland edge identified as the main focus of bat activity. The Hay Barn was identified as a non-breeding roost used by Common Pipistrelle bats with the Canal Tunnel used by roosting Soprano Pipistrelle and Daubenton’s bats.

4.4.16 **Phase 1 Extended Habitat Survey & NVC Botanical Surveys**
Survey work to update the Phase I Habitat survey and the NVC appraisal of species-rich grassland communities at the site was completed in July 2012. As stated in previous sections of the Scoping document, the intention was to validate and update the nature and extent of habitat distribution/coverage within the survey area rather than produce a separate map of ecological features. Where habitats or ecological features had changed since 2010 – for example increase extent of Japanese Knotweed or Himalayan Balsam - these were noted as part of the July 2012 survey. Similarly, NVC sampling using quadrats was undertaken for those grassland communities identified in 2010 as particularly diverse so as to confirm their status and provide information relating to future management.
4.4.17 For the purposes of the 2013 EIA, the Phase I Habitat mapping of 2010 is still considered relevant for the most part with minor amendments as indicated above to address changes in the distribution and extent of habitats or ecological features.

4.5 Chapter 7: Water (Drainage, Flood Risk and Water Quality)

4.5.1 Surface Water Drainage Strategy
The existing site is predominantly agricultural pasture land, which is drained in a southerly direction via a number of drainage ditches / watercourses. The source of the majority of these watercourses is on the higher ground to the north east of the Site.

4.5.2 The Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal bisects the centre of the site in a north/south direction. The aforementioned streamcourses either discharge into the canal, or serve as an overflow for the canal or are culverted beneath the canal.

4.5.3 The preferred method of surface water disposal is through the use of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems, such as soakaways. In this case Waterman would review the potential feasibility of these systems using the available Site Investigation information.

4.5.4 It is envisaged however that all surface water runoff from the proposed site will be discharged into the streams/canal running through the Site, but in order to do this the hydrological status quo of the existing site will need to be defined. Waterman will therefore need to identify the existing catchments within the site and their respective points of discharge to each watercourse. The local catchments areas within the Site will be defined using the topographical survey and then a hydrological analysis would allow us to define the runoff from each catchment.

4.5.5 The current rates and points of discharge for the existing site runoff would be maintained as part of the development proposals, and any increased runoff as a result of the proposals would be attenuated within suitable facilities. It is not envisaged that any calculations relating to attenuation storage will be required at this stage, however it is key that the hydrological status quo is maintained such that third parties downstream of the development site are not adversely affected.

4.5.6 Maintaining the status quo, both in terms of rate/volume and quality of runoff, will be particularly important for the drainage catchments that are associated with the canal and wetland habitat.

4.5.7 The discharge of surface water runoff to the public sewerage system is unlikely to be the most appropriate and economical solution, however the feasibility and potential costs will be discussed with DCWW.

4.5.8 A visual condition survey of the off-site culverts would be carried out along with an assessment of their potential for blockage. It is not envisaged that a CCTV survey of the culverts will be required.

4.5.9 A hydraulic model of the existing network of streams will be carried out as part of the Flood Risk/Hydrological/Hydro-geological Assessment required by the EIA. The Flood Risk Assessment would highlight any potential for out-of-bank flood flow generated by an extreme rainfall event on the upstream catchment and as such provide constraints for the proposed development in terms of flood risk.
4.5.10 **Foul Water Drainage Strategy**

There is currently no foul water drainage system on the site which could accommodate foul discharges from the proposed development.

4.5.11 The previous drainage strategy proposed a solution which involved an off-site connection to the Eastern Valleys Trunk Sewer. Dwr Cymru Welsh Water have since undertaken a feasibility assessment for the potential discharge of part of the site’s foul flows to a sewer in the north-eastern corner of the site. The EIA will establish the most appropriate and cost effective method of disposal of foul drainage emanating from the development.

4.5.12 **Proposed Scope of Work:**

It is intended to examine alternative options involving a combination of pumped and gravity solutions which would deliver the foul sewage to the Trunk Sewer in the most appropriate manner. Careful consideration will be given to the routes of the gravity sewers and rising mains to minimise ecological impact.

4.5.13 Liaison with Dwr Cymru Welsh Water will also be necessary to establish the final solution.

4.6 **Chapter 8: Landscape, Townscape and Visual**

4.6.1 Soltys Brewster Consulting, the company that will undertake the assessment for this chapter, is a Landscape Institute Registered Practice and Member of IEMA. All LVIA work prepared by the practice is undertaken by experienced Chartered Landscape Architects in accordance with latest published guidance. Assessment would be undertaken in accordance with ‘Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment’ 3rd edition as published by the Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (GLVIA3 - April 2013). Other relevant guidance drawn on within the LVIA methodology would include:


4.6.2 Desk Study to include consideration of Landscape Designations, CCW LANDMAP Landscape Level 3 Classification and Evaluation for all five Aspect Layers; Cultural, Geological, Habitats, Historic and Visual and Sensory within a 3km radius study area. Use of digital terrain modelling and aerial photography to analyse landform and land use pattern and potential zones of visual effect, and to inform viewpoint selection. Consideration of public access/PROW and planning policy pertinent to landscape and visual issues. Map based collation of data to inform field assessment.

4.6.3 Fieldwork to review and record site context and character, validate desk based mapping and to refine the visual envelope. Confirmation of visibility from publicly accessible locations and verification of key view areas and specific viewpoint locations for consultation purposes. Viewpoints to comprise views both within and outside the site, including views from the canal towpath.
4.6.4 Site walkover to confirm land use and landscape features including woodland, hedgerows, site boundaries, public access, stream valleys and canal corridor.

4.6.5 Preparation of a strategic landscape plan, cross sections and other illustrative material in collaboration with the site masterplan designers and project ecologist to illustrate existing woodland, grassland, watercourses and hedgerows retained, proposed planting and grassland. To include illustrative species lists and mitigation objectives.

4.6.6 Consultation with the Local Planning Authority and Natural Resources Wales to obtain written approval of LVIA methodology, the number and location of viewpoints and the strategic landscape plan/mitigation objectives. Modifications to scope as required following consultation.

4.6.7 Preparation of a baseline landscape and visual report including written description of landscape context and character and visual context, with illustrative plans and images. Baseline report to be provided to other EIA specialists to inform individual assessments.

4.6.8 Viewpoint photography from confirmed viewpoint locations following approval of viewpoint coordinates and extents by the LPA and NRW. To include selected winter viewpoints.

4.6.9 Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment of scheme proposals for both construction and operational phases based on a 10 year phased construction period (years 5, 8 and 10), and a 10 year post completion design year (year 20). To include the assessment of landscape effects within identified character areas (based on LANDMAP Aspect Areas) and the assessment of visual effects within individual view areas, as illustrated by the approved viewpoints. Sequential Visual Assessment from key publicly accessible routes including the canal towpath and selected public footpaths through the site.

4.6.10 Preparation of illustrative viewpoint photographs annotated as appropriate to show site extents, key features and points of reference.

4.6.11 Reporting and presentation of effects within an LVIA Report (ES Appendix) and in summary within an ES chapter.

4.7 Chapter 9: Archaeology and Cultural Heritage

4.7.1 In relation to archaeology and cultural heritage, Waterman have completed a number of projects in the vicinity, having advised Newport Gwent Dragons on the redevelopment of their ground and have also completed desk based assessments and ES chapters, together with management of fieldwork in Swansea, Newport, Cardiff and Caldicot. The previous desk based assessment and ES chapter for Sebastopol were also undertaken by Waterman. Waterman has a good relationship with the Glamorgan-Gwent, Archaeology Trust (GGAT) who is advisor to the LPA.

4.7.2 Waterman would consult the Historic Environmental Record (HER) held by GGAT for any new information relating to the site and its study area. A site walk over has already been undertaken and as there have been no significant changes in the area it is not considered necessary to repeat this. Waterman would undertake a data search and would rely on historic maps previously obtained from the Glamorgan Record Office and consider previously obtained aerial photographs for the site held by the Welsh Assembly Office. It is
assumed that a visit the Glamorgan-Gwent Sites and Monuments Record in Swansea would not be required.

4.7.3 It is not expected that there would be a requirement for further pre-determination evaluation, but it is foreseen that based on previous research some elements of the site will need to be the subject of evaluation / recordings.

4.8 Chapter 10: Traffic and Transport

4.8.1 The existing site comprises mostly agricultural land with small pockets of woodland, a number of detached properties and the Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal, which bisects the centre of the site in a north to south direction.

4.8.2 The proposed development comprises up to 1200 dwellings, retail centre and playing fields together with associated highways and landscaping work.

4.8.3 A TA for the original scheme was prepared by PFA using base information from 2001.

4.8.4 Changes have also been made to the transport network locally since its drafting such as the granting of planning permission for the former Panteg Steelworks Site.

4.8.5 Transport Assessment

The Transport Assessment (TA) and associated Travel Plan/Transport Implementation Strategy, which will be scoped with Torfaen CBC prior to its undertaking, will be compiled in accordance with the recommendations of the following documents:

- National Transport Plan, 2009
- ‘Smarter Choices – Changing the Way We Travel’, DfT, 2004

4.8.6 Discussions with Torfaen CBC and Waterman’s knowledge of the local highway network have allowed us to develop the following preliminary scope of assessment.

4.8.7 The previous TA (dated 2001) uses traffic survey information that was collected in January 2001 and a gravity model of the likely origin/destination of vehicular traffic from the proposed development, which was carried out in 1999. Twenty junctions were identified as being relevant to any assessment of the impact of the development on the surrounding highway network. For the purposes of this scoping opinion Waterman have assumed that the original gravity model and the number of junctions to be assessed remain appropriate.

4.8.8 The assessment of these junctions was carried out at the AM and PM peaks using the Department of Transport’s capacity criteria, which is identified in TA 79/99 and TA 46/97. The TRL software suite (ARCADY, OSCADY and PICADY) was then used to confirm the
capacity of the 4no. proposed access points to the Site. Following the comments of the Trunk Road Authority, an addendum to the TA was produced that included an analysis of the A4042/A4051 junction.

4.8.9 A revised TA was submitted in 2011 in support of the previous planning application (application number 01/P/05525) which adopted a similar approach to the TA produced in 2001. The scope of the 2011 TA was also agreed in advance with Torfaen CBC and the South Wales Trunk Road Agency (SWTRA).

4.8.10 A further iteration of the TA was submitted in support of the scheme in November 2012. The TA was updated to provide further information to address reasons for refusal provided by Torfaen CBC, in connection with the application, which specifically focussed on the traffic impact of the scheme. The traffic analysis within this TA included details of assessments undertaken using PARAMICS microsimulation software of the following junctions:

1. Rechem roundabout;
2. Avondale roundabout;
3. Cwmbran roundabout;
4. A4042 / Tre-Herbert Road roundabout;
5. A4051 / insulation factory junction (left-in/left-out);
6. Edlogan Way / Chapel Lane roundabout;
7. Heol Yr Glyn / Pontrhydyrun Road traffic signals; and,
8. Pontrhydyrun Road / Avondale Dr / Brook St priority junction.
9. The Site Access junctions on Lowlands Crescent, Cwmbran Drive

4.8.11 The assessment results from this model were reviewed and mitigation measures were recommended to address any transportation issues. The model was reviewed and agreed in December 2012, and in this case it is proposed to use the base and future year models to assess the impact of the currently proposed application.

4.8.12 This application proposes an access at Lowlands Crescent will be available possibly for buses but for no other vehicular traffic. On this basis, the PARAMICS model be updated to account for the closure of this access. A revised TA will also be produced which will review the impact of the reassignment of traffic from this access and will propose changes to the original mitigation measures should these be required.

4.8.13 This application also proposes the possibility that the bus access on Oaklands Road be removed so that this access will just be used by pedestrians and cyclists. The TA will therefore review the accessibility of the site with these changes in place.

4.8.14 In addition to the above it is also proposed that the sustainable transport access and travel plan arrangements be reviewed to take account in any significant changes in layout or policy since the previous submission.

4.9 Chapter 11: Noise and Vibration

4.9.1 To enable the production of a Noise Assessment in support of the planning application, Waterman will undertake the following:

- A review of noise monitoring data carried out in support of the previous application to establish the NEC Category in accordance with TAN 11
- Assessment of the noise effects of the proposed development and consideration of mitigation measures that could be incorporated into the scheme.
• Liaise with the Torfaen CBC to agree a suitable methodology for this assessment using relevant guidance including TAN 11 Planning and Noise, Guidelines for Community Noise and the Department of Transport Calculation of Road Traffic Noise (CRTN).
• Construct a noise model using the computer model, which relies on the principles set out in the CRTN procedure. The methodology for the noise assessment will comprise of:
  • Construction and calibration of the noise map model to represent the proposed network and predicted noise effects. Analysis to be undertaken for Do Minimum and Do Scheme scenarios in the opening year and design year (fifteen years after opening).
  • Analysis of impacts of scheme over existing and consideration of mitigation measures.
  • Upon completion of the noise map model, an assessment will be made of the predicted noise and noise nuisance changes at relevant locations.

4.9.2 Waterman will set out the results of the assessment in a technical report, and present constraints to the development. Outline mitigation measures will be proposed to reduce the impact of noise, where impacts are identified. These may include recommendations for an acoustic fence, specific site layout orientations or specific building fabric components.

4.9.3 The report will be produced in a form of an ES chapter, which will identify predicted air quality/noise levels at sensitive receptors with and without the Development.

4.10 Chapter 12: Air Quality

4.10.1 Wales enjoys good Air quality and concentrations of most air quality pollutants in Torfaen are low.

4.10.2 Waterman would propose to review and update the Air Quality Chapter in the light of the main potential sources of air quality in the vicinity of the Site. This will encompass a review of stack emissions from the previously identified five plants located within 1km from the Site and an assessment of vehicle emissions associated with the proposed development on the local amenity.

4.11.3 Waterman would carry out a Stage 2 assessment using the Local Screening Method identified in the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB). This assessment would provide estimates of pollutant concentrations at the properties most likely to be affected by the scheme along the A 4051 and would provide a quantitative and qualitative input into the Appraisal Summary Table. Pollutant concentrations will be calculated for the base year, opening year and assessment year (15 years after the opening year) for nitrogen dioxide (NO\(_2\)) and particulate matter (PM\(_{10}\)).

4.11.4 The detailed methodology for this will be discussed and agreed with the Torfaen CBC prior to commencing work. Torfaen CBC has not declared an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) in the County and therefore a screening assessment based on a DMRB methodology should be adequate.

4.11.5 Review of the climatic conditions in Torfaen and re-evaluation of stack emissions from factories in the vicinity of the Site.
4.11.6 Review of current and predicted traffic flows (AADTF), mainly on A4051 for use within the air quality model.

4.11.7 Identification of potential sensitive receptors, i.e. people that could be affected by deterioration or improvement in air quality as a result of the development, this will be initially undertaken by a review of OS mapping followed by a site visit to confirm the appropriateness of the receptors.

4.11.8 Collation of all current available information regarding air quality in Torfaen and the results of the continuous monitoring data and the latest Torfaen CBC Air Quality Review and Assessment.

4.11.9 Liaison with Torfaen Council Pollution Control Team to agree the proposed Air Quality methodology using the Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Technical Guidance TG09 and incorporate the methodology used by the Torfaen Council within their review and assessment procedure.

4.11.10 Assessment of the impacts of the proposed scheme in relation to the concentrations of Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂) and Particulates (PM₁₀) on a number of receptors (to be determined). The assessment of the impact of the proposed Development at South Sebastopol will be in the following parts:
   - The current air quality (baseline scenario)
   - The predicted air quality in the locality in the opening year with and without the Development
   - The predicted air quality in the locality in the assessment year, (15 years after opening -to be agreed with the EHO) with and without the Development
   - Assessment of impacts and recommendation of mitigation measures if appropriate.
   - Production of an air quality chapter for inclusion in the Environmental Impact Assessment, in accordance with a template supplied by Environmental Statement (ES) coordinator.

4.11.11 The report will be produced in a form of an ES chapter, which will identify predicted air quality/noise levels at sensitive receptors with and without the Development.

4.11.12 The following Information is required to undertake the above Air Quality Assessment:
   - Digital Ordnance Survey plans indicating the vicinity of the site and the proposed development (area has to cover the traffic scheme constructed by traffic consultant) in dwg and bitmap format
   - Annual average daily traffic flow figures AADT (7 day, 24-hr periods) and % HGVs (baseline, opening year, 2010 and assessment year (15 years after opening year));
   - 18-hour traffic Flows (7 days, 18-hr periods) and % HGVs for baseline, opening year and 15 years after opening year.
   - Annual average traffic speed data for all above years;
   - Identification of ground cover between the receptors and roads
   - Topographical information (spot heights) to form ground contour including any existing noise barriers (berms, solid fences, other houses) which would affect noise distribution, bedroom windows heights;
4.12 Chapter 13: Land Contamination

4.12.1 The existing site comprises mostly agricultural land with small pockets of woodland, a number of detached properties and the Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal, which bisects the centre of the site in a north to south direction.

4.12.2 The proposed development comprises up to 1200 dwellings, retail centre and playing fields together with associated highways and landscaping work.

4.12.3 The previous ES included a Chapter on land contamination and remediation strategy. The Chapter essentially assessed the previous work carried out by Integral Geotechnique (IG) who was initially appointed to undertake an investigation of the site and to prepare a Report including a section on Remediation Strategy.

4.12.4 The Contamination Risk Assessment dated 2004 prepared by PBA will be updated

4.12.5 An updated report is also required in order to update the EIA

4.12.6 The scope of service is to include:
- The drafting of a revised scheme of investigation for the site and submit to the LPA/EA for approval
- The investigation and recording of previously identified contamination
- The detailed proposals for the remediation/decontamination as approved by the LPA/EA

4.12.7 There are a large number of investigation reports for the site which have already addressed most of the issues raised. The overall risk has been assessed as low and very low and whilst it is acknowledged that the environmental guidelines have changed there will be a need to revisit the data and update, reappraise or supplement the information to support an up to date risk assessment, it is highly unlikely that the general impact of the known areas of made ground will be significantly different.

4.12.8 It is our opinion there is probably sufficient data to enable the review to be undertaken. Should specific issues arise or, if during walk over surveys further areas of made ground are encountered, then Waterman would advise as to the scope and extent of any further works required.

4.12.9 Furthermore it is considered likely that no further investigatory works will be required until such times that layouts are developed and the potential interaction of the known made ground areas can be further assessed. At this time detailed remediation or, more correctly, site preparation requirements can be defined.

4.12.10 A detailed walk over of the site area will be undertaken by an Engineer experienced in geology, geotechnics and environmental matters, where access permits, in order to understand some of the physical constraints and surface signs of historic activity and contamination.

4.12.11 One of the outputs of the desk study will be an initial conceptual model to satisfy the current best practice (BS10175: 2001) that will form the basis of the design of future intrusive investigations works.
4.12.12 The main thrust of this stage of the work is to gather all the relevant data for site appraisal. Some of this lies with the Client, some statutory bodies and other archives including our own.

4.12.13 The aim of the desk study review of available information is to prepare an overview of likely geotechnical and geo-environmental constraints to development covering environmental contamination aspects of the site, any reclamation requirements, and any physical constraints including landslips, hydrogeological and hydrological factors.

4.12.14 Review the proposed schemes and provide an assessment of the current conditions and potential impacts. Waterman will then derive an assessment of the potential mitigation measures that will be likely for the scheme.

4.12.15 Prepare an updated conceptual model to satisfy the current best practice (BS and CLR11) and to form the basis of a Preliminary Contamination Risk Assessment in accordance with the WAGEAW guidelines, and, in the context of the proposed development, provide a review of the issues relating to ground and groundwater contamination, any geotechnical considerations, and the likelihood of the need for any remediation work.

4.12.18 All works will be carried out in accordance with current guidelines and best practice including:
- BS 10175 (2001) Investigation of potentially contaminated land
- Code of Practice DEFRA CLR 11 Model Procedures for the Management of Land Contamination Environment Agency
- NHBC Publication 56 Guidance for the site development of housing on land affected by contamination
- Code of Practice Site investigations

4.13 **Chapter 14: Socio Economic & Community Assessment**

4.13.1 Cwmbran and Pontypool, along with Blaenavon, are the principal settlements in the County Borough of Torfaen. The Unitary Authority of Torfaen has a population of 90,949.

4.13.2 The role of Cwmbran as a new town has meant that Torfaen’s population increased rapidly during the 1950’s and 60’s. However, continuing population decline from the north and a reduced growth in Cwmbran from the 1970’s onwards at approximately 90,000.

4.13.3 The northern and mid-areas of Torfaen comprise communities historically formed around the iron and coal industries. Whilst historically independent, de-industrialisation and associated depopulation means increasingly there has been a need for employment and services to be accessed outside these areas. Cwmbran, occupying a shallower section of the valley, has met a large proportion of the new employment growth in Torfaen.

4.13.4 The specific socio-economic characteristics of the area include:
- Limited projected change in population based on current trends
- Need for new homes
- Inflated house prices relative to income
- Aging housing stock
- Affordable Housing need
- Health inequality
- High level of out-commuting for employment
The Environmental Statement will have due regard these and any other identified characteristics and will identify any potential impact that the development may have on these characteristics and vice versa.

5.0 Construction Programme

5.1 The EIA will provide information on the intended construction programme and the methods of working in so far as they will have potential environmental effects. This will facilitate an assessment of the construction impacts, including those arising from construction access and construction methods.

5.2 In particular, given the environmental sensitivity of the Site area the methods of construction will be very important, and their effect on hydrology, water quality, transportation, ecology, landscape and archaeology and cultural heritage, etc will be assessed within the specialist sections of the report.

5.3 The volumes and sources of materials imported and exported to the site will be estimated, the methods and routes described and their impacts assessed.

5.4 The risk of pollution incidents will be assessed, and an avoidance and mitigation strategy developed.

6.0 The Consultant Team

6.1 The EIA will be managed by Asbri Planning Ltd, with the assistance and guidance of the Development Team consultants who will feed into the EIA process producing individual assessments which will be incorporated into the ES and form the basis of the assessment process. The development team are:

- Soltys Brewster
- Watermans
- The Conservation Studio
- PAD Design

7.0 Conclusion

7.1 We note that, in accordance with Regulation 10(5), your Authority has five weeks in which to adopt the scoping opinion.

7.2 I trust the above level of initial information is sufficient in accordance with Regulation 10(2) for you to provide a detailed “scoping opinion” and I would be grateful if the above could be undertaken as soon as is practically possible in order that I may progress the required studies.

7.3 Should you require any further information please do not hesitate to contact me directly to discuss the matter further.
Yours sincerely,

Jon Wilks
Associate
Asbri Planning Ltd