



Broad Street Mall Masterplan

Environmental Impact Assessment

Volume 1: Environmental Statement

Prepared for:
Inception (Reading) Sarl (c/o Moorgarth Group Ltd)

Date:
November 2019

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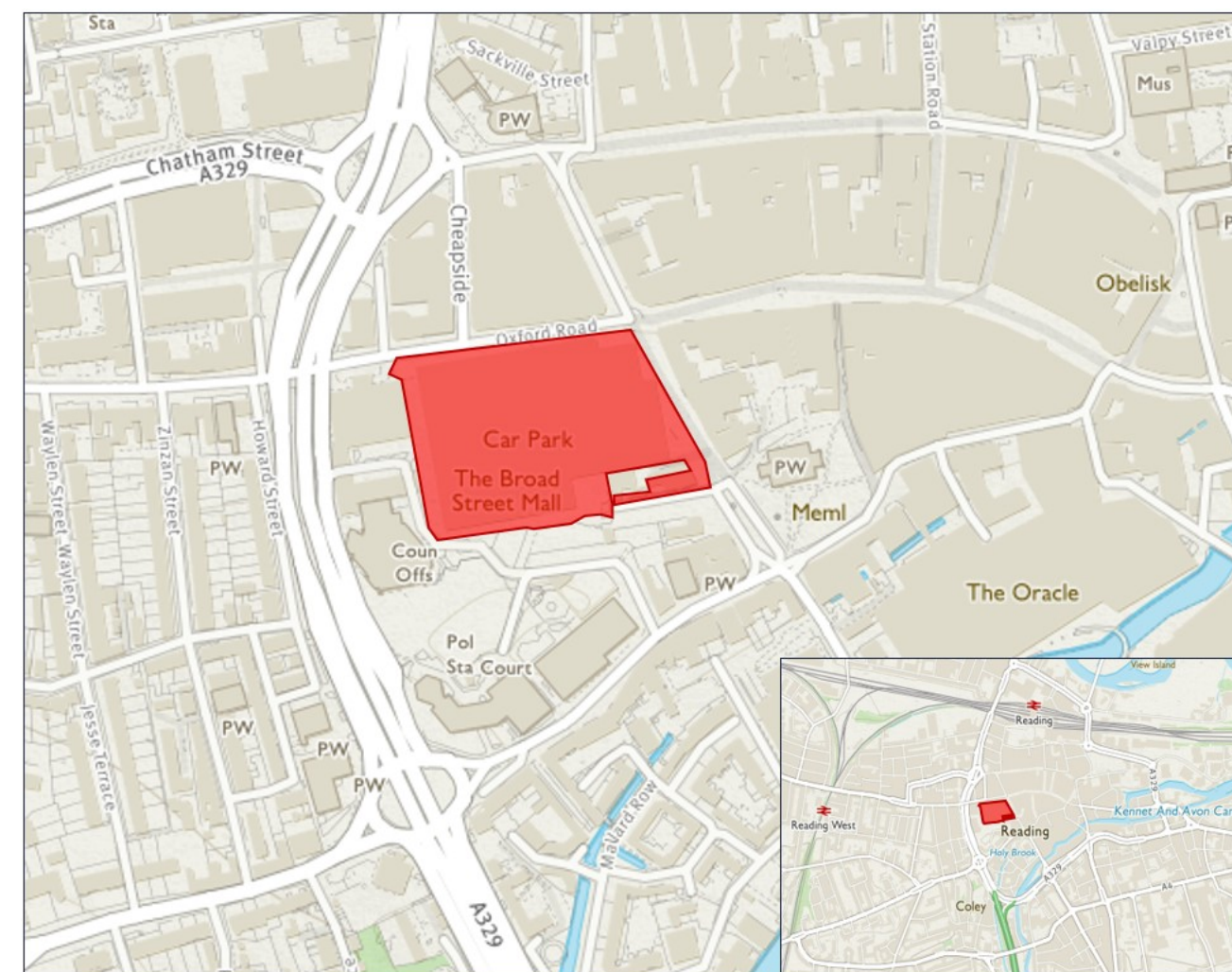
Chapter 1: Introduction

INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Environmental Statement (ES) has been prepared on behalf of Inception (Reading) Sarl (c/o Moorgarth Group Ltd) (hereinafter referred to as the 'Applicant') in accordance with the statutory procedures set out in the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017¹ ('the EIA Regulations').
- 1.2 The Applicant initially submitted an application for full (detailed) planning permission in December 2018 (application reference: 182137) for the proposed redevelopment of an area of land (comprising the existing Broad Street Mall) which is bordered to the north by Oxford Road, to the east by St Mary's Butts, to the south Dusseldorf Way and Hosier Street, and to the west by Queen's Walk. The area described is hereafter referred to as the 'site'.
- 1.3 Since the initial submission of the application in December 2018, the initial scheme submitted has undergone revisions to elements of the design of the built form and the quantum proposed, in response to the consultation comments received from statutory consultees and from meetings with Reading Borough Council (RBC) and Design South East (further details presented in **ES Volume 1: Chapter 3 – Alternatives and Design Evolution**). This ES therefore replaces the initial documents prepared in support of the scheme details submitted in December 2018, which has been prepared to reflect the amended scheme now described as the 'Proposed Development' (further details of the redevelopment of the site is presented within **ES Volume 1: Chapter 4 - Proposed Development**).
- 1.4 The site covers a total area of approximately 2.42 hectares (ha) and falls within the administrative boundary of the Reading Borough Council (RBC), and within the Abbey Ward. The location of the site (outlined in red) is shown in Figure 1.1.
- 1.5 The redevelopment of the site comprises the construction of three residential buildings (Use Class C3) ranging in height from 5 to 22 storeys (Site A to provide 164 units, Site B to provide 134 Units, and Site E to provide 50 units) above Broad Street Mall and provision of a podium level amenity area; Construction of a 16 storey building on South Court comprising ground and first floor retail (Use Class A1/A3/A4) and residential over upper floors (Use Class C3, Site C to provide 98 units); Creation of two ground floor retail units (Use Class A1/A3/A4) fronting Dusseldorf Way and one ground floor retail unit (Use Class A1/A2/A3) fronting Queens Walk; All necessary enabling and alteration works required within the existing Broad Street Mall basement, ground and upper floors; Associated car park alterations, provision of servicing and refuse storage, cycle parking, public realm, landscape, and other associated works.
- 1.6 The Proposed Development is to comprise a total uplift of circa 30,000 m² gross internal floorspace (GIA) and up to 446 residential units (of a range of unit sizes and tenures), which is comprised of the following elements:
- Block A: 22 storey (on top of the existing mall) development providing up to 164 residential units;
 - Block B: 18 storey (on top of the existing mall) development providing up to 134 residential units;
 - Block C: 16 storey (on top of the existing mall) development providing up to 98 residential units; and
 - Block E: 5 storey (on top of existing mall) development providing 50 residential units.
- 1.7 Further details of the redevelopment of the site is presented within **ES Volume 1: Chapter 4 - Proposed Development**.
- 1.8 Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is a process carried out which examines the available environmental information to ensure that the likely significant environmental effects of certain projects are identified and assessed before a decision is taken on whether a project is granted planning permission. This means environmental issues can be identified at an early stage and projects can then be designed to avoid or to minimise significant adverse environmental effects, and appropriate mitigation and monitoring can be implemented.
- 1.9 The Applicant recognises that the Proposed Development has the potential to give rise to significant effects on the environment. The Applicant has therefore undertaken an EIA for the Proposed Development.
- 1.10 In accordance with the EIA Regulations, this ES reports on the likely significant effects of the Proposed Development. The ES describes the likely significant environmental and socio-economic effects of the Proposed Development during demolition, construction and on subsequent completion and occupation. The ES is designed to inform readers of the nature of the scheme proposed, the likely significant environmental and socio-economic effects and the measures proposed to protect the environment.

¹ Her Majesty's Stationery Office (2017); The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017

Figure 1.1 Site Location (red) and Surrounding Context



SITE INFORMATION

- 1.11 The following section presents an overview in terms of the key features and designations associated with the site and surrounding environmental context. Further detail describing the existing baseline context is presented within **ES Volume 1: Chapters 6 - 10**, as well as the supporting environmental reports presented within **ES Volume 3**.

Site Context

- 1.12 The site is currently occupied by a shopping centre, Broad Street Mall, comprising retail units and public realm, with a car park to the west and on the roof of the shopping centre. The car park comprises 700 car-parking spaces spread across three floors. The car park is present within the western part of site for the first and podium floors and is present across the whole of the site on the second floor. The car park is a 24-hour car park, open seven days a week. Access to the site is gained from the west, via A329, through the basement.
- 1.13 The retail shopping mall covers the whole site, and is arranged over basement level, ground floor and one upper floor. The basement level extends underneath the site and includes numerous plant rooms, the main waste storage area and numerous storage rooms associated with the retail units.
- 1.14 Office space is contained within Fountain House and Quadrant House. Fountain House sits in the north-western corner of site along Queens Walk and is eight storeys in height (on top of the retail elements i.e. 11 storeys in total) and has recently been refurbished. Quadrant House is located along the eastern boundary, along St Mary's Butts, and is currently vacant office space (four storeys).

- 1.15 The application red line boundary for the site is shown in Figure 1.2.
- 1.16 Key features and designations associated with the site are presented in Table 1.1.

Figure 1.2 Application Red Line Boundary Plan

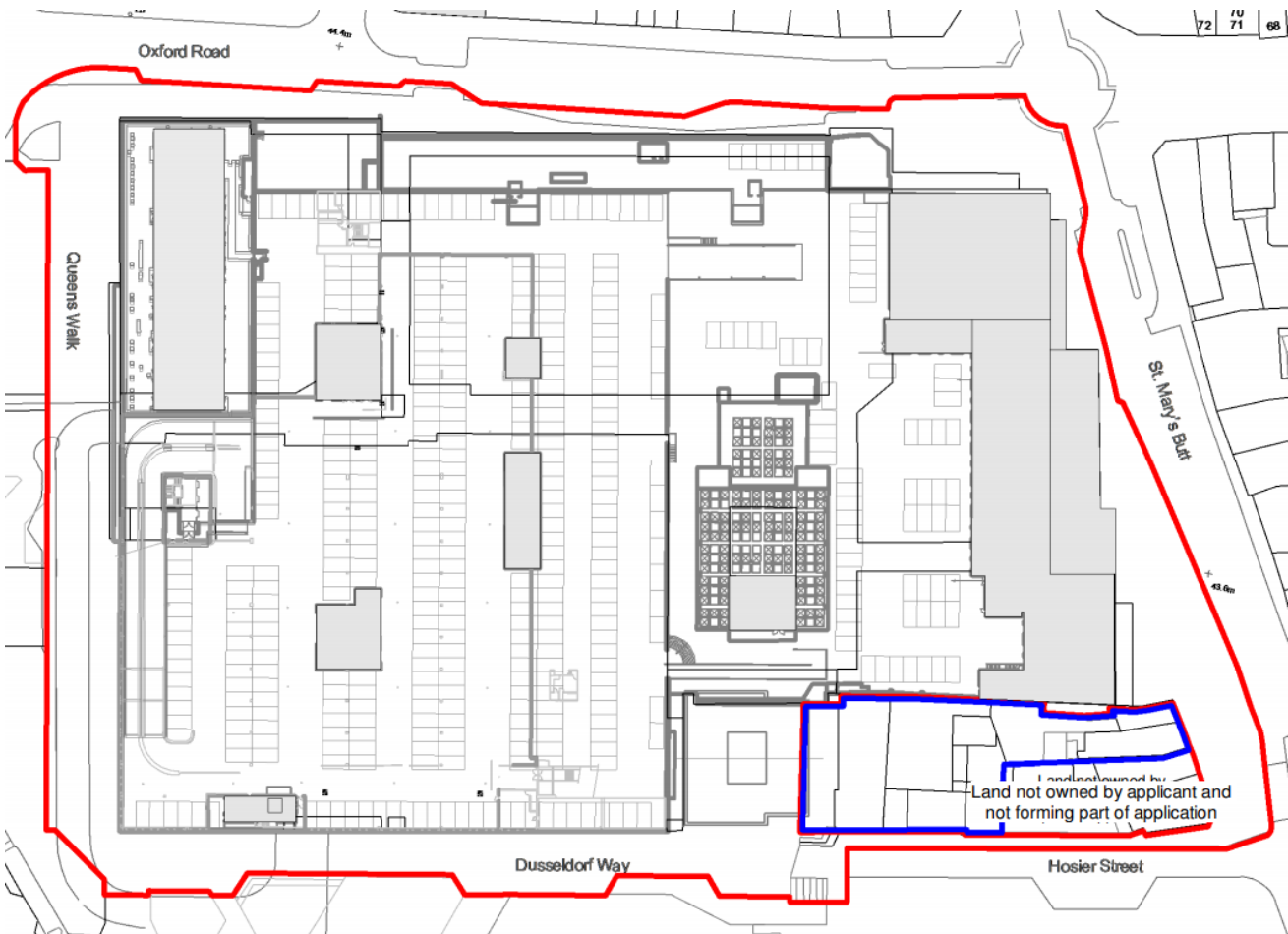


Table 1.1 Outline of Key Features and Designations

Environmental Topic	Key features and designations
Traffic and Transport	The car park comprises 700 car parking spaces spread across three floors (first and podium floors, and is present across the whole of the site on the second floor). The car park is a 24-hour car park, open seven days a week.
Air Quality	The site is located within an AQMA (whole of the Reading town centre has been designated on the basis of exceedances of the annual mean objective for concentrations of nitrogen dioxide (NO₂)).
Water	- The site is located within the Flood Zone ¹² (regarded as a low probability of flooding, according to the EA Flood Map); - The site is not at risk of surface water flooding; - The site is not located within a Nitrate Vulnerable Zone (NVZ)³; - The site lies within a Drinking Water Safeguard Zone (surface water)⁴;
Ecology	The site is not located within a 'sensitive area' (as defined in Part 1 of the EIA Regulations) and does not fall within the boundaries of any statutory or non-statutory sites, including Special Areas of Conservation (SAC); Special Protection Areas (SPA), Ramsar sites, Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), National Nature Reserves (NNR) and Local Nature Reserves (LNR);
Heritage	There are no statutory designations (listed buildings, conservation areas, scheduled ancient monument or world heritage sites) that fall within the site;

² Land having a less than 1 in 1,000 annual probability of river or sea flooding.

³ Designated areas of land that drain into nitrate polluted waters, or waters which could become polluted by nitrates.

Surrounding Environmental Context

- 1.17 The site is located within Reading town centre which has typical town centre characteristics with typical high street shops, banks, restaurants, coffee shops, gyms and primary schools within walking distance.
- 1.18 Existing residential provision within the vicinity of the site includes large areas to the west of site, including but not limited to: Howard Street, Zinzan Street and Baker Street. To the south of the site residential streets include Maltings Place, Swan Place and Waterside Gardens. A majority of residential provisions are low level brick dwellings of 2-3 storeys with some high-rise developments to the north-west and mid-rise to the south.
- 1.19 Key features and designations associated with the surrounding environmental context are presented in Table 1.2.

Table 1.2 Outline of Key Features and Designations – Surrounding Environmental Context

Environmental Topic	Key features and designations
Socio-Economics	- Primary schools located in the surrounding area include: - St Paul's Primary (located adjacent to the west); - Cole Primary School and Nursery (approx. 450m south); - Katesgrove Primary School (approx. 580m south); - Secondary schools located in the surrounding area include: - Kendrick School (approx. 700m southeast); - Reading School (approx. 1.56km southeast); - The nearest healthcare facilities include: - Reading Walk-in Health Centre (located within the Broad Street Mall); - Chatham Street Surgery (approx. 320m northwest); - Abbey Medical Centre (approx. 360m southwest); - Dental practices located in the surrounding area include: - Vesta Dental Centre (approx. 65m north); - Reading Smiles (approx. 330m east); - Reading Dental (approx. 395m west); - Areas of public open space within the area surrounding include: - communal gardens along Dusseldorf Way and Hosier Street (approximately 10m south of the site); - play areas and communal gardens serving properties along Tilehurst Road and Pell Street (both located approximately 650m west and southeast of the site respectively).
Traffic and Transport	- The site is located to the east of and, and in close to proximity to (approx. 70m), the road network of the A329, which is mostly a dual carriageway ring road that encircles the town centre of Reading (referred as a 'inner distribution road'); - The site is located 500m south of Reading Station and 1km west of Reading West Station, which provide links on Great Western Rail, South Western Rail, Cross Country and Great Western Rail Services. From these stations trains run directly to London Paddington, Bristol Temple Meads, Cardiff Central, Newcastle and numerous other stations to the north, south and west; - Reading Station is one of the stations set to benefit from the construction of Crossrail. From December 2019, two Elizabeth line trains an hour (four an hour at peak times) will allow passengers to travel right through central London without having to change trains - greatly increasing the accessibility to the centre of London from Reading; - There are four bus stops on both Oxford Road and St Mary's Butts, providing easy access to public transport for potential new residents / workers and those wishing to visit Broad Street Mall; 59 local bus services are available within 100m of site, including routes 15 Sky Blue, 144, BB3, Purple 17 and 50 Greenwave; - The site is well served by local and national cycle routes;
Air Quality	The site is located within an AQMA (whole of the Reading town centre has been designated on the basis of exceedances of the annual mean objective for concentrations of nitrogen dioxide (NO₂));
Water	The River Kennet lies approximately 315m to the southeast of the site;

⁴ Are a catchment area that influence the water quality for their respective Drinking Water Protected Area (Surface Water), which are at risk of failing the drinking water protection objectives. These non-statutory Safeguard Zones are where action to address water contamination will be reviewed.

Ecology	- There are no Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) or sites of local importance for nature conservation (SLINC) within 2km of the site; and - There are three non-statutory designated sites (Local Wildlife Sites) within a 1km radius: - Holy Brook (LWS) (approx. 490m south); - River Kennet / Kennet and Avon Canal (LWS) (approx. 780m south) - Cow Lane Depot (LWS) (approx. 880m northwest);
Heritage	- The site sits adjacent to the northwest of the St Mary's Butts and Castle Street Conservation Area (which is made up of three character areas: St Mary's Church and Graveyard; St Mary's Butts; and Gun Street and Castle Street Frontages); - There are several listed buildings in proximity, including but not limited to: - The Allied Arms (Grade II, adjacent to the site to the east); 55 and 55A St Mary's Butts (Grade II, adjacent to the site to the east); 3 and 5, Cheapside (Grade II, adjacent to the north); - Several buildings to the south of Hosier Street, including the Church of St Mary, Castle Street (Grade II*), the Sun Inn (Grade II), 35 and 37 St Mary's Butts (Grade II), and properties along the south side of Castle Street; and - Church of St Mary, St Mary's Butts (Grade I). - The site is located in close proximity to an Area of Archaeological Potential (AAP) as defined by the RBC. The area has demonstrated potential for saxon structures and environmental evidence due to its proximity to Reading Minster. The AAP extends around the northern and eastern boundaries of the site and continues from Hosier Street to the south west, with the closest point located approximately 25m south of site.

HISTORICAL PLANNING CONTEXT

- 1.20
- The site has not been the subject of any significant previous planning applications.
- 1.21
- An area located to the south eastern corner of the site (Land not owned by applicant and not forming part of application) has been subject to a planning application for the demolition of all existing structures, erection of a part 7, part 8 storey building for use as 101 bed Hotel (Class C1 Use) at Ground - 8th Floor and Restaurant with ancillary Bar (Class A3/A4 Use) at ground floor, with means of access, servicing and associated works (reference: 182054). The planning application was permitted 4th November 2019.

THE LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS FOR AN EIA

- 1.22
- Applications for development that are covered by the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017⁵ are termed 'EIA Applications'.
- 1.23
- The requirement for an EIA is based on the likelihood of significant environmental effects arising from a proposed development; and it is either mandatory or conditional depending on the classification of the development project. EIA applications are divided into Schedule 1 and Schedule 2 applications under the EIA Regulations.
- 1.24
- Schedule 1 developments constitute those that are likely to have significant effects on the environment, such as major chemical or petrochemical projects and construction of ground or air transport infrastructure, and for which EIA is mandatory. For all other developments which fall under Schedule 2, the need for an EIA is determined based on set criteria as follows:
 - It is within one of the classes of development stated in Schedule 2; AND
 - EITHER it exceeds the applicable threshold criteria for that class of development in Schedule 2; OR it is to be carried out in part or all of a sensitive area; AND
 - It is likely to have significant effects on the environment by virtue of factors such as its nature, size or location.
- 1.25
- The EIA Regulations Schedule 2 Part 10(b), states that for “urban development projects, including the construction of shopping centres and car parks, sports stadiums, leisure centres and multiplex cinemas”, the thresholds which determine the need for a development to be screened for the potential for environmental effects comprise:

“(i) the development includes more than 1 hectare of urban development which is not dwelling / house development; OR

(ii) the development includes more than 150 dwellings; OR

(iii) the overall area of the development exceeds 5 hectares”.

- 1.26
- Based on the above, as the Proposed Development provides over 150 residential dwellings, and that there is the potential for likely significant environmental effects given the size and scale of the new build, the Proposed Development is considered to constitute 'EIA development' under the EIA Regulations. As such, the Applicant has undertaken an EIA and the results of this are presented within this ES (**Volumes 1, 2 and 3**) which has been submitted to accompany the planning application. Accordingly, a request for an EIA Screening Opinion was not sought from the RBC.

ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT STRUCTURE

Environmental Statement

- 1.27
- The ES comprises three technical volumes:
 - ES Volume 1: Main ES** – a document which forms the main body of the ES and which comprises of the following non-technical and technical chapters:
 - Chapter 1. Introduction;
 - Chapter 2. EIA Methodology;
 - Chapter 3. Alternatives and Design Evolution;
 - Chapter 4. Proposed Development;
 - Chapter 5. Demolition and Construction;
 - Chapter 6. Socio-Economics;
 - Chapter 7. Air Quality;
 - Chapter 8. Noise and Vibration;
 - Chapter 9. Daylight, Sunlight and Overshadowing;
 - Chapter 10. Wind Microclimate;
 - Chapter 11. Effect Interactions;
 - Chapter 12. Likely Significant Effects and Conclusions;
 - Chapter 13. Mitigation and Monitoring; and
 - Chapter 14. Glossary and Abbreviations.
 - ES Volume 2: Townscape, Built Heritage and Visual Impact Assessment** – a separate townscape, built heritage and visual impact assessment (TBHVIA) document that will be accompanied by a full set of views and verified images;
 - ES Volume 3: Technical Appendices** – comprises background data, technical reports, tables, figures and surveys. The following appendices are included:
 - Appendix: EIA Scoping;
 - Appendix: Supporting Technical Information;
 - Appendix: Air Quality;
 - Appendix: Noise and Vibration;
 - Appendix: Daylight, Sunlight and Overshadowing; and

⁵ 2017 No. 571; TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING; The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017

– Appendix: Wind Microclimate.

Non-Technical Summary

1.28 A separate document that comprises part of the ES and which is referred to as the Non-Technical Summary (NTS) provides a concise summary of the ES written in non-technical language. The NTS provides a description of the Proposed Development, the main alternatives considered, the potential environmental and socio-economic effects, any identified mitigation measures and the residual environmental and socio-economic effects of the Proposed Development.

Location of Information within the ES

1.29 Regulation 18(3) of the EIA Regulations defines that “an environmental statement is a statement which includes at least -

- (a) a description of the proposed development comprising information on the Site, design, size and other relevant features of the development;
- (b) a description of the likely significant effects of the proposed development on the environment;
- (c) a description of any features of the proposed development, or measures envisaged in order to avoid, prevent or reduce and, if possible, offset likely significant adverse effects on the environment;
- (d) a description of the reasonable alternatives studied by the developer, which are relevant to the proposed development and its specific characteristics, and an indication of the main reasons for the option chosen, taking into account the effects of the development on the environment;
- (e) a non-technical summary of the information referred to in sub-paragraphs (a) to (d); and
- (f) any additional information specified in Schedule 4 relevant to the specific characteristics of the particular development or type of development and to the environmental features likely to be significantly affected.”

1.30 The above information defined in Regulation 18(3) is replicated within Schedule 4 of the EIA Regulations - this is presented in Table 1.3, including sign-posting the location of the information within the ES.

Table 1.3 Schedule 4 Information Requirements - Location of Information within the ES

Part	Description of Information Presented in Schedule 4 (EIA Regulations)	Location within the ES
1	A description of the development, including in particular: (a) a description of the location of the development; (b) a description of the physical characteristics of the whole development, including, where relevant, requisite demolition works, and the land-use requirements during the construction and operational phases; (c) a description of the main characteristics of the operational phase of the development (in particular any production process), for instance, energy demand and energy used, nature and quantity of the materials and natural resources (including water, land, soil and biodiversity) used; (d) an estimate, by type and quantity, of expected residues and emissions (such as water, air, soil and subsoil pollution, noise, vibration, light, heat, radiation and quantities and types of waste produced during the construction and operation phases.	ES Volume 1, Chapter 1: Introduction ES Volume 1, Chapter 4: Proposed Development ES Volume 1, Chapter 5: Demolition and Construction
2	A description of the reasonable alternatives (for example in terms of development design, technology, location, size and scale) studied by the developer, which are relevant to the proposed project and its specific characteristics, and an indication of the main reasons for selecting the chosen option, including a comparison of the environmental effects.	ES Volume 1, Chapter 3: Alternatives and Design Evolution
3	A description of the relevant aspects of the current state of the environment (baseline scenario) and an outline of the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the development as far as natural changes from the baseline scenario can be assessed with reasonable effort on the basis of the availability of environmental information and scientific knowledge.	ES Volume 1, Chapters 6 to 10 ES Volume 2: Townscape, Built Heritage and Visual Impact Assessment

Part	Description of Information Presented in Schedule 4 (EIA Regulations)	Location within the ES
4	A description of the factors specified in regulation 4(2) likely to be significantly affected by the development: population, human health, biodiversity (for example fauna and flora), land (for example land take), soil (for example organic matter, erosion, compaction, sealing), water (for example hydromorphological changes, quantity and quality), air, climate (for example greenhouse gas emissions, impacts relevant to adaptation), material assets, cultural heritage, including architectural and archaeological aspects, and landscape.	ES Volume 1, Chapter 2: EIA Methodology ES Volume 1, Chapters 6 to 10 ES Volume 2: Townscape, Built Heritage and Visual Impact Assessment
5	A description of the likely significant effects of the development on the environment resulting from, inter alia: (a) the construction and existence of the development, including, where relevant, demolition works; (b) the use of natural resources, in particular land, soil, water and biodiversity, considering as far as possible the sustainable availability of these resources; (c) the emission of pollutants, noise, vibration, light, heat and radiation, the creation of nuisances, and the disposal and recovery of waste; (d) the risks to human health, cultural heritage or the environment (for example due to accidents or disasters); (e) the cumulation of effects with other existing and/or approved projects, taking into account any existing environmental problems relating to areas of particular environmental importance likely to be affected or the use of natural resources; (f) the impact of the project on climate (for example the nature and magnitude of greenhouse gas emissions) and the vulnerability of the project to climate change; (g) the technologies and the substances used.	ES Volume 1, Chapters 6 to 10 ES Volume 2: Townscape, Built Heritage and Visual Impact Assessment
6	A description of the forecasting methods or evidence, used to identify and assess the significant effects on the environment, including details of difficulties (for example technical deficiencies or lack of knowledge) encountered compiling the required information and the main uncertainties involved.	ES Volume 1, Chapter 2: EIA Methodology ES Volume 1, Chapters 6 to 10 ES Volume 2: Townscape, Built Heritage and Visual Impact Assessment
7	A description of the measures envisaged to avoid, prevent, reduce or, if possible, offset any identified significant adverse effects on the environment and, where appropriate, of any proposed monitoring arrangements (for example the preparation of a post-project analysis). That description should explain the extent, to which significant adverse effects on the environment are avoided, prevented, reduced or offset, and should cover both the construction and operational phases.	ES Volume 1, Chapters 6 to 10 ES Volume 3, Appendix: Supporting Technical Information
8	A description of the expected significant adverse effects of the development on the environment deriving from the vulnerability of the development to risks of major accidents and/or disasters which are relevant to the project concerned. Relevant information available and obtained through risk assessments pursuant to EU legislation such as Directive 2012/18/EU(c) of the European Parliament and of the Council or Council Directive 2009/71/Euratom(d) or UK environmental assessments may be used for this purpose provided that the requirements of this Directive are met. Where appropriate, this description should include measures envisaged to prevent or mitigate the significant adverse effects of such events on the environment and details of the preparedness for and proposed response to such emergencies.	ES Volume 1, Chapter 2: EIA Methodology

Part	Description of Information Presented in Schedule 4 (EIA Regulations)	Location within the ES
9	A non-technical summary of the information provided under paragraphs 1 to 8.	Non-Technical Summary
10	A reference list detailing the sources used for the descriptions and assessments included in the environmental statement.	ES Volume 1, Chapters 1 to 10

PREPARATION OF THE ES – COMPETENT EXPERT

- 1.31** Trium is an environmental consultancy specialising in urban regeneration and property development projects in the UK, with a specific focus in London. Trium's Partners and Employees have extensive experience in managing the environmental issues and impacts surrounding large scale, high profile urban regeneration development projects. The Partners and Employees of Trium have, over the course of their careers to date (including with former employers), project directed, managed or contributed to numerous EIAs within the retail, residential, leisure, commercial, cultural, infrastructure and industrial sectors. This also includes selecting and managing competent experts for the topics required in an EIA, who have been selected for the project based on their knowledge and experience for the specific topic.
- 1.32** The technical ES Chapters provided within the ES have been prepared by competent experts within the respective companies identified, who have sufficient knowledge and experience of working on projects involving urban regeneration schemes relating to the relevant technical topic in question. The preparation of each of the technical ES Chapters has involved several individuals within the respective company and has involved a process of review for issue of the chapter by a figure with sufficient experience and seniority within that company.

ES AVAILABILITY AND COMMENTS

- 1.33** The ES is available for viewing by the public during normal office hours at the RBC's Planning Department, and is viewable online at the RBC Planning Portal: http://planning.reading.gov.uk/fastweb_PL/welcome.asp.
- 1.34** Comments on the Planning Applications should be forwarded to the RBC at the following address:
Reading Borough Council
Civic Offices
Bridge Street
Reading, RG1 2LU
- 1.35** Electronic copies of the NTS are available free of charge. Printed and electronic copies of the ES are available to purchase – to obtain, please contact Trium Environmental Consulting LLP. For further information and prices, please contact us at hello@triumenv.co.uk or on 0203 887 7118.