

Mr D. Jordan
DP9 Limited
100 Pall Mall
London
SW1Y 5NQ

By email

Without Prejudice

Frances Martin
Executive Director for Economic Growth
and Neighbourhood Services

Civic Offices, Bridge Street,
Reading, RG1 2LU

☎ 0118 9373787

Our Ref: 190833/SCO

Your Ref: JWP/DTJ/DP4815

Direct ☎: 0118 9372980

e-mail: stephen.vigar@reading.gov.uk

24 July 2019

Your contact is: Steve Vigar, Planning

Dear Mr Jordan,

Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment)(England) Regulations 2017

Request for a Scoping Opinion from the Local Planning Authority under Regulation 15 for a redevelopment consisting of: Demolition of existing buildings and construction of a mixed use development comprising residential development (C1/C3), office development (B1A), retail (etc) uses (A1, A2, A3, A4, A5), community and/or leisure development (D1/D2) and associated vehicle parking, highways improvements and public realm works at Station Hill, Reading.

The following Opinion is provided in response to your application as described above and in more detail in the submitted Scoping Report WIE14788-101-R-10.5.1-EIA Issue 5 dated May 2019.

The request has been considered in accordance with under Regulation 15 Part 4 of The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017. The necessary consultations have been carried out and the Authority's formal Scoping Opinion in accordance with the Regulations is set out below.

The following bodies have been consulted:

- Natural England (response received)
- Environment Agency (response received)
- RBC Environmental Protection
- RBC Transport Strategy (the Highway Authority)
- Berkshire Archaeology (response received)
- RBC Ecologist (response received)
- RBC Natural Environment
- RBC Sustainability Team
- Lead Flood Authority (response received)
- RBC Emergency Planner

The comments from consultees are enclosed and form part of the Opinion.

The following additional comments form part of the Opinion.

EIA Background and Strategy

As indicated previously the new ES should consider effects of the extant SH3 scheme, the amended scheme (all variations), including Plots E and F and the new proposals (190441/190442/190465/190466).

The updated ES should also include a comparison of the effects of the SH3 Scheme, the revised SH3 scheme and the new proposals, including 'worst-case' impacts based on various outcomes under the proposed 'flexible' Outline application.

Proposed Scope of the EIA

The general methodology is considered appropriate. The Sensitive Receptors (Annex 1), seem appropriate in line with the previous ES.

In respect of the following Chapters proposed for the updated ES, I respond as follows, where required.

Socio-Economics

The socio-economic effects of the increase in residential floorspace and the reduction in Class B1 floorspace should be addressed. The impacts of different options or permutations under the proposed 'flexible' Outline should be included. Impacts should be assessed in terms of their impact on the Borough as a whole.

Archaeology

Section (5.7) on the '*Historic Environment*' sets out a brief archaeological background to the application area, noting previous archaeological investigations within the redline boundary, including a recent archaeological watching brief on ground investigations within the south part of the site. The report notes that this work has identified '*archaeological finds dating to the prehistoric period, although detailed analysis of found features has not yet been completed*'. The ES assessment should draw together the results of all these investigations to provide an overview of the archaeological potential of areas of the site. This overview is likely to need to be tested by exploratory archaeological trial trenching, which will become possible now that the existing structures between Garrard Street and Friar Street are being demolished. As per Berkshire Archaeology advice.

Transport and Access

The role of walking and cycling in terms of public health, air quality and sustainable transport should be included. Including opportunities for improvement.

Noise

No additional comments. Subject to more detailed EHO advice/requirements at application stage as detailed proposals emerge.

Air Quality

No additional comments at this stage. Subject to more detailed EHO advice/requirements at application stage as detailed proposals emerge.

Ground Conditions and Contamination

No additional comments. Subject to more detailed EHO advice/requirements at application stage as detailed proposals emerge.

Surface Water Drainage and Flood Risk

No additional comments . Refer to EA advice.

Ecology

The submitted Scoping report states that an updated Preliminary Ecological Appraisal was carried out in 2018. It also states that the development site will be subject to “*further surveys for this species [black redstarts] would be carried out between April and July 2019 to confirm if birds are on Site and how they are utilising it.*” This will be adequate to assess the likely ecological impact of the proposals and the survey reports should be submitted in the ES with the application.

Wind

Detailed assessment of the actual building design where known will be required, and ‘worst-case’ impacts based on proposed parameters for the Outline element will be required. Specialist advice and third party verification will be required.

Daylight, Sunlight and Overshadowing

Detailed assessment of the actual building design where known will be required, and ‘worst-case’ impacts based on proposed parameters for the Outline element will be required. Specialist advice and third party verification will be required.

Townscape, Visual and Heritage Assessment

The viewpoints as listed in Appendix A and Fig.3 appear reasonable.

It would be advisable to confirm that proposed “*View 6 Junction of Mount Pleasant and Southampton Street*” is equivalent to Draft Policy EN5 “*2. View northwards down Southampton St from Whitley St towards St Giles Church, St Mary’s Church and Greyfriars Church*”; or to adjust accordingly.

Population and Human Health

The CCG will be consulted at pre-application and application stages. Please note comments regarding cycling and walking above.

Climate Change

The energy strategy is subject to ongoing detailed pre-application discussions. The detailed approach will need to be set out in the ES once this has been clarified. A detailed assessment will also be required at planning application stage. A decentralised approach to energy is expected.

Risk of Major Accidents or Disasters

No additional comments at this stage, although it should be noted that consultation with emergency services and emergency planners will be carried out once greater detail on the scheme is made available. This will consider the routes and spaces around the buildings as well as the buildings themselves. Crowded places and hostile vehicle mitigation guidance and best practice should be incorporated. The assessment will be expected to take into account the Station Hill site as a whole.

Cumulative Assessment

In addition to the list of cumulative schemes in Table 17.1 you are advised include:

Permission 162166 Former Coopers BMW site, Napier Road - should be included due to the height of the approved building (currently under construction).

Permission 162087, 120 Kings Road (completed).

Conclusion and Decision

Please note the contents of this letter. These principles should be incorporated into the final ES to accompany an application for planning permission.

This Opinion is provided on the information contained within the scoping request report only, and in the context of current planning policies and regulations. Furthermore, this Opinion is supplied without prejudice to any decision of the Council on this or any other application which has been, or may subsequently be submitted. If you have any queries regarding the above, please contact the case officer.

Yours sincerely

SDV

Steve Vigar
Principal Planning Officer