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By email

Without Prejudice

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Your contact is: Steve Vigar, Planning & Building Control

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 (C3), office development (B1A), retail (etc) uses (A1, A2, A3, A4, A5), leisure development (D2) and associated car parking and public realm works at Station Hill, Reading.

I refer to the above request for a Scoping Opinion as set out in your letter of 18 October 2018 ref. WIE14788-101-181018-EIA Scoping Request

I supply comments on the basis of the information supplied in the above letter, the submitted site location plan and Annexes 1, 2 and 3.

This 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.

Consultation responses:

The following bodies have been consulted:

- Natural England (response received)
- Environment Agency (response received)
- RBC Environmental Protection (response received)
- 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.

I supply the following additional comments

EIA Background and Strategy

As indicated previously (141124/SCO) it is not appropriate to undertake an EIA on the Telecom House/Plot E scheme application in isolation. The new and updated ES would consider effects of the existing SH3 scheme, amended to reflect the changes to Plots E and F.

The updated ES should also include a comparison of the effects of the SH3 Scheme and the revised proposals.

Proposed Scope of the EIA

The methodology as described in the 2015 ES is considered to be suitable to apply to the updated ES. 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, the reduction in Class B1 floorspace and the shift from owner-occupied to Build-to-Rent should be addressed. Impacts should be assessed in terms of their impact on the Borough as a whole.

Archaeology

No additional comments as per Berkshire Archaeology advice.

Transport and Access

No additional comments as per Highway Authority advice.

Noise

No additional comments as per RBC EHO advice.

Air Quality

No additional comments as per RBC EHO advice.

Ground Conditions and Contamination

No additional comments as per RBC EHO and Environment Agency advice.

Surface Water Drainage and Flood Risk

No additional comments as per Environment Agency and Lead Flood Authority advice.

Ecology

The Updated PEA and Bat Survey Report should be appended to the ES or submitted as a separate document.

Wind

Detailed wind tunnel assessment of the actual building design, rather than just the parameters currently approved in Outline will be required. Specialist advice and third party verification will be required.

Daylight, Sunlight and Overshadowing

Detailed assessment of the actual building design, rather than just the parameters currently approved in Outline will be required. It appears that the proposals will be quite different from those envisaged previously. Specialist advice and third party verification will be required.

Townscape, Visual and Heritage Assessment

The viewpoints to be updated appear reasonable.

View 22 Kings Meadow should include Permission 162166 Former Coopers BMW site, Napier Road. It would also be worth including an additional new view looking west along Napier Road as this is proposed to become a main Mass Rapid Transit transport route into the town.

A view westwards from the top of Shepherds Hill near to the junction with Pitts Lane should be included. Long range views from the east are currently missing from the assessment.

A view towards the site from the environs of Kings Road/Watlington Street, incorporating the new Kings Point, 120 Kings Road development (permission 162087) should be included.

Population and Human Health

No additional comment at this stage.

Climate Change

No additional comments in terms of building structure. 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.

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. 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 Annex 3, you are advised to check with the Council regarding any update on the 29-35 Station Road site.

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

Permission 162087, 120 Kings Road should be included.

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 letter only, 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