

Planning Department
Reading Borough Council
Civic Offices
Bridge Street
Reading
RG1 2LU

For the attention of Alison Amoah

Date 10th February 2016
Our ref: C-02344465-01-01

Dear Sir / Madam

400 Longwater Avenue, Green Park Business Park, Reading

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Screening Request

On behalf of Green Park Reading No. 1 LLP ("the Applicant"), we request your confirmation that the proposed development at 400 Longwater Avenue, Green Park Business Park ("the Site"), is not of the scale or type to necessitate the need for an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and therefore does not fall under the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2011 (as amended¹) ("the EIA Regulations"), guidance or associated case law to require an EIA to be undertaken to accompany the forthcoming planning application.

This EIA Screening Report has been prepared in support of a formal request to Reading Borough Council (RBC) under Regulation 5 of the EIA Regulations to determine whether the current proposals constitute EIA development.

Project Details

Site Description

The site area is approximately 2.9 ha and located on Longwater Avenue within Green Park (Plot 3.2); an established business park located on the A33 relief road south of Reading.

The site is bound by an existing office building at 350 Longwater Avenue to the north (Plot 3.1), Longwater Lake to the east, the 'Lily Pond Area' to the south and Longwater Avenue to the west.

The site has been previously cleared and currently forms a development platform ready for development.

¹ Statutory Instrument 2015 No. 660: The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Amendment) Regulations 2015

There are no Listed or Locally Listed Buildings within the boundary of the site and the site is not within a Conservation Area.

A site plan is provided at Appendix 1.

Planning History

Reserved matters planning permission (08/00261/REM) was previously approved on the site on 23 May 2008 pursuant to outline planning permission (OPP) reference 85/TP/690 (implemented). The reserved matters approval comprised 14,080 sqm of B1 office development, including access, 486 car parking spaces, servicing, landscaping and external works. The outline consent was subject to an EIA.

A scheme was developed in 2013 due to interest from a prospective tenant. The 2008 approved scheme did not meet the requirements of the proposed tenant. The new scheme sought approval for a 5 storey building to accommodate flexible office (B1) space with a total floorspace up to 27,000 sqm, and associated access, car parking, servicing, landscaping and related works. If submitted, the 2013 scheme would have sought approval for up to 13,000 sqm additional floorspace beyond that approved under the Reserved Matters permission (ref: 08/00261/REM).

A screening request was submitted to RBC on 21st October 2013 for the scheme. A Screening Opinion was issued by RBC on 9th December 2013 (Ref: 131468 SCR) and concluded that the development was not likely to have significant effects on the environment by virtue of factors such as its size, nature or location. A planning application was never submitted for this scheme.

Development Proposals

The proposed development is very similar to the 2013 scheme, and would consist of two 5 storey office buildings with associated car parking and landscaping.

Parking would be split into two 3-storey structures at either side of the site, including grade parking either side of a central spine road leading into the site. Parking would include disabled bays.

Table 1 overleaf compares the 2008 consented scheme and the current proposals (NB. the Proposed Development is subject to final confirmation)

Table 1: 2008 consented scheme and Proposed Development parameters

	2008 Consented Scheme	Proposed Development
Site Area	2.6ha	2.98ha
Building Floorspace (sqm GEA (Gross External Area))	14,080	27,207
Car Parking Provision (At Grade and Multi-Storey)	486 spaces	702 spaces
Maximum Height	65.24m	60.40m

Need for a Screening Opinion

The need for a Screening Opinion has been considered in light of:

- The requirements of the Town and Country Planning (England) (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2011 (as amended) (the “EIA Regulations”).
- European legislation under Directive 2011/92/EU.
- National Planning Practice Guidance (March 2014)².

The EIA Regulations outline thresholds for what are described as Schedule 1 and Schedule 2 Projects. EIA is mandatory for “Schedule 1” projects. EIA is required for “Schedule 2” projects if, in the opinion of the determining authority, they are likely to give rise to “significant effects” on the environment.

In determining whether the proposed development constitutes EIA development, consideration should be given to the following:

- If the proposed development is of a type listed in Schedule 1;
- If not, whether it is listed in Schedule 2;
- If so, whether it is of more than local significance, located in an environmentally sensitive area or likely to give rise to unusually complex and potentially hazardous effects; and/or
- It meets any of the relevant thresholds and criteria set out in Schedule 2.

Schedule 1 Projects

An EIA is mandatory for projects listed in Schedule 1 of the EIA Regulations.

The proposed development is not of a type listed in Schedule 1.

Schedule 2 Projects

The EIA Regulations state that the proposed development may be considered to be Schedule 2 development under Category 10, ‘Infrastructure Projects’, of the EIA Regulations. Sub-section (b) relates to ‘Urban development projects’, where the area of development exceeds 1 hectare of urban development which is not dwelling house development.

The Site is 2.9 ha and therefore exceeds the revised threshold of 1 ha set out in Schedule 2 10 (b) of the EIA Regulations 2011 (as amended).

Paragraph 18 of the National Planning Practice Guidance makes it clear that there are no simple formulaic approaches that allow the definition of Schedule 2 projects, stating that:

“While it is not possible to formulate criteria or thresholds which will provide a universal test of whether or not an assessment is required, it is possible to offer a broad indication of the type or scale of development which is likely to require an assessment. It is also possible to provide an indication of the sort of development for which an assessment is unlikely to be necessary”.

² <http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/guidance/environmental-impact-assessment>

The proposal falls within Schedule 2 of the EIA Regulations and has been assessed against the EIA screening criteria and a checklist of potential effects. It has also had regard to Schedule 3 of the EIA Regulations, and the National Planning Practice Guidance.

Consideration of EIA screening criteria

Having regard to the site context, planning history, and current proposals for development, it is not considered that the proposed development is likely to be of more than local significance, is not located in an environmentally sensitive area and is not likely to give rise to unusually complex and potentially hazardous effects.

Potential environmental effects may arise during the construction phase of the proposals due to increases in traffic, noise and emissions. However, these effects would be short term in duration and temporary in nature, and would be mitigated by way of best practice procedures.

Summary

The proposal involves development of a new office development at 400 Longwater Avenue, Green Park Business Park, to the south west of Reading. Potential increases in traffic, noise and emissions during the construction of the proposed development would be temporary in nature and mitigated by way of best practice procedures. Operationally, the proposed development is not considered to be of more than local significance, is not located in an environmentally sensitive area, and is not likely to give rise to unusually complex and potentially hazardous effects.

In conclusion, given the proposed development, neither independently nor cumulatively, does not meet the tests of Schedules 1 and 2; an EIA does not need to be considered.

We would be grateful if you could provide a Screening Opinion for the proposed development within the statutory timescales. We look forward to your response.

If you have any queries, or require any further information, please contact Matthew Wright on 0207 007 3623 or at matthewwright@deloitte.co.uk in the first instance.

Yours faithfully



Caroline McDade

For Deloitte LLP
