

2 ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

2.1 INTRODUCTION

2.1.1 This chapter sets out the method and approach applied by the consultant team in preparing this Environmental Statement. While there are no statutory requirements concerning the content of an ES, the scope of the document has been agreed with the local planning authority and the general approach has been a systematic assessment of the likely impacts and resultant effects. Where appropriate, this assessment has drawn on the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 1999, and accompanying Circular 02/99 Environmental Impact Assessment

2.1.2 The Environmental Statement has been prepared with reference to the following advisory documents:

- Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment 'Guidelines for Environmental Impact Assessment' 2004;
- The Department of the Environment 'Preparation of Statements for Planning Projects that require Environmental Assessment: A Good Practice Guide 1995';
- The Department of Transport Design Manual for Roads and Bridges, Vol II: Environmental Assessment; and
- The Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions 'Environmental Impact Assessment – A Guide to Procedures 2000'.

2.1.3 In accordance with the EIA Regulations 1999, this Environmental Statement includes the following information:-

- A description of the proposed development including information about the site and the nature, size and scale of the development;
- The data necessary to identify and assess the main effects that the development is likely to have on the environment, including short, medium and long term impacts;
- A prediction of the likely significant effects, both direct and indirect, on the environment of the area proposed for development, explained by reference to its possible impact on: human beings, flora, fauna, soil, water, air, climate, cultural heritage, landscape and the interaction between any of the foregoing material assets;
- Mitigation measures proposed where significant adverse effects are identified with respect to any of the foregoing, in order to avoid, reduce or remedy those effects; and
- A summary, in non-technical language, of the information specified above.

2.1.4 The site location and context and a detailed description of the proposed scheme are given in Chapter 3 which also includes consideration of alternatives.

Heyford Park Environmental Statement**2.2 SCOPE OF THE EIA**

- 2.2.1** This development falls under the category of “Infrastructure Projects” (Schedule 2) as described in the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations (1999), with the proposed development being considered to have environmental effects. On this basis, an Environmental Statement has been prepared to accompany the planning applications for this proposed development.
- 2.2.2** The scope of the ES has been determined in accordance with Regulation 10 of the EIA Regulations.
- 2.2.3** In the effort to ensure all environmental issues that are likely to be affected by the development proposals were included within the scope of the EIA and ES, scoping of the issues was undertaken at an early stage of the process with the final scope of the EIA being determined as follows:
- The requirements of the EIA Regulations;
 - Previous work undertaken on the site;
 - The experience of the EIA team and their knowledge of the site;
 - The preparation of a scoping report;
 - Informal discussions with Cherwell District Council;
 - A formal request and receipt of a ‘Scoping Opinion’ from Cherwell District Council, issued on 20 September 2006.
- 2.2.4** The report and Scoping Opinion from CDC are included in Appendix A01.

2.3 SCOPING OPINION AND CONSULTATION

- 2.3.1** Preparation of the Scoping Opinion involved consultation with a range of consultees including:
- British Waterways
 - Countryside Agency
 - Oxfordshire County Council
 - Thames Water
 - Highways Agency
 - English Heritage
 - Environment Agency
- 2.3.2** In relation to particular impacts and issues, individual consultants have carried out liaison and consultation with statutory consultees and other bodies as set out in further detail in the respective chapters.
- 2.3.3** The comments from the local authority and the consultees were taken into account resulting in a revised Scoping Report which was circulated to all the consultants working on the EIA.
- 2.3.4** Prior to and in parallel with work on the EIA and masterplanning, consultations were carried out by Cherwell District Council as part of the process of preparing the Development Brief for the site.
- 2.3.5** Over the course of undertaking the EIA and preparing the masterplan a programme of wider public engagement was carried out by the applicant's team. Groups involved included:
- Officers and members of Cherwell District Council
 - Representatives of Oxfordshire County Council

- Representatives of the Government Office for the South East
- Heyford and neighbouring Parish Councils
- Local business groups
- Representatives of the local print and broadcast media

2.3.6 The programme involved briefings with council members, residential tenants and media; a public exhibition, newsletters and correspondence. A fuller account of the programme of engagement is set out in the Stakeholder Engagement Report submitted with the planning application.

2.3.7 The aim of the wider involvement has been to seek the views and comments of stakeholders and as far as possible take account of those views in formulating the masterplan and development proposals.

2.4 ASSESSMENT, SIGNIFICANCE AND MITIGATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

2.4.1 Assessment methods differ for the different environmental topics covered in the individual chapters of the ES. The specific methods are covered in detail in the relevant chapters. The approach to assigning any significance to a predicted environmental effect relies on standards or codes of practice, expert judgement and views of other agencies and organisations.

2.4.2 The overall approach to the EIA is reflected in the general structure of each of the sections, which is more or less along the following lines:

- Introduction, assumptions and limitations
- Policy context
- Methodology
- Assessment criteria
- Significance criteria
- Baseline conditions
- Assessment of impacts and effects
- Mitigation
- Residual effects

2.4.3 As a process, the main assessment involves identification of impacts, identification of receptors, determining the likely significant effects and identifying mitigation measures, where appropriate.

2.4.4 Identification of impacts involves both the construction and operational phases of the development and the impacts may be adverse or beneficial, direct or indirect, temporary or permanent, short-term or long-term, and cumulative. The area covered varies for the difference specific topics.

2.4.5 In cases where the impact of the proposed development warrants mitigation, specific measures have been fed back to the masterplanning process, where appropriate, and incorporated into the final design response and various management plans. Appropriate to the iterative nature of the process, the final, mitigated design has

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undergone a further assessment to identify and residual effects. Ongoing measures for management are set out in individual sections, the Base Management Plan and Sustainability Statement.