The Benefit of Construction Environmental Management Plans as part of the Environmental Impact Assessment process

Developers are increasingly looking to secure planning permission or development consents by citing a lack of environmental impact and enhancements made to the surrounding, and localised environs through effective pre-planned mitigation strategies.

Construction Environmental Management Plans (CEMP) provide a platform for the implementation and delivery of this mitigation by stating specific requirements, procedures, and methodologies to be followed before, during, and after construction. This allows general and more specific auditing and monitoring to take place ensuring that all requirements are implemented.

**Benefits of Submitting a CEMP in support of an application for development**

Submitting a CEMP with an application for development allows a developer to present a positive outlook for development as it demonstrates a commitment on behalf of the developers to legislative compliance and that sets out the mitigation measures that will be put in place to improve environmental performance.

With a CEMP in place the developer has an obligation to deliver the scheme through the construction phase in line with pre-determined and agreed methodologies. There will typically be specific requirements whilst the works are completed such as monitoring of noise and dust levels, and inspection of artificial light levels (flood lights – direction and angle of) to ensure disturbance to local users is minimised. There may also be requirements for additional works such as translocation of present species to new on site created hibernacula, and the creation of new habitats for local / regionally rare species to improve the sites, and surrounding areas long term environmental performance.

**What Makes a Good CEMP?**

A CEMP should set out a proposal to demonstrate how its implementation will result in benefits to the environmental resource and to local communities, how landscape, heritage, agricultural, and ecologically sensitive elements within a site and surrounding area will be safeguarded and enhanced.

A CEMP should allow a developer to identify mitigation which will best meet their own needs and provides satisfactory environmental maintenance / enhancement.

A developer should seek to insert specific aims within the CEMP which will lead to the maintenance or improvement of landscape features, reinforcement of the sites character, improvement to the sites visual amenity, increased localised biodiversity, protection of archaeological sites and cultural heritage designations. These are often requirements identified through local planning authority policies and statutory consultees and stakeholders and should be implemented before a development is consented.

The CEMP offers a documented approach to show how legislative and policy requirements will be met.

**Benefits of Post-submission CEMP in support of consented development with conditions – CEMP requirement**

If a CEMP has not been submitted as part of an application for development consent or planning permission a consenting authority may determine that a CEMP is a conditional requirement. This allows the authority to control activities it feels will be disruptive, or environmentally damaging. It also allows them to identify requirements that they feel will maintain and / or improve a sites environmental performance.
The contents of the CEMP can be more rigid at this stage, and be designed to meet the aims and objectives of the LPA offering less opportunity for the development team to deliver the project with fewer constraints. However the specific requirements laid down by the authority can be a beneficial – they will often state specifically what documentation they require and what mitigation measures are to be implemented.

**Benefits of the CEMP throughout the operational / works phase**

A CEMP identifies the requirements of the authority / developer in relation to all aspects of environmental protection and enhancement during the construction phase of the planned development. The information contained within a CEMP is often familiar to work operatives, and serves more as a guarantee to ensure works are completed in line with standard and best practice procedures and techniques. Where there are requirements which are site specific, a CEMP will state in detail the necessary steps and procedures to be taken to ensure compliance. As a CEMP states all the environmental requirements throughout all works phases, it offers opportunities for site audits allowing progress and environmental compliance to be monitored. Effective auditing and monitoring can ensure a high level of transparency.

**Conclusion**

In conclusion the benefit a CEMP provides is the assurance through legislative requirements that a development will be delivered to agreed environmental standards. Specific requirements identified by the development team can be included to determine the scheme will be completed without damaging the environmental integrity. A CEMP allows for continuous monitoring / assessment of how the works are progressing in line with the agreed environmental protection and mitigation requirements.

The processes can be audited as the CEMP includes specific requirements, a methodological approach, time frames, and site specific features that should / should not be present.

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