Key Issues
There were a number of key issues that needed to be addressed through the EIA and design process, including:

- The way in which the development could be phased, and allowing for changes in requirements of the phases for different uses, whilst ensuring a robust assessment.

- Considering how the adjacent development would interact with the EIA, alongside how the future masterplan would interact with the EIA.

- The precedent set by a previous EIA (2012) and the implications for the proposed development, for example what could be scoped out of an Environmental Statement drawing upon previous findings.

- Consideration of the proposed development in relation to its proximity to Manchester Airport, and ensuring potential impacts in this regard were considered.

- Identifying the additional requirements arising from the 2017 EIA Regulations and ensuring these were appropriately considered during the Scoping and assessment stages.

Project background
A hybrid planning application was submitted which comprised full planning permission and outline planning permission. The purpose of the hybrid approach was to allow flexibility for future phases on the adjacent side of Enterprise Way. The planning application was approved in December 2018.

The site forms part of a wider masterplan area which had been subject to a comprehensive EIA in 2012, however the masterplan outline planning permission had recently lapsed in early 2018.

At the same time as progressing the application on this Site, a new masterplan for the area was being devised, whilst an adjacent office development was also being progressed with the planning application to be submitted at the same time.

Purpose of the project
The proposed development was for 66,476 sq.m of office floorspace proposed for a new headquarters building and 1,970 car parking spaces. The new headquarters building for one of the largest e-commerce businesses in the UK seeks to firmly establish the location as a key investment location.

Deloitte Real Estate (DRE) worked to co-ordinate the EIA for the hybrid application, including the screening and scoping exercise and the Environmental Statement. DRE also prepared the planning application.
Lessons learnt
The location of the site required consideration of interaction of the proposed development with its immediate surroundings, including the adjacent office development also being progressed for the applicant, along with the wider masterplan.

In addition consideration had also to be given to the proximity to the airport and the potential issues and constraints which needed to be considered as a result. These included height restrictions, potential for interference with radar systems, bodies of water potentially leading to bird strike issues, and considering any potential solar glare impacts on overhead aircraft.

Early engagement with the LPA was key, as was the technical consultants agreeing the scope of the ES assessment with the relevant specialist officers within the LPA.

As part of the Scoping exercise the 2012 EIA and ES was reviewed. As the EIA co-ordinator we asked consultants to consider the 2012 exercise and agree if items previously assessed in the 2012 ES could be scoped out on the basis of a negligible or minor impact. This evidence-based approach was an important aspect of defining an appropriate and proportionate scope.

In addition, the 2012 ES was produced under the older (2011) EIA Regulations. The 2017 Regulations included additional factors to be consider such as health, and it was important that we ensured all relevant considerations were covered within the ES. We also made the technical consultants aware of this, and for the discipline to be include within their assessment as necessary alongside consideration as part of their review of the 2012 ES. As a result, human health impacts were given more detailed coverage within the Air Quality assessment.

Particularly relevant was the impact in respect of Traffic and Transport due to high number of car parking spaces proposed, and the location of the site within the context of the Manchester Airport Terminal 2 expansion. It was also necessary to consider the impact of the site as part of the masterplan as a whole, specifically potential cumulative impacts on Traffic and Transport.

Lessons learnt cont.
A detailed mitigation exercise was undertaken and it was considered that junction improvements and widening of the highway would mitigate the impact of the increased number of vehicular movements.

Due to the quantum of development it was necessary to ensure the proposals could be brought forward in phases. One of the key challenges to overcome was setting the strategy for how to phase the proposals and consider the interaction of these phases with the delivery of the wider masterplan and in the context of EIA. This required finding an appropriate balance between flexibility and robust assessments. As part of the ES we requested each technical consultant to consider the impact of the successive phases and the cumulative impact of developing the whole masterplan. Because it was a ‘hybrid’ application, part of the proposals were for outline planning permission and therefore these outline phases were addressed via maximum parameters within the EIA to ensure a ‘worst case scenario’ was assessed.

It was important for each of the technical assessments to make clear the distinction between the phases and how the conclusions were to be presented. This required DRE as EIA coordinator to provide a brief introductory statement setting the overall planning approach and within the conclusions of each chapter consultants to make clear the impact across the phases and in consideration of the wider masterplan. In all instances it was the case that, following mitigation, the hybrid application was acceptable with no significant environmental effects.

Monitoring arrangements were also considered during the consideration of mitigation measures. The Applicant has agreed to monitor travel patterns for the first three months of the development, and will agree measures to monitor and review the effectiveness of a Travel Plan. After 6 months of operation the Applicant has agreed to submit a revised Travel Plan based on this monitoring exercise. In addition, the Applicant has agreed to S.106 contributions to the improvement of the highways junctions which will increase the road network capacity as the proposals come forward.

As Reserved Matters applications come forward, it will be important to consider the validity and robustness of the assessments already undertaken, to identify whether further work might be required.

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