# EIA Quality Mark Case Study

## Land at North Yate - Bristol

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Key Issues</strong></th>
<th><strong>Purpose of the project</strong></th>
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<td>The North Yate site had a number of key environmental constraints which needed to be considered throughout the design process. The key issues included existing services, noise sources, ecology and landscape sensitivities.</td>
<td>The Application Site is located within an area identified for major mixed use development under Policy CS31 in the South Gloucestershire Council (SGC) Core Strategy Incorporating Post Submission Changes (2011). The policy makes provision for up to 3,000 dwellings, and providing employment opportunities to broaden the existing employment base.</td>
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<td>The application site is crossed by a number of overhead lines including a 132kV high voltage line supported on steel pylons. The western boundary of the site is defined by the Bristol-Gloucester railway line, along which the movement of trains generates noise and vibration constraints.</td>
<td><strong>Description of the project</strong></td>
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<td>The site is characterised by fairly regular grid of hedgerows with mature specimen trees which create a sense of containment and enclosure around the fields. These landscape features were of importance with regard to the setting of the development.</td>
<td>The application site comprises approximately 100 ha of land immediately north of the existing urban edge of Yate and ten miles to the north east of Bristol. The site is bounded to the north by Tanhouse Lane and to the south by the residential area of Brimsham Park and adjacent areas of open space. The eastern boundary is defined by agricultural land, hedgerows and Yate Rocks whilst the western edge is defined by the Bristol to Gloucester railway line.</td>
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<td>The site contains a number of sensitive ecological receptors including great crested newts, bats, reptiles, harvest mice, dormice and invertebrates.</td>
<td>The development proposals are for a new balanced community comprising residential, employment and commercial uses, primary school, a reserved school site, neighbourhood centre, public open space and access and circulation provision.</td>
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<td>The EIA process therefore had a key role to play in the design evolution for masterplan being prepared for an outline planning application.</td>
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Lessons learnt

LDA Design’s approach to EIA development is to integrate design, planning and EIA to ensure a genuinely iterative process. This enables a rationale behind the scheme which can be presented in a powerful way, explaining how design has addressed environmental concerns and, in so doing, reducing the risk of potential objections. The key to this approach is to ensure dialogue between key members of the EIA, planning and design teams, to identify design constraints and mitigation measures that need to be factored into the scheme.

LDA Design arranged and attended key design team meetings early in the design process. These meetings were a crucial part of the EIA process and ultimately were critical in mitigating potential adverse environmental effects. These design team meetings also enabled constructive discussion between the different technical disciplines and identified that constraints of one discipline could be beneficial for another discipline.

Utilities and Ecology

Great crested newts were found to be present within the application site and the surrounding area. Therefore it was essential that existing ecological corridors were considered as part of the masterplan. Further constraints from overhead power lines that cross the site created a corridor, free of development. This design constraint was utilised by the ecologists to retain ecological corridors. A series of ponds, which act as ‘ecological stepping stones’, have been proposed further enhancing the value of the ecological corridor.

Noise and Flood Risk

The noise generated from the Bristol to Gloucester railway line, which forms the western boundary of the application site, was environmental constraint. The land adjacent to the railway line was identified to fall within PPG 24 NEC C noise category. Therefore development was restricted within this area to minimise any potential adverse impacts. This environmental constraint provided an opportunity for the mitigation of flood risk. The strip of land adjacent to the railway was used to accommodate surface water attenuation facilities, which otherwise would have taken up valuable development land elsewhere within the application site.

This approach not only allowed for a stronger environmental design response but also generated greater developable land efficiencies. As a result the final masterplan responded positively to the environmental constraints whilst still addressing the commercial requirements of the developer.

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