EIA Quality Mark Case Study

EIA for Development of Sydenhams Timber Yard, Poole

Key Issues:

Poole Harbour is one of the largest natural harbours in the world and is protected for its marine and terrestrial habitats and species. The harbour supports internationally significant populations of wintering birds.

Identifying suitable ecological mitigation and enhancements to avoid or minimise potential impacts on species in the Poole Harbour proposed Special Protection Area (SPA).

Engagement with the planning authority and the Environment Agency to agree suitable flood protection to enable a new underground car park entrance to connect to the existing road level.

Engaging with the local community and stakeholders to address concerns with introducing a new landmark tall building.

Ensuring the introduction of a new Marina would not adversely affect coastal processes or water quality in the existing Back Water Channel and wider Poole Harbour.

Purpose of the project:

Ramboll was instructed by Atlas Partners Development (Sydenham) limited to manage the EIA and prepare the Environmental Statement for a proposed mixed-use development on a site in the Poole regeneration area.

The proposed development provides an opportunity to provide new residential units and retail space within close proximity to Poole town centre as part of wider regeneration of Hamworthy and the Back Water Channel waterfront.

Description of the Project:

The site is currently a working timber yard. The site is situated in Hamworthy, on the western edge of Poole and adjacent to the Back Water Channel. The quay on site, and quays on adjacent sites, have historically been used for commercial port and industrial operations. However, with the exception of the Port of Poole itself, most are being converted for residential and commercial use. The application site’s water frontage is between the Poole Harbour Bridge and the Twin Sails Bridge.

The north-eastern site boundary lies adjacent to the Back Water Channel. The Back Water Channel links Poole Harbour, with Holes Bay, and separates Poole from Hamworthy.
Description of the project (continued):
The surrounding area includes sites designated for their biodiversity, historic, cultural and landscape value. Key constraints within 5 km of the site include the Poole Conservation Area which includes the Poole Harbour bridge adjacent to the site and the Poole Harbour proposed Special Protection Area adjacent to the site.

The site comprises a key location within Poole’s designated Regeneration Area, the aim of which is to provide a high quality urban extension on the edge of the town centre.

The proposed development comprises a residential led mixed-use scheme over 350 apartments, commercial space for shops, restaurants or small businesses, a marina for use by residents of the proposed development, underground car parking and landscaping, play space and public open space.

The marina would open out into the Back Water Channel. The commercial and residential units would occupy seven buildings of varying height. The building nearest the boat basin entrance and Poole Harbour Bridge would be a feature building of 14 storeys. The remainder would be in six blocks arranged around the boat basin. The height of these reduces towards the southwest, such that height respects existing buildings along the road to the south of the site.

Lessons learnt:
Pre-application discussions with the consenting authority allowed the scope of the EIA to be focussed on the key issues.

The importance of early programming of ecological survey works to ensure time to collect sufficient data.

The importance of agreeing with the consenting authorities that intrusive surveys, such as a ground investigation, could be conditioned to be undertaken post consent to prevent disturbance of the existing business operating on the site.

Early engagement with statutory stakeholders ensured that measures were incorporated into the design to avoid or minimise potential effects and provide enhancements.

Regular engagement with the MMO case officer enabled any outstanding queries from consultees to be identified and resolutions to be agreed.

The importance of consideration of alternatives in site layout to minimise potential environmental impacts; particularly landscape and visual impacts.

Regular communication of design changes to the EIA team to ensure potential environmental impacts of design changes were quickly communicated to the design.

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