# M1 J45 Leeds Skelton Lake Services

## Purpose of the project
Acting on behalf of Extra MSA Group, Spawforths secured outline planning permission for a £50m 'new concept' Motorway Service Area (MSA) at Junction 45 of the M1 in Leeds.

Leeds Skelton Lake Services will address road safety deficiencies on this section of the Motorway Network between the existing MSAs at M62 Hartshead Moor, M1 Woolley Edge and A1M Wetherby. The site is located at the Gateway to the Leeds Enterprise Zone and Extra’s investment in the City Region will create over 700 new job opportunities throughout its construction and operation.

## Description of the project
The 15.52-hectare site is adjacent to Junction 45 of the M1 Motorway, to the east of the urban area of Leeds.

The proposals are for a Motorway Service Area (MSA) including Facilities Building with viewing platform, up to 100 bedroom Hotel, Skelton Lake Visitor Centre, service yard, Fuel Filling Station, parking facilities for each category of vehicle, access and internal circulation roads, structured and natural landscaping with outside amenity space/picnic space and dog walking zone, pedestrian and cycle links, bus gate and bus shelter, surface water drainage areas, ecological mitigation, pumping station, retaining structures and associated infrastructure and earthworks.

## Key Issues –
The Skelton Lake site included a series of environmental issues which were addressed by the team through the design process and environmental assessment. The environmental assessment focused on heritage, landscape and visual impact, flood risk, ecology and ground, along with other technical areas, and in doing so, the team were able to identify appropriate mitigation within the scheme design.

The Case Study will focus on the importance of engagement and consultation; ES Co-ordination; a close working relationship with the technical and design teams and the Client; the need for development; and the alternatives considered.

The consultation strategy was adopted at an early stage and enabled significant and collaborative engagement and consultation with the Local Authority, key consultees, Local Councillors and MPs, key stakeholders, local residents, local community interest groups, local businesses and other developers. The feedback through this engagement influenced the scheme evolution.

Collaborative team working enabled a number of potentially conflicting matters to be addressed through scheme evolution and environmental testing, such as the commercial needs of the Client, highway safety, efficient and effective site layout, ecology, flood risk, ground constraints and landscape and visual impact.
Lessons learnt

MSAs exist primarily to meet a public safety need on the Strategic Road Network (SRN). Given Government Policy relating to the SRN in Circular 02/2013 and National Planning Policy Framework and Highway England guidance, there is a requirement to demonstrate both the need for an MSA and the most appropriate location for it.

The need was established due to the identification of an existing gap on the SRN for such a facility. A search area was therefore established to find a suitable site that would enable the need for an MSA to be met. Planning, engineering and environmental constraints were considered in respect of each of the potential locations, along with commercial factors. This assessment was drawn together to identify the preferred location for the MSA. This was fully detailed within the ES identifying the main reasons for the choices made taking account of the environmental effects.

It was imperative to the success of the scheme that the scheme made the most effective and efficient use of the site, didn’t give rise to highway safety issues, achieved a layout that accommodated all the necessary component parts and met commercial needs. There was a desire for a unique design incorporating green roofs. The scheme also needed to be fully cognisant of site-specific issues associated with such things as the ground conditions, flood risk, ecology and landscape and visual impact. This was as a result of the former use of the site, its location adjacent to a lake and established landscape corridors, part of the site being within Flood Risk Zones 2 and 3 and the site’s proximity to Temple Newsam (Listed House and Parkland).

Lessons learnt cont. -

Given the nature of the proposals and location, early engagement with the Local Authority was important, along with local councillors and key community and environmental groups. This provided feedback that was considered by the team and influenced the overall scheme design, layout and the mitigation that was both built into the scheme design, but also secured through planning conditions and legal agreement to ensure the environmental impacts and their effects were suitably addressed so the effects of the development were not significant.

Good project management was essential to ensure information was shared throughout the team and that the team worked together to enable environmental issues to be addressed suitably through scheme design. It was also essential to make certain that these did not give rise to other issues, particularly those related to highways, ecology, flood risk, ground constraints and visual impact. This enabled scheme fixes at the appropriate stage in the process for environmental testing and re-visiting of the scheme design and mitigation as appropriate ahead of any further testing. Regular full team meetings were therefore held and continual dialogue undertaken throughout the team.

This was all documented through the ES to show a transparent and robust process.

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