This case study will look at the environmental assessment’s role in identifying the required mitigation to address and manage the likely significant impacts of the proposed development, with a focus on green infrastructure.

The Parkside Colliery site proposals include a series of environmental issues and opportunities. To ensure the most effective and efficient use of the site to accommodate the development and the associated infrastructure, it was apparent through early environmental testing and professional knowledge and experience, that a series of mitigation measures were required to ensure the development would not result in a significant effect on the environment. Through close working, the team were able to identify appropriate mitigation and fully incorporate this into the scheme proposals as they evolved. The mitigation was carefully considered and designed to have a multi-functional purpose, particularly in respect of the green infrastructure.

This mitigation is largely incorporated as an inherent part of the proposals and as such is a fundamental part of the design. This mitigation has included retention of the general extent of the existing spoil heap, perimeter bunding, enhancement of retained vegetation, new landscape planting throughout the site, provision of new water bodies, attenuation features as part of the drainage strategy and a variation of existing ground levels.

Purpose of the project
Acting on behalf of Parkside Regeneration LLP, Spawforths led a team of consultants to prepare and submit an outline planning application with Environmental Statement.

The proposals are the first phase of a comprehensive development of the Former Parkside Colliery site to help to meet the current short term logistics need for the St Helens area.

The Proposed Development will bring significant benefits to the area, particularly in respect of socio economic (job creation and GVA) as well as other benefits related to the regeneration of a former colliery site that has remained vacant for many years despite efforts to bring forward its redevelopment having been hampered by the economic climate.

Description of the project
The proposal comprises the construction of up to 92,900 m² (gross internal) of employment floorspace (Use Class B8 with ancillary B1(a) offices) and associated servicing and infrastructure.

The site is a former colliery site, and is approximately 48 hectares. The site previously formed part of the Lancashire Coalfield although the colliery use ceased when the pit closed in 1993. It is located to the south of Newton-le-Willows in St Helens. The site is in close proximity to the strategic highway network, comprising the M62 and M6.
Lessons learnt

A full team of designers and technical consultants were involved early in the scheme proposals to ensure all issues and likely significant impacts were identified at an early stage in order that the required mitigation could be identified and incorporated into the scheme design. There was an opportunity to look at the mitigation carefully and comprehensively as the scheme developed and the team have worked closely through scheme evolution to develop the inherent, multi-functional, green infrastructure mitigation. This was done through regular design team meetings and continual dialogue throughout the team to discuss the evolving proposals and how the mitigation could best be incorporated to enhance the scheme.

As would be expected in any scheme, it was important to seek to retain as much vegetation on site as possible. However there was inevitably going to be a loss of vegetation within the site to enable the most effective and efficient use of such a sustainably located site for the strategic employment proposals. This loss therefore needed to be compensated, as did the loss of two ponds within the site.

Due to the nature of the proposals and the resultant scale of the buildings, bunding was incorporated to screen the proposed buildings visually in combination with the lowering of ground levels. The bunding also acts as an additional barrier to noise generated from the end uses. Due to the early implementation of the bunding, it will also act to screen much of the construction activities to protect neighbouring residential amenity and visual impacts.

A landscaping scheme is proposed for the site to help assimilate the buildings into the landscape, to provide an attractive setting for the proposals and provide planting to the bunding and throughout the site.

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