### Key Issues –
One of the main issues with the EIA process was the array of changes (some more subtle than others) that took place throughout this period which meant that large parts of the ES could either not be completed or even started. The team broadly worked to the timescales/milestones established. However, this was a challenging task as many other matters (mainly led by the parallel commercial implementation plan being driven) affected the team’s ability to achieve an absolute ‘fix’ on the scheme within the timescales established. For example, changes in the floorspace areas impacted upon the work being undertaken by various consultants.

The programme to submit a planning application was very challenging and the scheme continuously evolved. The design changes needed to respond rapidly and to a variety of influences. The proposed changes or mitigation was recorded so that they could be fully considered and explained in the introduction chapters of the ES and other planning submission material (e.g. the Statement of Community Involvement). Whilst the end scheme was successful and due diligence applied as part of the EIA and other assessments, this process was challenging to manage in terms of achieving a ‘fix’ to meet the target programme, and ultimately the timescale for completion of the EIA extended to account for this.

### Purpose of the project
Broadway Malyan has recently had planning permission granted for a £50M, 40,000 sqm retail and leisure led, mixed-use, regeneration scheme for this site. A Hybrid Planning Application (part full, part outline) with Conservation Area Consent was submitted to Cheshire West and Chester Council. An Environmental Statement was submitted with the application.

### Description of the project
The Barons Quay site is a brownfield site located within Northwich town centre and as such is well related to the urban area. Northwich, and more specifically the site, has long been a location for salt mining. Over time the extraction of salt below the ground left much of the Barons Quay area structurally unstable and unsuitable for development. As a result the former English Partnerships and Vale Royal Borough Council invested in a programme of land stabilisation across 32 hectares of the town centre. This made it suitable for development and allowed the regeneration of the area. The site is also adjacent to the River Weaver (is partially in a flood risk zone) and is adjacent to two of the town’s Conservation Areas.
Lessons learnt

**Design Freeze** – In order to avoid abortive work it is important to achieve a design freeze in order to enable all the assessments to be undertaken on a like for like basis. On a site of this scale and complexity, a two stage ‘design freeze’ would be sensible to enable other non-EIA related matters to continue to evolve. Stage 1 design freeze – high level, broad parameters and various scenarios. Stage 2 design freeze – the scheme being submitted for planning / no further changes. Even small changes to the design/proposal could have significant knock-on effects on timescale and the ability of the team to complete their assessments.

**Integrated Team Approach** – Good design needs a well-qualified and professional team who are able to work jointly through development issues that arise. The EIA co-ordinator needs to lead this process with an open dialogue enabling all disciplines to make a positive contribution to the design process.

**Monitoring and Reporting** – managing a scheme of this type can be challenging and with a full multi-disciplinary team there are a number of influences that mean the scheme is continually evolving and a ‘fix’ difficult to achieve at a time that is convenient for all parties involved. Monitoring and recording this process can be challenging as options are quickly assessed and included/excluded which may or may not affect the EIA until a ‘fix’ is achieved or key decisions made. Keeping a log and reporting to the project manager is an important task and there should be an allowance for this role and responsibility.

Lessons learnt cont. –

**Timescales** - Around two months is a minimum sensible time required on a scheme of this type once all assessments have been completed (1st complete draft) in order to review, discuss additional mitigation, liaise with LPA officers and consultees, agree a final strategy with the team and client, complete final reports (2nd draft final), compile and review ES for consistencies and compliance.

Contact details

Adrian Keal, Associate Director
Broadway Malyan
a.keal@broadwaymalyan.com
3 Weybridge Business Park,
Addlestone Road, Weybridge
Surrey, KT15 2BW
Telephone 01932 845 599

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