Key Issues –
In September 2004, an outline planning application was submitted for the Horley North West Sector development which was supported by an Environmental Statement (ES). Following the submission of the application, the development proposals were amended and refined to address more detailed flood modelling data which became available. These changes were addressed in a Supplement which was prepared to support the ES. Following this and a Regulation 19 request from Reigate & Banstead Borough Council (RBBC), the surface water drainage strategy for the proposed development was refined further. A second ES Supplement was prepared and submitted in 2007 which addressed the environmental impacts of these changes.

In 2012, the planning application remained undetermined for a number of reasons, resulting in additional amendments to the scheme design. As a result a third and final ES Supplements were prepared.

Purpose of the project
Horley North West Sector is one of two strategic housing sites identified by RBBC to deliver the majority of new homes required at Horley under the Surrey Structure Plan (1994) and the RBBC Local Plan First Alteration (2005).

Description of the project
The Horley North West Sector proposals are for a mixed-use residential development providing 1,570 dwellings, small scale employment, a school, open space and sports facilities.

The site is an irregular crescent-shaped area of land wrapping around the north west edge of Horley. Its outer boundary is formed by the River Mole to the west and the Burstow Stream to the north. It is bounded to the south east by the edge of the existing urban area of Horley, which comprises modern housing developments. At its southern end, it is bounded by Lee Street Sewage Treatment Works and at its eastern end by Bolters Wood, a small area of woodland. A minor road, Meath Green Lane, runs northwards out of Horley through the centre of the site, acquiring a winding, rural character as it passes northwards to cross the Burstow Stream.
Lessons learnt

Given the lapse of time since the 2003 Scoping Opinion and the 2007 Regulation 19 request, there was a concern that a challenge to the application could be raised, due to the original scoping opinion being out of date and therefore no longer valid.

The team worked closely with the local authority to confirm the scope of the ES supplement and inform the preparation of the new environmental information.

Approach to EIA

The ES supplement not only addressed the changes to the scheme design but also updated the existing ES to reflect any changes in policy, methodology and baseline conditions.

Approach to Scoping

Early discussions with statutory consultees, were crucial in the preparation of the Scoping Report and submission of the ES Supplement.

Ecology

Early discussions with Surrey Wildlife Trust identified that ecology surveys needed to be updated and reassessed against the current Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (IEEM) guidance.

Transport

Early discussions with Surrey County Council confirmed that the traffic flow analysis and comparison which had been used in the original ES remained robust and valid.

Lessons learnt cont.

Socio-economics

Prior to the submission of the Scoping Report, a review of the original ES was undertaken. This identified that socio-economic effects of the development had not been assessed previously and consequently was included within the Scoping Report.

These early discussions helped frame the Scoping Report which set out the changes to the proposed scheme along with the changes that were required for each of the individual topic chapters. This approach assisted RBBC to understand clearly what the Environmental Supplement was going to address and as a result the scoping opinion did not raise any further queries.

This approach to consultation enabled the EIA team to work efficiently and effectively, avoiding unnecessary work in order to meet a critical deadline.

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