**EIA Quality Mark Case Study**

**The former Aluminium works, Dolgarrog, Conwy**

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| - Previous use of the site was as an Aluminium works which closed in 2007.  
- Contamination was identified in the soil and groundwater at the site during intrusive site investigations.  
- The site is located broadly within Flood Zone C1 (TAN 15) in that it comprises an area of flood plain that has previously been developed and is served by significant infrastructure, including flood defences.  
- The site is subject to fluvial and tidal flooding – the water table on the site is particularly high.  
- Site history – archaeology issues, due in part to the Dolgarrog Dam disaster of 1925.  
- Ecology - SSSI adjacent to the site, historic concrete bunker on-site now used by Bats and there is an exceptional population of slow worms present.  
- Noise - difficult to predict noise impacts due to the unique nature of the scheme. | NJL Consulting were instructed to undertake the planning strategy and technical work to support an application to create the UK’s first ‘Wavegarden©’ inland surf lake. It will be called Surf Snowdonia and is located at an 18 hectare former aluminium works in Dolgarrog, North Wales. |

**Description of the project**

The planning application consisted of two applications. An outline planning application for an outdoor leisure complex (including a central ‘Hub’ building, accommodation and car parking) and a full planning application for infrastructure, landscaping and access works.

The planning applications together sought consent for a tourism led surfing and water sports adventure attraction, which will utilise new surfing technologies and appeal to a wide range of users from across the UK.
Lessons learnt
The EIA process was key in not only assisting the Local Authority and Statutory Consultees in understanding the scheme, but also the process of delivering the scheme. It also enabled the Local Authority to have confidence in the scheme and its ability to deal with the complex land contamination issues on site.

Two separate applications had to be submitted due to the details of the scheme. Article 2 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (Wales) Order 2012 defines outline planning permissions in respect of buildings only. The Dolgarrog proposal included substantial engineering works, the nature and scale of which meant that they were not incidental to the building operations, and therefore could not form part of the outline application as ancillary works.

The Council confirmed that there was no provision in the legislation which allows for ‘outline’ and ‘full’ proposals to be combined in the same application, so they were not willing to accept a hybrid application. Subsequently two Environment Statements (ES) had to be submitted, with a full suite of separate supporting application documentation.

Initially this approach appeared onerous, with no distinct benefits. As the process emerged however, it became apparent that separating the two phases of the scheme was beneficial. Early engagement with Natural Resources Wales (NRW) enabled the flood mitigation strategy to be agreed and signed off promptly, which provided a platform height for other parameters to follow. Due to a number of archaeology and ecology issues, the design of the scheme went through an iterative process.

Lessons learnt cont.
An example of this the bunker was safeguarded as a habitat resource. The lack of early engagement with the Gwynedd Archaeological Planning Service (GAPS) resulted in a request for trial trenching at a very late stage in the planning process, but further ground condition exploratory work identified the high water table and this ruled out trial trenching on feasibility grounds.

The application was decided within 9 weeks of submission. This was seen as a success by the project team and was down to the excellent working relationship with the Local Authority and early engagement with Statutory Consultees over the infrastructure works.

Key Lessons
- Begin early engagement with Statutory Consultees to ensure scope of works and potential mitigation measures are agreed early on in the project.
- Forge a positive relationship with the Local Authority Case Officer.
- Ensure the whole project team is updated regularly, especially post submission, when matters can arise frequently and need addressing quickly.

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