Brighton and Hove Wastewater Treatment Project

Key Issues
RPS coordinated the EIA process and provided all the specialist input required to provide a robust Environmental Statement (ES) and Expert Witnesses to Public Inquiry. Two of the key issues are summarised below:

1. Landscape
The site is located on the edge of an AONB and the South Downs National Park. This required the RPS landscape team to work closely with the project architects, engineers and Southern Water to design a solution as part of an integrated landscape strategy.

2. Odour
RPS air quality specialists worked with Southern Water in ensuring that odour concerns were addressed during the EIA process and at Inquiry. Measures taken included a state of the art odour control system and Odour Management Plan.

Purpose of the Project
Southern Water commissioned RPS to provide environmental advice as part of a new project team following refusal of a previous application. Southern Water has an obligation in UK and European law to provide secondary wastewater treatment for the Brighton and Hove catchment area.

Description of the Project
The project includes a Wastewater Treatment Works and Sludge Recycling Centre, transfer infrastructure to connect to the existing local sewerage infrastructure, and a Long Sea Outfall at Friars Bay.

The landscape strategy ensured the development would be screened and contained by land reprofiling, mounding, a large grass roof and areas of new planting. This aimed to blend the project into the local area and the wider South Downs.
The robustness of the site selection methodology was confirmed following the public inquiry as the Secretaries of State concluded that there was no more appropriate site.

The need to be clear on the scope of development subject to EIA bearing in mind under normal circumstances much of the development would otherwise be classified as permitted development under the planning acts or dealt with separately by other consenting bodies.

The importance of developing a robust site selection methodology. The robustness of the site selection methodology was confirmed following the public inquiry as the Secretaries of State concluded that the methodology used was robust and that there was no more appropriate site.

The desirability of understanding the detail of the project early so that mitigation measures can be identified and where possible incorporated into the development description. In this case, the RPS EIA team worked closely with Southern Water, engineers, architects, planners and legal advisors to develop an appropriate, innovative design solution for the preferred site.

Lessons Learnt cont.

The importance of developing Construction, Operational and Odour Management Plans in mitigation terms, and the ongoing role these have played in the construction and implementation of the scheme.

The need for careful editing of the ES to ensure a balanced effort between chapters with unnecessary detail being assigned to appendices to ensure easy reading of document as a whole.

Following grant of consent, RPS is now working with Southern Water during the construction phase. RPS has provided advice in relation to the discharge of conditions on a range of matters, including implementation of the grass roof, landscape, archaeology, protected species licenses, soil handling, traffic, noise and odour.

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