Key Issues –
This case study focuses on the adequacy of addressing alternatives with the Environmental Statement. The project is for a mixed use, residential led scheme on a site within the applicants ownership. Therefore the consideration of alternatives is limited.

The Key Issues include:
- contextual planning history
- the consideration of alternatives
- the extent of information required
- alternatives not considered suitable for further study.

Purpose of the project
The redevelopment of the HMS Ganges site, a derelict former naval training ground on the Shotley Peninsula, Suffolk.

- The developer Haylink Ltd own the site
- Babergh District Council are the determining authority
- The purpose is to provide new residential development, community uses and a retirement community

Description of the project
The project comprises the development of a brownfield site for:
- 21 open market residential units
- 43 affordable residential units
- 28 retirement homes
- 60 bed nursing home
- 30 bed youth hostel
- 1,599 sqm of commercial space

The site is a 23.8ha Brownfield site located on the Shotley Peninsula, which is adjacent to two estuaries, both designated SSSI, Ramsar and SPAs.
Lessons learnt

The project site has an extensive planning history in which different proposals for a residential led mixed use development have been previously granted (for an outline) permission and refused for subsequent reserved matters applications. A revised detailed application was also refused and a new permission was sought.

The ES discussed the issue of alternatives in terms of land use and layouts that were associated with the planning history.

The Council made a Regulation 22 request seeking a more detailed assessment of alternatives - to set out all the main alternatives and why these were rejected in favour of the proposed development.

Legal opinion was sought in relation to the issue whereby it was established that the level of detail required should be in line with the EIA Directive, namely:

- The developer need only provide information about the main alternatives actually studied by it.

Lessons learnt cont. -

- The developer is only required to provide an ‘outline’, and that is only in relation to the ‘main alternatives’ that it has in fact considered.

- The developer is only required to provide an ‘indication’ of the ‘main’ reasons for their choice of alternatives.

Further information under Regulation 22 was submitted which provided greater clarity in relation to the previous scheme and layout that were originally presented. It concluded that they were not considered further as reasonable alternatives and that no further detailed information need be provided.

The Council accepted the position as clarified under the Regulation 22 submission.

Contact details

- Eve Campbell
- Savills
- ecampbell@savills.com
- 0203 320 8245

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