### Key Issues

The ES addressed a total of three separate but inter-connected planning applications – the Westgate Site (outline planning application), as well as two temporary, offsite ‘enabling’ development proposals comprising a car park and a coach/HGV layout facility (full planning applications).

In this context, the ES was required to adopt a clear and well-structured assessment to consider the effects and alternatives to all three projects as well as their inter-relationship with each other.

Each of the three sites had differing constraints and opportunities, resulting in varying examination of site alternatives, demonstration of need for each of the proposed developments and a detailed consultation and communication scheme.

The ES also drew upon lessons from previous schemes which have failed to commence on the Westgate Site.

### Purpose of the project

With a land area of 5.7 ha, the Westgate Site represents by far the largest development site in Oxford’s City Centre. The proposed refurbishment of the existing 1970s Westgate Centre and redevelopment of adjacent land will strengthen Oxford’s retail and leisure offer and reinforce its regional role.

### Description of the project

**Westgate Site:**
- partial demolition of the existing Westgate, multi-storey car park, 14 residential units;
- up to 81,922sqm Class A1 retail space;
- up to 26,712sqm Class A2-A5 space;
- up to 5,986sqm leisure uses (Class D2);
- up to 122 residential units;
- retention of the existing library;
- up to 1,100 underground car park spaces;
- cycle parking, public realm improvements, shopmobility, public toilets & ancillary uses.

In addition, two additional separate applications for offsite ‘enabling’ temporary car/coach/HGV parking...
Lessons learnt

The learning outcomes from this case were focused on the need to ensure the proposed development properly assessed all aspects, including the ‘enabling’ developments even if they would not require an ES when in isolation.

The learning outcomes for future retail-led mixed-use schemes included:

- Review the site history to understand the context of previous schemes that have either been implemented or failed as a starting point for going forward;
- Engage at an early stage with the Local Planning Authority, Highways Authority and local key stakeholders to identify the different requirements for each site including opportunities, constraints and potential alternatives for each site, resulting in a more iterative process;
- Understand the varying levels of information and assessment required for each site, as particular issues may not apply to all sites;
- Agree methodologies in advance. In doing so it is possible to clearly set out the assessment approach for each site in a regimented and consistent manner for ease of preparation and interpretation;
- Address all key issues through a robust and defendable set of conclusions, plans and principles.

Lessons learnt cont.

The ‘enabling’ development sites could easily have been omitted as part of the ES, however as they were material to the planning decisions being made at the Westgate Site, it was worthwhile to ensure the project was being considered in its totality so that the full extent of effects were being properly and genuinely assessed. This approach was welcomed from the Local Planning Authority from the outset.

The application has received a resolution to grant planning permission on balance of the various issues considered throughout the application process.

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