### Purpose of the project

Waterman Infrastructure and Environment (Waterman IE) undertook the EIA and associated technical studies to support two detailed planning applications for this landmark development adjacent to Waterloo station for Elizabeth House Partnership, a joint venture between London & Regional Properties Ltd and Chelsfield.

### Description of the project

The development is located immediately west of Waterloo Railway Station. The site comprises an area of 2.21ha (including Elizabeth House and 10 Leake Street). The development comprises three buildings up to 29 storeys in height and will deliver approximately 8,700 new jobs on the site and 165 new homes.

An ES was submitted in 2012 for Elizabeth House which was then supported by an ES Addendum in 2014 that included the 10 Leake Street development. The 10 Leake Street development was included and subjected to EIA because the two developments are very closely linked, and, accordingly, formed part of the same project for the purposes of the EIA Regulations.

### Key Issues –

The key issue was how to accommodate the schemes which were included in the cumulative assessment in 2012 but had been completed in the interim. These schemes therefore had to be included in the ES Addendum baseline for each technical specialism. Another challenge was how to reasonably assess the large number of cumulative schemes now proposed at the time of the 2014 Addendum. In the 2012 ES nine cumulative schemes were identified and assessed as part of the EIA whereas by the time that the 2014 ES Addendum was prepared 47 cumulative schemes were proposed by stakeholders which were reduced to 32 for final assessment. The method we used to reduce this number was as follows:

We firstly identified all the possible schemes within 1km (spatial threshold) and any of significant size beyond this (massing threshold) and then assessed if we had enough information to be able to assess them (information threshold). The information threshold criteria were, did we know the proposed number of residential units, the massing of buildings and preferably the housing mix and form and other associated land uses. We then considered what the effect threshold criteria would be e.g. would including them have a different or greater effect on our scheme’s effects. This criteria was dependent on the aspect being considered (socio-economic, wind; daylight, sunlight, overshadowing, light pollution, solar glare, built heritage, townscape and visual impact) as each will have its own threshold based on the sensitivity of the receptor, the strength of the source and the ease with which the two can be linked. The final 32 chosen cumulative schemes were modelled and assessed.
Lessons learnt

The way in which cumulative impacts are assessed tends to be inconsistent across EIA practice as highlighted by the Canadian review of Cumulative Environment Assessment in 2012 (bit.ly/1PLmJL5) Subsequent guidance was produced including the Renewable UK Cumulative Impact Assessment Guidance (focussed on offshore wind farms). Although this guidance focussed on wind farms and its scoping, data and assessment principles influenced the way in which we approach cumulative assessment.

Defining the criteria

Like many assessments we included the ‘in combination’ (synergistic) effects from the development itself as well as the additive effects from other developments. However in identifying cumulative schemes outside of our 1km spatial threshold e.g. those that could give rise to heritage, visual and townscape effects due to their height, bulk and massing in addition to those included due to their proximity, uplift size or introduction of sensitive receptors meant we ended up with a large initial list. The use of criteria and thresholds to define what schemes would be used in the cumulative assessment allowed us to be proportionate in what we included.

Defining a cut-off point

An accurate list of nearby schemes was maintained through communication with the clients and planners as well as regular searches of local borough’s planning portals. But we realised we had to define a cut-off point after which we could not include new proposed developments with our ES. We are still learning when to set this point: setting it too early can mean several schemes in a busy redevelopment area are assessed post-submission, possibly requiring further ES Addendums, but too late and the assessments may not be completed robustly before the planning application is submitted.

Lessons learnt cont.

Defining early

Collating information on any potential cumulative scheme in proximity to the development early on in the EIA process (at scoping stage), and consequently updating the list throughout the EIA process was found to be integral in ensuring accurate delivery of the cumulative assessment, already started.

A pragmatic and concise scope for the EIA ensured the subsequent cumulative assessment within the ES focused on the likely significant environmental effects and also ensured the design team were made aware of any environmental issues (including those due to cumulative effects) prior to scheme fix. The EIA specialists also provided information to support the design process by contributing to technical solutions. In contributing to the design process from an early stage, fewer design alterations had to be made at a later stage as a result of environmental constraints.

We continue to refine our cumulative assessment process.

Contact details

Pippa Kelly Associate Director
T: 020 7928 7888
E: pippa.kelly@watermangroup.com

For access to more EIA case studies and hundreds of non-technical summaries of Environmental Statements visit:
www.iema.net/qmark