

AGENDA ITEM 8.3**Graham Blew**

PTE A/A 23/10/13.

From: Liz Quogan [liz.quogan@dartford.gov.uk]
Sent: 22 October 2013 15:54
To: PLACON Environment Agency planning apps, (kentplanning@environment-agency.gov.uk); PLACON KCC ARCHAEOLOGY (wendy.rogers@kent.gov.uk); PLA Footpaths (olivia.bonham@kent.gov.uk); PLACON Kent Wildlife Trust (info@kentwildlife.org.uk); 'Peter.Rosevear@kent.gov.uk'; 'PLACON Highways Agency (M25Planning@highways.gsi.gov.uk)'; Natural England (Kent.planning@naturalengland.org.uk); PLACON Southern Water (southernwaterplanning@atkinsglobal.com); Graham Blew; info; 'PLANATIONALGRID PLANT PROTECTION (plantprotection@nationalgrid.com)'; planning.applications@kent.gov.uk; 'james.trimmer@pla.co.uk'; 'ray.agozzino@highspeed1.co.uk'; Network Rail (TownPlanningSE@networkrail.co.uk); 'southeast@english-heritage.org.uk'
Cc: 'Liz.Shier@kent.gov.uk'
Subject: Consultation on a Request for a Screening Opinion - Swanscombe Peninsular Ref No: 13/01406/SCREEN
Attachments: Dartford BC Screening 181013.pdf; 11114002 Site Plan Rev H 2013-10-11 (2).pdf

Dear Sirs,

Request for a screening opinion under the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2011 (Regulation 5) to determine whether an EIA is required for the redevelopment of land to provide a leisure resort of up to 747,000sqm plus external hotel operations, car parking and transport interchanges, and support facilities.

I have received a request for a screening opinion from Savills on behalf of London Resort Company Holdings in relation to the redevelopment of land within and to the south of Swanscombe Peninsula, to provide a world class resort and leisure entertainment district, including a Theme Park Resort.

The request for screening has also been sent to Gravesham Borough Council as the proposed development boundary covers both districts and so you will be consulted by both Councils. It would be helpful, therefore, if you could copy any response to both Councils.

The screening request letter together with a copy of a plan identifying the area are attached.

As you will see Savills have concluded that an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is required for the development and I think it is likely that the Council's will reach the same conclusion.

We have 21 days to issue a screening decision. If you have any comments that you would like the Council to take into account please contact Sonia Bunn on 01322 343620 or sonia.bunn@dartford.gov.uk to discuss, as soon as possible.

Any formal written response should be received by the Council by lunchtime on 5th November 2013, so that these can be considered fully before a screening decision is issued.

Please let me know who the contact will be within your organisation with regard to this proposal, as Savills are keen to start the scoping exercise with regard to the EIA and so you will be consulted again with regard to this, at which time more detailed comments will be sought.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Kind regards

Sonia Bunn
Senior Planner

22/10/2013

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18th October 2013

savills

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Dear Ms Bunn

**London Paramount development
Request for a Screening Opinion - Regulation 5 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2011**

I write on behalf of our client, London Resort Company Holdings (LRCH) to request a formal Screening Opinion in relation to emerging proposals for the redevelopment of land, within and to the south of the Swanscombe Peninsula, to provide a world class resort and leisure entertainment district, including the largest and only world class Theme Park Resort in the UK.

The project is at the initial stages of design evolution, however it will see the delivery of a resort, leisure, entertainment and theme park alongside delivering substantial new infrastructure, employment generation and remediation of large areas of derelict and contaminated land.

This letter considers whether the application should be subject to an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) for the purposes of the above Regulations.

In relation to this we enclose:

- A plan sufficient to identify the land (see attached Site Plan Rev H);
- A brief description of the nature and purpose of the development and of its possible effects on the environment (see The Site and Surrounding Area and the Proposed Development below); and
- Additional information (see The Screening Process below).

Site and Surrounding Area

The project site comprises land of approximately 198 hectares (ha). The project site is located both within and to the south of the Swanscombe Peninsula which itself is adjacent to the River Thames. The Swanscombe Peninsula transects the Boroughs of Dartford and Gravesham.

The project site will encompass a number of parcels of land surrounding Swanscombe Railway Station. However, at this stage it is not anticipated that the Swanscombe Railway Station will be included within the red line boundary.

The Swanscombe Peninsula itself is largely post industrial brownfield land. Historically the Peninsula was used for a variety of industrial uses, ranging from early 20th century chalk pits to a cement works and Cement Kiln Dust (CKD) tipping in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s. The Peninsula is now largely

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derelict. The areas to the south of Swanscombe Peninsula are characterised by extensive brownfield land holdings.

The site lies in the eastern part of the London Basin, which is underlain by White Chalk, and the Peninsula itself is overlain by alluvium, comprising silts and clays. The underlying chalk is designated by the Environment Agency to be a Principal Aquifer and is the main source of water in the area and used for potable purposes. The majority of the project site lies within a groundwater Source Protection Zone (SPZ).

Background

The project has been evolving over the last 2 years through careful assessment of the locational credentials and business case.

LRCH has an exclusive licensing agreement with Paramount Licensing Inc. for the development of the project. The aim is to create a world class resort and theme park, which will deliver transformational benefits locally, regionally and nationally.

The Proposed Development

The proposals are at the initial stages of design development. However, in order to give an understanding of what the development will involve the following are considered to represent the key elements:

- Leisure resort of up to 747,000 sqm, including:
 - entertainment street
 - water park
 - 3 hotels (1,500 rooms)
 - theme park
 - events space
 - service buildings (approximately 27,000 sqm)
 - service yards (40,000sqm)
 - creative community office space (approximately 21,000 sqm)
 - brand land concept stores (approximately 11,000 sqm)
- External hotel operations area (approximately 3,500 hotel rooms and 3,000 parking spaces which will potentially be located underground)
- Staff apartments (approximately 2,500)
- Bus park (approximately 300 spaces)
- Transport plaza (approximately 3,500 sqm, including ticket office, toilets and food and beverage outlets which will channel guests into the transport systems)
- Bus station and drop off point (approximately 6,000 sqm)
- Staff training academy (approximately 10,000 sqm and 10 parking spaces)
- Staff parking
- Main visitor car park (approximately 8,000 with an additional 6,000 overflow spaces (at grade level)
- River taxi access (4 berths)

It is estimated that 12 to 15 million people will visit the resort annually.

The Screening Process

On 3rd March 1997 the Council of the European Union amended Directive 85/337/EEC through Council Directive 97/11/EC, which was given legal effect in England and Wales through the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2011 in so far as it relates to development under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

The 1997 amending Directive has several purposes, including the introduction of provisions to "*clarify, supplement and improve the rules on the assessment procedure*" and enabling developers to obtain an opinion from the competent authority on the need for EIA. The Directive also extends the range of projects to which EIA applies and requires an outline of the main alternatives considered to the development proposed.

In addition to the EIA Regulations and Directive, there is a body of guidance that further informs the EIA process, including:

- DETR. (March 1999). Circular 02/99: Environmental Impact Assessment; and
- DETR. (November 2000). Environmental Impact Assessment: A Guide to Procedures.

Development that falls within Schedule 1 of the Regulations always requires EIA and is referred to as 'Schedule 1 development'. Development listed in Schedule 2 that is located in a 'sensitive area' (as set out in Regulation 2(1)), or, exceeds one of the relevant criteria or thresholds given in Schedule 2 is referred to as 'Schedule 2 development'. Not all 'Schedule 2 development' will require an EIA, only that development likely to have significant environmental effects due to its size, location or nature. Development that requires EIA is referred to as 'EIA development'.

The proposed London Paramount development falls within the description in Schedule 2 Part 10(b) 'Urban Development Projects'. The site does lie within a sensitive area, as defined by the Regulations. Therefore the test of whether the proposal is EIA development is whether it would have significant effects on the environment by virtue of its characteristics, location and potential impact in the context of the selection criteria set out in Schedule 3 of the Regulations.

Regulation 4(6) of the Regulations requires screening to be undertaken with reference to the selection criteria set out in Schedule 3 of the Regulations. It is therefore important that these are considered. However, we consider that a more useful framework is set out in Article 3 of the Directive, and the following assessment follows those criteria with reference to the selection criteria in Schedule 3 as appropriate. The relevant selection criteria set out in Schedule 3 are:

- i. Characteristics of Development;
- ii. Location of Development; and
- iii. Characteristics of the Potential Impacts.

It is accepted that the development is of a sufficient size and nature to give rise to potential environmental effects.

Further clarification of the relevant criteria is also set out in Circular 2/99. These are also addressed below.

The Circular indicates that the local authorities should first consider the "*selection criteria*" within Schedule 3 of the Regulations (and Annex A of the Circular). The criteria for Category 10 (b) 'Urban Development Projects' are considered in the following paragraphs.

i. Characteristics of development

Schedule 3 refers to:

- a) Size of the development;
- b) Cumulation with other developments;
- c) Use of natural resources;
- d) Production of waste;
- e) Pollution and nuisances; and
- f) The risk of accidents, having regards to technologies used.

In respect of the Schedule 3 criteria, it is evident from the description of the Proposed Development above, that the site and the nature of the development are likely to give rise to potential effects and as such should be assessed under an EIA.

ii. Location of development

The EIA Regulations define 'Sensitive Areas' as follows:

- Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI);
- Land to which sub-section (3) of section 29 (nature conservation orders) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 applies;
- Areas to which paragraph (u)(ii) in the table in article 10 of the Town and Country Planning (General Development Procedure) Order 1995 applies;
- National Parks;
- The Broads;
- Properties appearing on the World Heritage List;
- Scheduled Ancient Monuments;
- Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty; and
- European sites within the meaning of regulation 10 of the Conservation (Natural Habitats etc) Regulations 1994.

The Baker's Hole SSSI and Scheduled Monument lie within the project site and the Springhead Roman Scheduled Monument is adjacent to the site to the south of the A2 (Watling Street).

iii. Characteristics of Potential Impact

The extent of potential impacts is likely to be widespread and more than of local significance. The magnitude, probability and complexity of any impacts on the environment will be high, given the proposed nature of the project. The characteristics of the development will be considered further within a Scoping Report in due course. However, at this stage it is anticipated that the Environmental Statement will follow the structure below:

1. Introduction
2. Background to EIA
3. The Site and its Setting
4. Description of Development
5. Construction and Implementation
6. Air Quality
7. Archaeology
8. Biodiversity
9. Energy and Carbon Dioxide Emissions
10. Heritage

11. Landscape and Visual
12. Micro-Climate
13. Noise and Vibration
14. Socio Economic
15. Soil Conditions, Groundwater and Contamination
16. Transportation
17. Waste
18. Water Environment (including flood risk)
19. Cumulative Impacts
20. Summary of Impacts

Summary

Given the above, it is considered that the proposed development is likely to give rise to significant effects on the environment taking account of the characteristics of the development, its location, and the potential impacts. Therefore we consider that the project will constitute EIA development.

We request that in accordance with the 2011 Regulations, Dartford Borough Council confirm that they share this view, and look forward to receiving a Screening Opinion from you within the requisite 21 days.

Should you require any further information to provide us with a screening opinion please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely



Christopher Potts
Director

Enc. As listed above

cc. Kevin Burbidge Gravesham Borough Council
Nigel Smith Kent County Council
Kevin Doyle, K2 Projects

