



## **Chapter Six** **SCOPING AND CONSULTATION**

### **EIA SCOPING**

#### **Introduction**

**6.1** This chapter describes the scoping and consultation process that has been undertaken for the Enviroparks scheme. Scoping is an important part of the EIA process which is used to identify the environmental issues that need to be assessed and to ascribe an appropriate level of importance to each issue so that the EIA work is properly focussed.

**6.2** The EIA Regulations do not stipulate that scoping is mandatory, although Regulation 10 enables an applicant to request a scoping opinion from a planning authority. This requires the local authority to seek advice from key consultees and then set out their opinion on what information should be included in the ES. Government guidance on EIA emphasises that undertaking a thorough scoping exercise is good practice. The guidance highlights also that scoping should involve consultation before the submission of a planning application.

#### **EIA scoping with the planning authorities**

**6.3** In advance of the planning application, a scoping report was submitted to both RCTCBC and BBNPA in May 2008 with a request for a formal scoping opinion to each of the planning authorities. The report was able to draw on information regarding ground conditions reported in 1995 for the Welsh Development Agency in connection with preparation of the land for development, and existing environmental information available from sources such as the Countryside Council for Wales, Environment Agency Wales and other government agencies.

**6.4** The scoping report gave an outline of the environmental issues that would be examined in the EIA. Each of the environmental issue sections included information on the baseline conditions, the potential effects that could arise and the potential mitigation that could be provided. To ensure that a comprehensive assessment was achieved, comments were invited on the intended scope of the EIA, inviting reviewers to consider whether:

- there were any potential significant impacts that had not been identified;
- the intended method of assessment was appropriate; and
- if there were any additional mitigation measures that should be considered.



#### Meetings with local planning authorities

**6.5** Prior to submitting the EIA scoping report, meetings were held with officers of BBNPA and RCTCBC to review the key issues that needed to be considered in the planning submission.

**6.6** To assist this, RCT officers with responsibilities for planning, development control, landscape, highways, drainage and pollution control were consulted. It is relevant to note that discussions on the methodology for detailed EIA studies, such as for transport, were being conducted by members of the applicant's EIA team concurrently as part of their normal approach to assessment.

#### Formal EIA scoping opinion from RCTCBC

**6.7** In June 2008, RCTCBC provided a formal response to the scoping exercise. It confirmed that the content of the scoping report presented a reasonable basis for progressing the EIA and added a number of comments from officers in addition to those documented in a note of the meeting in May. In summary, these comments were in respect of:

- **transport** – RCT Highways department provided the scope of information for the Transport Assessment
- **landscape** – RCT advised that the Countryside Council for Wales's *Landmap* should be used alongside the guidance from CCW cited in the scoping report.
- Assessment of the potential **visual effects** should include illustrations such as photomontages.
- RCT also consulted local council members on any **specific local views** that might be considered in the assessment.
- **TAN21: Waste** – to which the ES should have regard.
- The effects on **air quality** should be considered with reference to the information contained in the Stage 3 Detailed Assessment for NO<sub>2</sub> (April 2007).

**6.8** No response on the scoping report was received from BBNPA. However, a meeting with planning officers to discuss the project was held on 30 April 2008.

**6.9** Chapter 12 sets out a comprehensive account of the methodology used for the landscape assessment, in respect of the above, CCW's *Landmap* has been utilised, and photomontages have been prepared in developing the scheme design and assessing the potential visual effects of the scheme. Nine visual receptor locations were incorporated in the visual effects assessment on the basis of the information provided to RCT by local councillors.



**6.10** The Environment Agency Wales also reviewed the EIA scoping report and offered comments concerning:

- the local planning authorities' role as competent authority in respect of assessing whether there would likely be any significant effect on the Blaen Cynon SAC. Subsequent correspondence confirmed EAW's satisfaction with the scope of ecology survey work proposed;
- the need to identify licensed and un-licensed abstractions in the area;
- the need to confirm with Welsh Water that the discharge of treated effluent to the local sewerage network should not cause Hirwaun treatment works to fail any discharge consent limits;
- the need to include consideration of how the development would affect surface water and flood risk.

#### **Consultation by the project team on technical assessment**

**6.11** Additional consultation has been undertaken regarding specific elements of the technical assessment as follows.

**6.12** The transport assessment was conducted after consultations with the Highways Development Control and Adoption Manager and the Transportation Strategy Co-ordinator of RCT-CBC. Additionally, one of the council's chosen auditors, Capita Glamorgan Consultancy, was involved in the discussions. Various issues were raised regarding the production of a suitable transport assessment, and these are detailed within the transport and access chapter of this ES. Guidance received included:

- the need to undertake peak period surveys at five roundabouts in Hirwaun, and automatic traffic count (ATC) data to be obtained from Fifth Avenue in order to inform a Stage 1 Road Safety Assessment;
- junction assessments (ARCADY) are required at the five roundabouts to be surveyed;
- the proposed site access junction on Fifth Avenue as proposed initially by EHL, which formed a staggered access, should be modified. This was undertaken;
- the principles of a Travel Plan are to be included in the Traffic Assessment. Again, this has been done.

**6.13** The noise and vibration study was informed through consultation with Rhondda Cynon Taff County Borough Council prior to the undertaking of the monitoring exercise. The scope of the monitoring surveys was discussed and agreed. Representation was also made to the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority regarding the proposed noise assessment scheme, although no response was received.



**6.14** The provision of water and drainage and the options to discharge trade effluent into the local sewer were discussed with Dwr Cymru Welsh Water, initially through a pre-planning request and then through the supply of information as to the nature of the trade effluent from the site. Dwr Cymru Welsh Water identified the potential for water supply and domestic sewerage treatment, and identified the nearest drainage runs. The water company advised that clean surface water run-off would have to be discharged separately, through the use of a soak-away or similar. Initial comments on the discharge of trade effluent suggest that the Dwr Cymru Welsh Water Sewage Treatment Works has sufficient capacity for the proposed volume flow, but would require effluent from the facility to be treated to a high standard, and to omit any effluent from the biomax facility. Copies of the Dwr Cymru Welsh Water responses to Enviroparks' enquiries are included in Appendix 11.8 of this ES.

**6.15** Before finalising the scope of the ecology works, requests were made to the Countryside Council for Wales (CCW) for comments on the original ecology baseline report. CCW agreed that a marsh fritillary butterfly survey would be required due to the proximity of the Blaen Cynon SAC and the potential for the devil's bit scabious to exist within the tussocky turf. CCW recommended that, should the marsh fritillary butterfly be found, mitigation measures would be expected and this might include providing sufficient land for their continued habitat.

**6.16** CCW was also interested in the deep peat beds of the SAC / SSSI. It was agreed that, as a contaminated land survey was proposed, the hydrogeology of the area could be assessed at this point, although a subsequent meeting with RCT-CBC had suggested that the topography of the area means that the planning application site is unlikely to be associated with the peat beds.

**6.17** CCW would expect further studies for the European protected species including otters, bats, great crested newts and reptiles. Additionally, as potential water vole habitat existed, CCW would expect further investigation. These considerations are reflected in the ecology chapter of this ES.

**6.18** Finally, CCW predicted that lapwings might favour the application site and thus proposed a breeding birds survey. CCW felt that two visits would suffice for the survey, and suggested that the Glamorgan Bird Club and the Local Record Centre (Biological Record Centre) could provide some useful information. These organisations were duly contacted.

**6.19** The local planning authorities agreed that that EHL's EIA team should follow CCW's advice, and could seek to incorporate additional bat habitats on the site using landscaping and green construction techniques.

**6.20** Representations were made to both CADW and the Glamorgan Gwent Archaeological Trusts for information on available records and any specific requirements of a local study. CADW noted that that no designated historic assets fell within the area of interest. GGAT responded by noting that, due to a lack of records in the immediate vicinity of the site, it was unlikely to recommend that an archaeological condition be attached to any consent granted.



## CONSULTATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

### Public engagement

**6.21** EHL held a public exhibition at Hirwaun Village Hall on 23 and 24 September 2008 and Rhigos Community Centre on 30 September 2008. Invitations to attend the exhibition were sent to a wide range of stakeholders, including elected members and community representatives, council officers and representatives of government agencies and economic development bodies. The exhibition was advertised by press notices and posters.

**6.22** The exhibition was staffed by senior representatives of EHL and its consultant team at all times. The exhibition itself comprised illustrated display panels, a large screen television showing resource recovery process diagrams and 'fly-by' digital film of the proposals, and leaflets. Feedback from the exhibition that influenced the proposals as now submitted included the following:

- **Lorry routing** – EHL is committed to ensuring that heavy goods traffic does not use Halt Road. Heavy goods traffic will only be allowed to approach and leave the site via Fifth Avenue and Rhigos Road to the east of the application site.
- **Air quality** – to make absolutely sure that adequate emissions dispersion can be achieved, EHL has increased the height of the central ventilation stack to 40 metres above local ground level, and has deleted ventilation pipes on the Biomax building.

**6.23** At the same time, the exhibition underscored the local desire for new employment opportunities and regeneration, with some visitors to the exhibition requesting job application forms.

### Consultation on the planning application

**6.24** In accordance with the EIA Regulations and normal planning procedures, the planning application and ES will be advertised, provided to consultees and made available to members of the public. During the consultation period, written representations on EHL's planning application should be sent to the local planning authorities.

**6.25** The remaining chapters of this ES consider in detail the environmental effects of the Envioparks proposals, highlighting proposed mitigation measures and the residual environmental effects of the scheme.