

Frequently Asked Questions on LRIE Environmental Appraisal Report

25 January 2022

Q1 What is the LRIE Environmental Appraisal Report?

The Environmental Appraisal Report is a high level examination of the environmental issues with potential to affect the redevelopment of the LRIE site, which were identified in the LRIE Development Brief approved by the Council in November 2020. It is not an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) or an Environmental Statement, which are statutory documents required for certain applications during the planning application process. An Environmental Statement is informed by EIAs and states the likely effects on the environment of a proposed development for which planning permission is being sought. The LRIE proposals are not yet at this stage.

Q2 Why was it commissioned and who wrote it?

The report was commissioned in May 2021 by the Council as landowner to move the LRIE development brief forward and to inform soft market testing with potential development partners. The decision to commission the report was informed by environmental concerns raised during the public consultation on the draft development brief during September 2020. The Council as landowner wanted to know whether there were any obstacles to redevelopment arising from environmental concerns that were so significant as to affect viability of the project and discourage any potential development partners.

The report has been written by the Council's consultants Avison Young in liaison with statutory consultees such as the Environment Agency with technical input from consultants WSP and Aecom. This is the same team that prepared the Development Brief that was approved in November 2020.

Q4 What does the report say?

The report examines air quality; heritage; ecology; flood risk and drainage; ground conditions; noise; and transport. It notes that flooding and drainage improvements are the major items where mitigation works will be required in order to develop the LRIE site. The report generally sets out the detailed further investigative works required to be carried out in respect of all environmental factors and as part of any future outline planning application.

The report concludes that no 'in principle' issues have been identified that would prevent development of the LRIE site. It states that the significant issues of flood risk and drainage can be satisfactorily addressed at detailed design stage during the planning process.

Q5 What happens next with the report?

In the first instance, the report will be used to inform soft market testing with potential development partners. It will also inform the uses, layout and design of the development proposals ahead of a planning application and is the beginning of an iterative process of assessing the environmental impact of the development as a whole.

Q6 Will there be a further opportunity for interested parties and the public to comment on environmental issues in connection with the LRIE site?

Yes. Redevelopment of the LRIE site will require planning permission. The planning application process will require the submission of an Environmental Statement. This information will be made publically available for comment. Bodies such as the Environment Agency and Thames Water will be statutory consultees of any application. Notice of the application will be published in appropriate media such as the Newbury Weekly News via which interested parties and members of the public can go on-line at the WBC Planning Portal, view submission material and make comment on-line or write in.

You can find out more about the Council's proposals for LRIE on our website at <https://info.westberks.gov.uk/lrie>