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EIA Screening Opinion request and notification of repair and renewal works to be undertaken under permitted development rights at New River, Eade Road, Haringey, N4 1DN.

Dear Sir/Madam,

We are writing to request a formal Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Screening Opinion under the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (England) Regulations 2017 ('the EIA Regulations') for proposed works on the New River, Eade Road.

We previously wrote to the council to advise of the intention to undertake works to the New River in July 2023. Since that time the scope of works has been further developed including confirmation of temporary working areas. The scope has been revised from concrete lining of the channel to a combination approach of sheet piling on the northern bank of the New River with two small areas of concrete lining in locations where there are below ground services which prevent the use of sheet piles. The revised scope will assist with minimising the impact of the works in the local area.

Where concrete lining is required, this will take place across the width of the New River and as such will involve works in Hackney. Consequently, a copy of the EIA screening opinion request is also being issued to Hackney Council although most of the works will take place in Haringey.

As set out in our correspondence in July 2023 the works could be considered to be works that constitute repair and renewal of the existing assets and as such works that would not constitute development as defined in Section 55 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 As Amended and as such would not fall to be considered under the EIA Regs. Notwithstanding this, as the works are being undertaken to a long-distance aqueduct and the area of works, including temporary working areas, will exceed 1ha this request for an EIA screening opinion has been prepared for the avoidance of doubt.

In accordance with Regulation 6(2) of the EIA Regulations, this letter (and enclosures) provides:

- A plan sufficient to identify the land (see Enclosure 1 and Enclosure 2);
- A description of the proposed development (see Section 3); and
- A description of environmental aspects likely to be affected by the proposals.

1. Background and Need

The New River is an aqueduct that forms an important part of the raw water supply system for North London. It conveys up to 200ML/d of raw water from the source at the New Gauge on the River Lee for onward use at King George V storage reservoir, Hornsey and Coppermills Water Treatment Works.

Seepage from the New River has been occurring on an 800m section of the New River between Seven Sisters Road and Green Lanes to the south of Eade Road. Previous drainage works have been undertaken to divert flows from leakage to the sewer network. However, this is not a sustainable long-term solution as it results in unnecessary loss of water that could be treated for potable use, reduces capacity in the sewer network and will be gradually eroding the embankment.

The works are being programmed to commence in April 2024 with completion by January 2025. Prior to the works commencing some environmental enabling works are being progressed between November 2023 and January 2023. These works do not constitute development.

In addition to works related to the leakage, Thames Water Operations are proceeding with works to remove existing reed beds which have formed in the New River. This is a separate and necessary activity to the leakage works which needs to be undertaken periodically. It should be noted that the New River is an operational aqueduct which needs to be kept clear from obstructions. Reed beds periodically grow within the New River and obstruct the flow of water and can cause overtopping of the New River upstream. As such the reeds are periodically removed for operational purposes with works undertaken under ecological guidance to avoid nesting birds.

As set out above, the proposed works are not considered to constitute development. However, for the avoidance of doubt, as the works will take place on an existing long-distance aqueduct and the area of works including temporary working areas will exceed 1ha, an EIA Screening Opinion is being requested under the EIA regs.

2. Location, Site and Surroundings

The works are proposed along an 800m long section of the New River between located between Seven Sisters Road and Green Lanes to the south of Eade Road. The north side of the New River in this location is raised above the surrounding ground levels with a grass embankment sloping towards Eade Road. On the south side of the New River the ground levels are flat and avoid issues with leakage from the embankment. A permissive footpath runs along the south of the New River.

The site (New River) is designated as an ecological corridor and a Site of Metropolitan Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC).

The location of the proposed works is contained in Enclosure 1.

3. Proposed Development

In order to resolve the root cause of the seepage it is proposed to install new sheet piles along the 800m stretch of the New River with two smaller areas where sheet piles cannot be installed because of below ground services being addressed through concrete lining of the channel and an embankment. Where the sheet piles are installed, they will be installed approximately 700mm away from the existing sheet piles.

Temporary works will be undertaken to facilitate the leakage repair works. The temporary works include provision of hardstanding, lay-down areas for materials and provision of welfare facilities together with a ramp to provide access to the New River from Eade Road. In the areas of concrete lining there will be silt removal and overpumping facilities. Some temporary alterations to the highway on Eade Road will be required to facilitate the works and will be discussed and agreed with the Highway Authority. The rest of the temporary works will take place on Thames Waters operational land including the New River and land adjoining the New River.

Upon the completion of the works all temporary buildings, hardstanding areas and works will be removed from the site and the land reinstated.

As set out above the proposed works will take around 8 months to complete. Two gangs will be used for installing the new sheet piles working in opposite directions to minimise the duration of the works.

4. EIA Screening Methodology

To determine if an EIA is required for the proposed development a sequential screening test in accordance with the EIA Regulations has been applied as summarised in Table 1.

Schedule 1 of the EIA Regulations sets out those developments for which an EIA is mandatory. Schedule 2 of the EIA Regulations lists those developments which will require an EIA if it is likely to have a significant effect on the environment due to its size, nature and / or location. Schedule 3 of the EIA Regulations provides details of the selection criteria for screening Schedule 2 developments.

Although not all of the criteria will be relevant in every case; three broad criteria are identified which should be considered:

- The characteristics of the development (e.g. its size, cumulation with other development, use of natural resources, production of waste, pollution and nuisance, and the risk of accidents);
- The location of the development (e.g. existing land use, capacity of the natural environment to absorb further development, environmental sensitivity of the location); and
- The characteristics of the potential impact (e.g. its magnitude, probability and duration, frequency and reversibility).

In general, EIA will be needed for Schedule 2 developments in three scenarios:

- For major developments which are of more than local importance;
- For developments which are proposed for particularly environmentally sensitive or vulnerable locations; and
- For developments with unusually complex and potentially hazardous environmental effects.

Table 1: EIA Sequential Screening Test for the Proposed Development

Step	Yes/No	Comments
1 - Is the proposed development described in Schedule 1 of the EIA Regulations?	No	The works are not described as a Schedule 1 development.
2 – Is the proposed development described in Schedule 2 of the EIA Regulations?	Yes?	If the works were to be considered as development they could fall under Schedule 2 in the context of paragraph 13(b) as a change or extension to a long distance aqueduct falling under paragraph 10(l).
3 – Does the proposed development meet any of the relevant thresholds and criteria of Schedule 2?	Yes	The applicable threshold and criteria to be considered when determining if the proposal falls within Schedule 2 is defined as follows, either: • The development as changed or extended may have significant adverse effects on the environment; or • The area of works exceeds 1 hectare. It is expected that the proposed development will not have significant adverse effects on the environment (see Section 5). However, the area of works including all temporary works areas is estimated to be just over 1ha.

4. – Is it a ‘sensitive area’?	No	The site is not located in a sensitive area as defined in the EIA Regs.
5 – Taking account of the selection criteria in Schedule 3 is the development likely to have significant effects on the environment?	No	Characteristics of Development The proposed works will install new sheet piles beyond the existing sheet piles through which leaks have arisen and small areas of concrete lining where sheet piling is not possible. This is unlikely to result in significant effect on the environment. Location of the Development The proposed works are restricted to an 800m stretch of the New River and will take place on existing operational land with the works being proposed to repair the existing aqueduct and reduce leakage. Types and Characteristics of Potential Impacts Discussed in Section 5 below.
6 – Is the proposed development likely to have a significant environmental effect?	No	With recommended appropriate mitigation, there will be no significant effects from the proposed development.

5. EIA Screening

5.1. Ecology

A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal has been undertaken for the site (May, 2023). Limited vegetation removal is to be undertaken with temporary clearance of amenity/modified grassed areas to provide access and laydown areas and some limited pruning of overhanging trees may be necessary to facilitate crane access. The site has the potential to support protected species including: water vole, otter, nesting birds, bats, reptiles and fish. Further surveys/checks are ongoing with appropriate mitigation to be built in.

The New River is a SINC, at a Metropolitan level. The site is designated for aquatic plants and invertebrates. The section within this project forms a small proportion of the designated site (800m of a total of 24km strip). An appropriate management and mitigation plan will be put in place to ensure that on completion of the works, the site returns to its original (if not an enhanced) condition.

The proposed works will be the subject of Thames Waters environmental assurance processes helping to ensure that the works accord with the *‘Water Industry Act 1991 Code of Practice on Conservation, Access and Recreation: Guidance for the Environment Agency and Water and Sewerage Undertakers’* (the Code of Practice).

Upon the completion of the works the areas used for temporary storage and working areas will be fully reinstated with opportunities for seeding which will enhance biodiversity explored.

Works to remove the reed beds are being progressed by Thames Water Operations to address existing operational issues including the backing up of water which is leading to overtopping of the channel upstream from Eade Road. Removal of temporary reed vegetation within the New River is part of the regular maintenance plan by Thames Water to enable the provision of clean water to water treatment sites.

5.2. Historic Environment

The site is located within an archaeological priority area and as such GLAAS will be consulted regarding the impacts of the proposed works and to agree any need for archaeological evaluation or mitigation measures. Given the scope of work it is not anticipated that the works would result in any significant effects on the historic environment.

Thames Water Utilities Limited, a company registered in England and Wales with company number 02366661.

Registered office address: Clearwater Court, Vastern Road, Reading RG1 8DB. VAT registration number: GB 537-4569-15.

5.3. Landscape and Visual

The proposed works will have a limited temporary impact on the area for a period of around 8 months while temporary facilities are provided on site. Following the reinstatement of the land on the completion of the works there will be no appreciable impact on the landscape and visual amenity of the area.

5.4. Construction Impacts

Baseline noise surveys have been undertaken and a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) will be put in place to manage construction impacts. Areas where noise could result in a nuisance will incorporate additional acoustic mitigation measures such as acoustic curtains on fencing and acoustic barriers around any noisy plant. Generators and pumps will be located away from residential premises with acoustic barriers as required. The piling rig chosen for the works is a silent rig the uses the anchorage of the previous pile to push the new pile into the ground minimising noise impacts. All works will also be undertaken during normal hours of work for construction activities.

Once a contract is awarded for the works the contractors will engage with the highway authority to discuss highway requirements. The anticipated route for construction vehicles is from Seven Sisters Road into Eade Road with temporary removal of planting beds and bollards within Eade Road which restrict access to facilitate construction access only. These works will be the subject of further discussion and agreement with the Highway Authority and will minimise construction traffic in residential areas.

5.5. Water Resources and Flood Risk

The proposed works are necessary to address leakage from the existing embankment of the New River in this location. Previous drainage has been installed but this results in water from the New River draining to the sewer network reducing the capacity of the sewers. The proposed works will have beneficial impacts by reducing the loss of raw water which can be treated for potable use and increasing the capacity of the sewer network.

6. Conclusion

The proposed works are considered to be works of repair and maintenance which would not constitute development with some limited temporary development works undertaken in association with the delivery of the works including temporary hardstanding areas and welfare facilities.

The works are not considered to result in any risk of significant environmental effects and will deliver benefits through the prevention of loss of raw water from the aqueduct and reduction of flows of raw water into the sewer network. Overall, the works are not considered to constitute EIA development and the Council are requested to confirm agreement of this position.

Subject to confirmation of the works not constituting EIA development it is intended to progress the works either as not constituting development as defined in the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 or under permitted development rights under Schedule 2, Part 13, Class B(g) of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 which allows for *'any other development in, on, over or under their operational land, other than the provision of a building but including the extension or alteration of a building.'* and Part 4, Class A which relates to temporary buildings and structures.

I trust that the above and enclosed information is sufficient for you to confirm that the proposals do not constitute EIA development allowing this important work to progress. However, should you require any further information please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully,

Chris Colloff
Thames Water Property Town Planner

Enclosures:

- Site Location Plan
- Sheet Piling Section
- Concrete Lining Section
- Overview drawings

