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| Delegated Report | | Analysis sheet | | Expiry Date: | | 16/11/2017 | |
| | | N/A | | Consultation Expiry Date: | | N/A | |
| Officer | | | | Application Number(s) | | | |
| Jennifer Walsh | | | | 2017/6029/P | | | |
| Application Address | | | | Drawing Numbers | | | |
| Land between Northern Portal of Copenhagen Tunnel and Kings Cross Station London | | | | Refer to Draft Decision Notice | | | |
| PO 3/4 | | Area Team Signature | | C&UD | | Authorised Officer Signature | |
| | | | | | | | |
| Proposal(s) | | | | | | | |
| Request for screening opinion for a re-signalling proposal at Kings Cross Station extending to the north portal of Copenhagen Tunnel. | | | | | | | |
| Recommendation(s): | | EIA Not Required | | | | | |
| Application Type: | | Request for Screening Opinion | | | | | |
| Conditions or Reasons for Refusal: | | Refer to Draft Decision Notice | | | | | |
| Informatives: | | | | | | | |
| Consultations | | | | | | | |
| Adjoining Occupiers: | | No. notified | 00 | No. of responses | 00 | No. of objections | 00 |
| | | | | No. electronic | 00 | | |
| Summary of consultation responses: | | N/A | | | | | |
| CAAC/Local groups comments: | | N/A | | | | | |

Site Description

The site of the proposed application for re-signalling works includes operational railway land located between Kings Cross Station and Hornsey Street. It is located within the two London Boroughs of Camden and Islington whose boundary is defined at this point by York Way.

Kings Cross Station is located in Camden and is a Grade I listed building, within the Kings Cross Conservation Area.

The temporary works will be accommodated on two sites; the corner of Goods Way and York Way (Known as Compound Z – located in Camden) and Hornsey Street – located in London Borough of Islington.

Relevant History

N/A

Relevant policies

Town & Country Planning Act 1990

Town & Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017

National Planning Policy Framework 2012

Planning Practice Guidance – Environmental Impact Assessments July 2017

Assessment

Proposal

An Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Screening Opinion has been submitted for in respect of re-signalling proposals at Kings Cross Station extending to the north portal of Copenhagen Tunnel.

The proposed works include:

- New signalling and renewal of rail track along the length of the line from the north portal of Copenhagen Tunnel to the buffer stops within Kings Cross Station;
- New slab track, OLE and signalling in the east bore of Gas Works Tunnel (currently a vehicular access track);
- New track layout into King's Cross Station, associated alterations to equipment and realignment of existing platforms to accommodate new 12 carriage trains including the removal of a short section of block work wall on the eastern side adjacent to the existing signal box; and

It is anticipated that the following temporary facilities will be required to support the construction activities.

- A main compound located on Network Rail land located on the corner of York Way and Goods Way. The proposal is to construct a 5 storey prefabricated structure to house mess and office facilities needed for the duration of the project.
- A secondary compound is proposed at Hornsey Street. This location will house a mess facility for track side workers and the adjacent land will be used for storage of materials during the construction period. The existing access from Hornsey Street will also provide access to track side for the vehicular movements associated with the proposed works.

There will be some initial enabling works over the next 12 months followed by a construction period which is predicated to last for approximately 18 months with the scheme fully operational by March 2020. Network Rail intends to deliver the works using a combination of permitted development rights under the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015. Associated works to the Grade I listed station building will require listed building consent. The construction is likely to include the following activities:

- Site set up;
- Vegetation clearance;
- Civils Works – Earthworks OLE Gantry installation;
- Track bed construction and track re-laying and drainage;
- Switches and Crossing installation and connection to existing ECML Main Line;
- Signalling, Telecoms, E&P and Overhead Line Installation;
- Commissioning; and
- Demobilisation.

Network Rail has stated within their submission documents, that the key purpose of the development proposals is to improve and upgrade signals and railway tracks which would enable the use of quieter trains as well as reduce the need for frequent maintenance as well as increasing capacity on the lines, in terms of the trains and the platforms.

Assessment

In line with the 2017 Regulations an assessment has been made of the proposed works against the EIA thresholds. Reference has also been made to The Planning Practice Guidance Note 'Environmental Impact Assessment' July 2017.

The proposed works would not involve any development or works listed in schedule I of the EIA regulations. The proposed works would involve development covered by one of the categories listed in Schedule 2, "10 (d) Construction of railways (unless included in Schedule 1)" and they exceed the defined threshold which is the 'area of works exceeding 1 hectare'.

The proposed site is not in or adjacent to a sensitive area which includes:

- Sites of Special Scientific Interest and European sites;
- National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty; and
- World Heritage Sites and scheduled monuments.

The proposed site is not in or within a 2.5km radius of a Natura 2000 area – a site designated under the Bird Directive (SPA, the Habitats Directive (SAC), or the Ramsar Convention.

Copenhagen Junction is a locally designated SINC site located 0 miles and 60 chains from Kings Cross Station. The environment of Copenhagen junction will not be altered once the re-signalling project has been implemented.

The site is not in a sensitive area as defined in the EIA Regulations.

Taking account of the above an EIA would therefore be required if the proposed works were judged likely to give rise to significant environmental effects. To make this judgement the local planning authority is required to take account of the selection criteria in Schedule 3: characteristics of development; location of development; type and characteristics of the potential impact.

Within the submission documents, the applicant has evaluated the potential significant environmental effects in terms of the perceived sensitivity of the local environment and with regard to the criteria set out in schedule 3 of the EIA regulations.

They have considered the following Environmental Aspects:

- Landscape and Visual Amenity
- Noise and Vibration
- Air Quality
- Traffic and Transport
- Land Use
- Biodiversity

- Trees
- Heritage
- Flood Risk and Drainage
- Use of Natural Resources and Waste Management
- Socio – Economic
- Cumulative Impacts

Each of Schedule 3 criteria has been considered:

Characteristics of development:

- a) Size of the development – The site area in total comprises approximately 182 and extends into the administrative boundary of the London Borough of Islington. The proposed works do not represent ‘redevelopment of land and/ or new development’ they relate to essential upgrade and improvement works to the current railway infrastructure.
- b) Cumulation with other existing development and/or approved development – Whilst it is noted that the site is next to a large development of Zone A on the Kings Cross Central Site, the proposed works are on operational land and therefore it is not considered that the proposed development would result in the risk of cumulative harm in this instance. The applicants have stated that a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) will be developed by Network Rail and this document will identify appropriate management practices which would extend to other important environmental aspects such as traffic management, noise management, air quality and ecology. This is welcomed as is the statement that the team will liaise with departments at the Council where appropriate and local residents will be informed of the details of the project as appropriate.
- c) Use of natural resources – The proposal would not result in a development which has a greater impact on the resources than the existing use.
- d) The production of waste- The proposal would not result in a development which has a greater impact on the resources than the existing use.
- e) Pollution and nuisances - result in a development which has a greater impact on noise nor air pollution than the existing use;
- f) Risk of accidents (and or disasters relevant to the development concerned) – Network Rail have many safety procedures in place and the proposed development is not considered to increase any risk of accidents over and above working on the railway.
- g) Risks to human health (i.e. water contamination or air pollution) – the proposals would not result in greater risk to human health compared to its current use.

Location of development:

- a) The proposed development would not have significant environmental impact as the proposed location of the works is on ‘operational railway land’.
- b) There are no natural resources in the immediate area that could be adversely affected by the proposed development.
- c) The proposed development is not within any of the sensitive areas identified in the guidance.

Characteristics of the potential impact

- a) – e) The impacts of construction and the use are not considered to have significant environmental or wider reaching impacts and all impacts have been assessed from the scope of information included within this screening option application.

The proposed works are relatively small-scale alterations to existing railway infrastructure within an urban mixed use environment, the land effected is already in this use and there would be limited impacts on the natural environment and the population beyond those from the construction process.

The proposed site affects the platform layout at the northern end of Kings Cross Station. Kings Cross Station is a Grade I listed building and is located within the Kings Cross Conservation Area.. The proposed works relate to an area which is at the end of the train shed, and the local effects of the proposal can be adequately controlled through any subsequent listed building consent applications.

The proposed works do include Compound Z which is also located within the Kings Cross Conservation Area. The site is currently obscured along Goods Way by hoarding and shall be obscured by the construction on the large office building on Zone A, Kings Cross Central. There is an existing access to the compound from York Way which is to be utilised through this proposal. The proposal in this location is to construct a five storey temporary building for the welfare and office facilities associated to this re-signalling project.

As stated in the applicant's submission, the temporary use of Compound Z during construction will be controlled through a Construction Environmental Management Plan (noted above) which will manage the operation of the site including traffic movement and waste disposal.

The local designations identified above will not be significantly affected by the development, and can be considered as part of the subsequent Listed Building Consent Applications which would be required to be submitted and assessed by the Local Planning Authority.

Conclusion

The management measures in respect to the Environmental Aspects of the development as outlined within the submission documents have been considered. Whilst the proposed works will require alterations to a Grade I listed building and within a conservation area, it is considered that the impact in these respects can be fully and properly assessed through the submission of Listed Building Consent. It is considered that the environmental effects of the development by virtue of the nature of those works, the character of the area and the management measures proposed would be limited. The construction process itself is likely to give rise to the largest impact, particularly taken account of the potential for cumulative construction effects with the nearby development of Zone A, Kings Cross Central due to the impact on Goods Way and York Way. However, the proposed measures which include Network Rail liaising with the respective developers and contractors (Argent LLP and Lendlease) would avoid and reduce potential cumulative effects arising from overlapping construction periods and these should be incorporated into the Construction Environmental Management Plan, an informative is recommended to be added to any decision detailing this information.

Given the above, and due to the proposed size, scale and nature of the proposal and the characteristics of the surrounding area, it is considered that the scheme would not be of more than local importance, be within an 'environmentally sensitive location' or 'create any unusual or hazardous effects' pursuant to the selection criteria of Schedule 3 of the EIA regulations 2017.

Therefore, although the development is, by definition, Schedule 2 development, it is recommended that a Screening Option be adopted stating that an Environmental Statement is not required.