

**Our ref: EN010092 Deadline 5 Response - Heritage**

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**Thurrock FGP DCO Ref. EN010092 Deadline 5 Response - Heritage**

I write in response to the Deadline 4 representations made by Historic England (HE) dated 12<sup>th</sup> May 2021 (ref: REP4-026) and Thurrock Council dated 17<sup>th</sup> May 2021 (ref: REP4-024). This should also be read in conjunction with REP4-021 (Written Summary of Oral Submissions for Issue Specific Hearing 2 – Cultural Heritage).

As noted by HE, the issues raised in their Deadline 4 comments were discussed at the Issue Specific Hearing (ISH) on 28<sup>th</sup> April 2021.

In terms of HE point 1: Lack of trial-trenched evaluation, as was discussed at the ISH, it was noted by Mr Richard Havis (Place Services, Essex County Council representing Thurrock Council as their archaeological advisor) that due to timescales, getting trial-trenching completed within the Examination process would be unlikely. Moreover, Mr Havis also agreed with me that it is not uncommon that trial-trenching happens post-consent and pre-commencement. The most significant point in this debate is that there is an agreed Outline Written Scheme of Investigation that covers all archaeological works going forwards, which has been agreed by all parties. We maintain our position in taking a precautionary approach with regards to intrusive investigation, and Walton Common, and once again reiterate that sufficient information has been presented to allow for a balanced judgement to be made in terms of the scale and significance of effects of the Scheme on cultural heritage.

To reiterate, we strongly disagree with HE's "*belief*" expressed in the Deadline 4 submission that "*insufficient information has been provided in terms of below-ground archaeology for the effect of the proposed development to be assessed*". There has never been any ambiguity in the Environmental Statement<sup>1</sup> that a potential significant adverse effect is predicted, but one that is mitigated by the agreed strategy for further investigation and preservation of remains whether in situ or in the record.

In terms of HE point 2: Setting of high-graded designated heritage assets, there is a difference of professional opinion regarding the significance of effect, but all parties are in agreement that this equates to less than substantial harm and that whilst the settings of some designated assets will be diminished, these effects are not significant in EIA terms. The ES and settings assessment was carefully considered, which is why the assessment concluded a moderate adverse effect for the designated assets (Church, Earthworks

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<sup>1</sup> in Chapter 7 (Historic Environment; APP-056) and Chapter 33 (Summary of Further Mitigation, Residual Effects and Monitoring; PDC-023)

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and West Tilbury Manor) within the West Tilbury Conservation Area when taken as a whole (i.e. a significant effect in EIA terms), but judged on balance to be minor adverse for the assets individually, due to the largely panoramic setting of each of these assets and Zone A (main development site) representing a small fraction of that overall panorama. In terms of Bowater Battery, this asset is all about looking skywards to deter and disable enemy aircraft, in conjunction with the Battery at Coalhouse Fort and Tilbury Fort, and to have a 360 degree, upward-looking panorama. Once again, Zone A is only a fraction of that panorama, and the settings of all assets have to be seen in their modern context of surrounding industrial development, transport infrastructure, ash dumping, and electricity generation and transmission.

In terms of HE point 3: Historic Landscape Character, HE put forward some information gleaned from a secondary source (Randal Bingley, 2006, *Behold the Painful Plough*), which covers the period from 1700-1850, in which there are a number of 'suggestions' and 'possibilities' proposed, but not substantiated (within the precis set out by HE in their Deadline 4 response). The 'Walton Common' that Bingley (2006) refers to would have been a more extensive area across the marshes, prior to the Tithe. As stated at the ISH, and set out within REP2-054, pages 17-20 (Deadline 2 Submission, HER-2 Historic Environment Information), the historic map evidence clearly shows Walton Common as its current entity from only the time of the Tithe (1839-40) onwards. Our assessment of a residual minor adverse effect following mitigation of the loss of the non-designated mid-19<sup>th</sup> century common and its replacement with exchange common land adjacent to Parsonage Common still stands. A major magnitude of impact to an asset of low-medium sensitivity equates to a moderate significance of effect, prior to mitigation: the moderate adverse effect is offset by the exchange common land, resulting in a minor adverse effect, which is not significant in EIA terms.

With respect to the Deadline 4 submission by Thurrock Council, and the summary from Richard Havis (Principal Historic Environment Consultant at Essex County Council advising Thurrock Council of Archaeology) regarding ISH2 – Cultural Heritage, it is reiterated that the ES process applied a 'worse-case scenario' (applied the Rochdale Envelope) and took a precautionary approach: as such the ES identifies the impact from the scheme to below-ground archaeology as a significant adverse effect and the agreed Outline WSI mitigates this – there is no lack of understanding of impacts or effects. We have a very clear understanding of the archaeology of this landscape, as set out in REP3-008 and REP4-021.

Yours sincerely,  
for RPS Group Limited

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