



Stantec UK Limited
Caversham Bridge House
Waterman Place
Reading RG1 8DN

14th April 2022

Project/File: HIF1 Application (R3.0138/21)

Emily Catcheside
Oxfordshire County Council
Planning Department
County Hall
New Road
Oxford
OX1 1ND

Dear Emily,

Reference: R3.0138/21

I am writing on behalf of our client RWE Generation UK in response to the Science Bridge proposals submitted by Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) as part of the Didcot Garden Town Infrastructure project (planning app. ref. no. R3.0138/21) (known as 'HIF1').

The proposed Science Bridge Road Link (SBRL), which forms part of the HIF1 application, runs through RWE's Didcot Power Station Site, located to the northwest of Didcot. As your colleagues are aware from the pre-application discussion RWE is currently finalising a hybrid planning application for the proposed redevelopment of the element of the wider site that historically accommodated the former Didcot A Power station site, known as Didcot Data Campus. For the avoidance of doubt, a plan showing the location of the proposed Didcot Data campus site and wider RWE site has been appended to this letter.

Our comments are based on a review of the following application documents:

- Didcot Garden Town Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF1) Transport Assessment – hereafter referred to as 'TA';
- Road Safety Audit Stage 1 – hereafter referred to as 'RSA'; and
- Application Drawings:
 - Highways General Arrangement Sheets 5 and 6 out of 19;
 - Visibility Splays Sheets 5 and 6 of 19; and
 - Highways Swept Path Analysis Sheet 17 of 39.

General comments on the Transport Assessment (TA)

Based on our review of the submitted TA, it is unclear whether the former Didcot A Power Station has been accounted for in the baseline assessment and whether the proposed SBRL scheme allows for the currently permitted operations or the continued use of the site as an element of the nationally important power generation infrastructure.

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The base junction capacity assessments presented in Table 3.4 of the TA appear to be based upon traffic surveys carried out in 2016 and 2017, when the active use of Didcot A had ceased, and the demolition of Didcot A Power Station had already started. With the information provided, it is clear that unfortunately no consideration has been given to traffic flows with the Didcot A Power Station site operating under its permitted development rights, which allow for the following:

RWE Generation UK Plc (“RWE”) holds an electricity generation licence under Section 6(1) of the Electricity Act 1989 and is entitled to exercise powers conferred by Schedules 3 and 4 of that Act. As such, RWE is a statutory undertaker as defined in S262(6) of the T&CPA 1990. RWE holds its interest in the site of Didcot A Power Station for the purposes of its statutory undertaking and as such the Didcot A Power Station site is classed as operational land in accordance with S263 of the T&CPA. The site predates 1968 and has been subject of specific planning consents for the purposes of energy generation for several decades. Schedule 2, Part 15, Class B of the T&CP (GPD) (England) Order 2015, as amended, sets out the permitted development rights that exist in relation to RWE’s undertaking at Didcot A. These rights are wide ranging and allow for many types of development uses. Consequently, the Didcot A site has the ability to generate traffic movements without the need for planning permission. The 2011 surveys provide a reasonable reflection of traffic flows with the site operating under its permitted use.

In our view, for the baseline assessment to be robust it is critical that the 2011 surveys should be incorporated into the Paramics model in order to accurately reflect the baseline operational performance of local junctions around Didcot A Power Station. Without consideration to these, the results of the base junction capacity assessments are an underrepresentation of the current operation of the road network around the site, and therefore inappropriate for the purpose of carrying a net impact assessment. We therefore request that an updated assessment is carried out using the 2011 survey data, which can be made available to OCC upon request.

Additionally, we are concerned about the following issues with regard to the A4130/ Science Bridge Junction (referred to as ‘SCH6’ in the TA) Assessment:

HIF1 TA Results	Comments
<p>The applicant suggests that there is an alternative route via the Southmead industrial estate (turning into Hawksworth Road) for traffic heading north or east, with capacity to accommodate re-routing traffic.</p>	<p>Although it is accepted that the improved A4130/ New Thames River Crossing/ Collet roundabout (SCH7) has spare capacity to accommodate re-routing traffic, no evidence is presented in the TA to suggest that the Hawksworth Road/ Collet junction can accommodate this traffic. Without testing this, it is not possible to understand whether traffic would route this way or would carry on using the SCH6 and potentially impact traffic along the SBLR and the former Didcot A Power site (or possible future Didcot Data Campus) access.</p>
<p>The applicant’s view is that one of the main ways to prioritise mainline flow is by discouraging traffic from using the existing A4130 between the Mendip Heights and Purchas Road roundabouts by creating a priority junction instead of a roundabout where the existing A4130 meets the new A4130 (SCH3).</p>	<p>The effects of a priority junction at SCH3 instead of roundabout on the SBLR junctions have not been tested.</p>

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HIF1 TA Results	Comments
The Paramics model assumptions account for 400 dwellings at the former coal yard for the Didcot A site. However, it is understood that this is no longer likely, therefore, if the 400 units do not come forward, the model is assuming too many trips in the area.	It is accepted that a residential development at Didcot A site would assume too many general traffic movements in the area. A sensitivity test should be carried to understand the capacity/operational benefits of testing Amazon and Cloud HQ data centres, which have now been permitted and are under construction.

Comments on Road Safety Audit (Stage 1)

Additionally, there are a number of concerns with regard to issues raised in the RSA Stage 1 that could have an impact on the operation and safety users of the former Didcot A Power Site, if left unresolved:

- The change of speed limit to the east of the TOUCAN crossing should be implemented at least at the desirable minimum sight stopping distance (SSD) for the lower speed limit from the crossing, in line with the RSA.
- Side road junctions along the SBLR:
 - Give way line should be moved back to the bottom of the raised entry treatment ramp and visibility splays checked.
 - Junction warning signs with sub-plates bearing the legend “give way to cyclists” should be provided.
- Warning signs should be located closer to the parallel crossings.
- Upright signs should be provided for the segregated cycleway/ footways along SBLR.
- Street lighting should be provided to the west of the Old A4130 junction, only at the junction and approaches.

We would appreciate confirmation that the above will be addressed as part of the detailed design stage and RSA Stage 2.

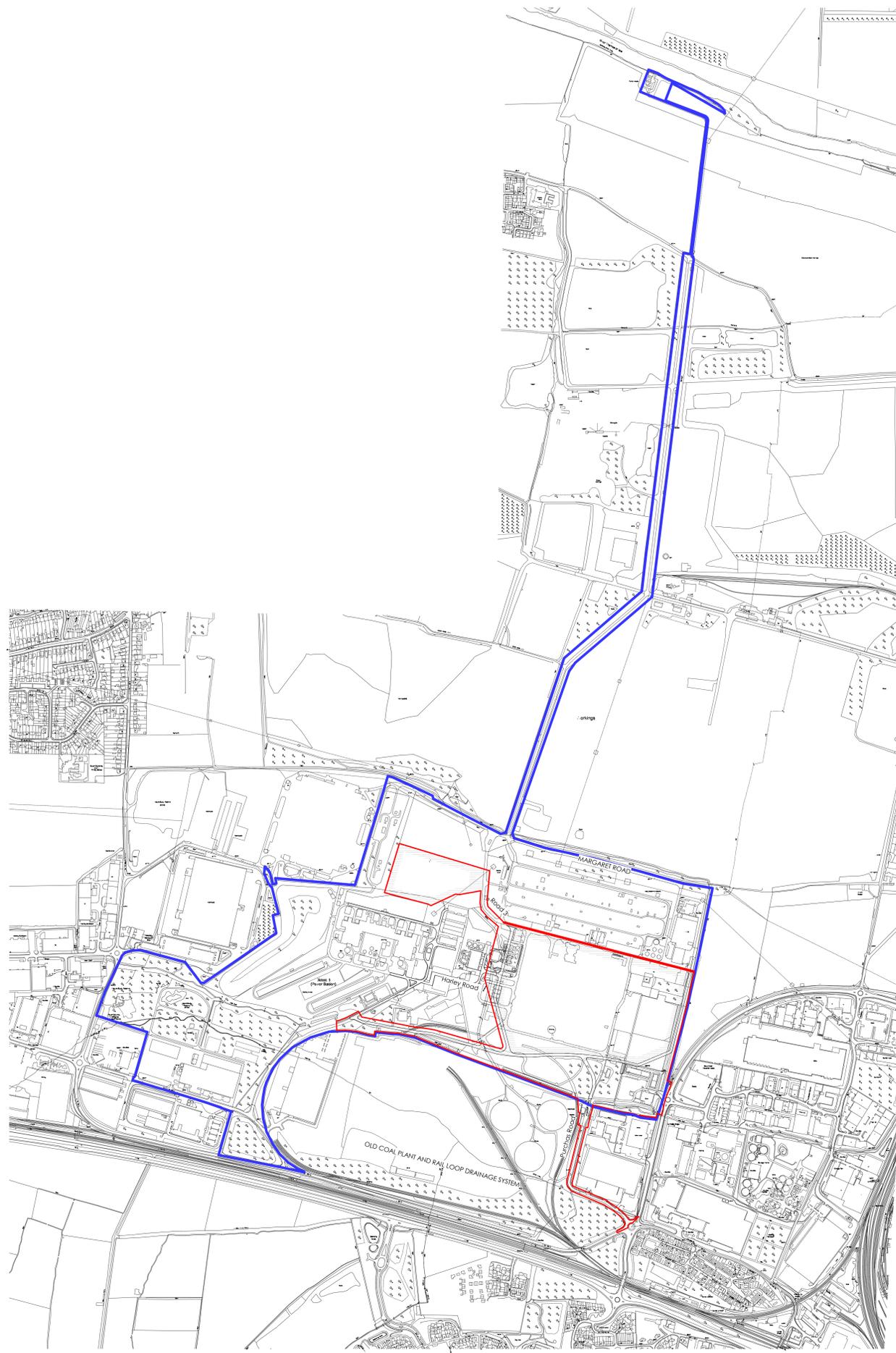
Sincerely,

Sarah Matthews

Director Transport Planning
Sarah.matthews@stantec.com

Attachment: [Attachment]

NOTES:
 1. All rights reserved. All drawings and written material appearing herein constitute original and confidential works of ARCC/MC. Copying, use or disclosure without written consent.
 2. All dimensions shown are in millimeters.
 3. This drawing shall be read in conjunction with all Specifications and schedules.
 4. All dimensions shall be checked by Contractor prior to any work commencing on site.
 5. The contractor shall be responsible for all relevant health, safety, and environmental matters of practice, methods of working, and good practice.
 6. Dimensions and/or levels shall be taken from the drawing and the contractor shall be responsible for obtaining all dimensions and levels on site for the actual setting out of the works.



SITE BOUNDARY ————
 OWNERSHIP RWE BOUNDARY ————

REV	DATE	ISSUED FOR COMMENT	BY	CHK

STATUS: WORK IN PROGRESS

ARC:MC
 140-142 St John Street, London EC1V 4UB T 020 34112571
 REGISTERED IN ENGLAND COMPANY REG. NO. 7883297

CLIENT: **RWE**

PROJECT: DIDCOT CAMPUS
 LAND EAST OF SUTTON COURTENAY LANE AND
 WEST OF DIDCOT POWER STATION, SUTTON
 COURTENAY
 PROJECT NO: L3118.00
 DESCRIPTION: Site Location Plan

SCALE: As Indicated @ A0
 DRAWING NO: RWE-ARC-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-1001
 REVISION: #

1 LOCATION PLAN -SITE PLAN
 1 : 5500