



**MANCHESTER
CITY COUNCIL**

Julie Roscoe

Director of Planning, Building
Control and Licensing

Growth and Development
Directorate

PO Box 532
Town Hall
Manchester M60 2LA

Mr John Cooper
Deloitte Real Estate
PO Box 500
2 Hardman Street
Manchester
M60 2AT

Contact: Miss Jennifer Atkinson
Tel: 0161 234 4517
Email: jennifer.atkinson@manchester.gov.uk

28 April 2021

Our reference: JA/DMN

Your reference:

Dear Mr Cooper

**TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT)
(ENGLAND) REGULATIONS 2017**

**FORMAL SCREENING REQUEST FOR ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT
'SCREENING' UNDER PART 2 REGULATION 6**

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT AT DOWNLEY DRIVE MANCHESTER

SCREENING OPINION ADOPTED BY MANCHESTER CITY COUNCIL

Thank you for your letter dated 14 April 2021 in respect of your request for a screening opinion at the above site.

In coming to a formal opinion on whether an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is required to support the proposed development, Manchester City Council, as Local Planning Authority, has taken into account the supporting information contained within your letter, site location plan and supporting appendices.

The proposal type is listed in category 10 (b) Urban Development Projects of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (England) Regulations 2017. The regulations state that the threshold where a development is likely to have significant effects on the environment, by virtue of factors such as nature, size or location, are developments exceeding 150 dwellings.

Your letter of the 14 April 2021 sets out the reasons why you believe an EIA is not required to support the proposed development.

Within the Planning Policy Guidance (PPG), general considerations relating to the need for an EIA for Schedule 2 developments is identified within paragraph 18 of the guidance. This references the selection criteria in relation to Schedule 3 of the Regulations. This criteria which must be taken into account in determining whether a development is likely to have significant effects on the environment. The criteria is as follows:

- I. Characteristics of Development (e.g. its size, use of natural resources, quantities of pollution and waste generated);
- II. Location of Development (e.g. environmental sensitivity of geographical areas);
- III. Characteristics of the potential impact (e.g. its magnitude and duration).

Below is a consideration as to whether an EIA is required to support a planning application for the above development.

CONTEXT AND PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The development site, subject to this screening opinion, is bounded by St Vincent Street and the Rochdale Canal to the north, Woodward Place to the west, Downley Drive to the south and Kingham Drive to the east within the area of the city centre known as New Islington.

The site is 0.69 hectares and is a combination of vacant land and open grassland. The western portion of the site is secured by fencing and comprises overgrown shrubland and hardstanding. The eastern portion of the site comprises open grassland with a number of mature trees within the site. A footpath cuts through the site from St Vincent Street to the north to Downley Drive to the south.

There is a significant level change across the site of 3 metres from the Rochdale Canal to Downley Drive.

The area immediately around the development site comprise of low rise residential dwellings. The Rochdale Canal lies to the north of the site along with an apartment building.

Cotton Field Park and New Islington Marina provide outdoor recreational space for residents and visitors in this area. New Islington Free School and the Medical Centre provide essential amenities to support this residential neighbourhood.

The development site is not located in a conservation area. However, the Ancoats conservation area is adjacent to the southern boundary of the Ancoats conservation area, separated by the Rochdale Canal.

The nearest listed building to the development site is the grade II* Listed Union Street Bridge located 146 metres to the west of the development site.

The development site is located within Flood Zone 1 together with being in a critical drainage area.

The site is not known for its ecology, biodiversity, or contamination. The site is not located within the Greater Manchester Air Quality Management Area (AQMA).

The proposed development would comprise the redevelopment of the site including the refurbishment of the listed building to form up to 75 affordable residential dwellings. A

mixture of one and two bedroom apartments is proposed within an apartment building and would be available for social rent. Terraced housing with a mixture of 2 and 3 bedroom properties would be available for shared ownership and affordable rent tenures.

The terrace housing would have a building height of not more than 3 storeys (10.5 metres) and the apartments no more than 4 storeys (13.5 metres).

A total of 48 car parking spaces would be available across the site with 1 space per dwelling house and 23 shared spaces for the apartments (including 2 disabled spaces). 100% cycle parking would be available for both the apartments and the dwellings.

It is considered that the potential impacts from a development of this nature are as follows:

- Visual/landscape character;
- Heritage and archaeology;
- Ecology and biodiversity;
- Traffic and access;
- Air quality and pollution;
- Daylight and sunlight;
- Use of resources including water;
- Creation of waste;
- Land contamination;
- Impact on climate change and human health;
- Noise/dust/emissions from construction and operations of the development; and
- Cumulative impacts.

This assessment would determine whether any of the above impacts are significant in nature and warrant consideration by an EIA.

ASSESSMENT

As detailed above, an assessment would now take place based on the three criteria within Schedule 3 of the regulations.

Characteristics of Development

Size of Development

The development site is approximately 0.69ha and would see the creation of up to 75 new homes. The building height for the dwellinghouses would be up to 3 storeys and up to 4 storeys for the apartment building.

The proposed development is below the threshold, within Schedule 2 10 (b) of the Regulations, and therefore significant effects on the environment are unlikely to arise.

The site is currently vacant having been previously developed and located on site which has been identified for development as part of the Ancoats and New Islington Neighborhood Development Framework. The site also comprises an area of open grassland which is currently used for recreational purposes.

The development of the site would represent a change in scale and character compared to the current conditions at the site. The change in scale is considered to be comparable with the surrounding context which is nestled between the more denser

development around Ancoats and the low rise residential developments found in Miles Platting.

The development site location in a regeneration area anticipates increased levels of development activity over the coming years. The site also forms part of the city centre which is dominated by dense, urban developments of different heights, scale and uses.

The impact of the changes resulting from the development, including increase in scale/height as a result of the buildings, would be considered through various supporting documents within the planning submission including impact on daylight and sunlight and impact on traffic.

There is likely to be some local disruption during the construction phase of the development from construction traffic and noise. However, the effects are considered to be temporary and predictable.

When the development becomes operational, the level of vehicle trips is anticipated to be low, around 25 two way vehicular trips in the AM peak and 27 two way vehicular trips in the PM peak. The traffic impacts are therefore considered to be of no more than local significance and would not result in significant environmental impacts on traffic, noise and carbon emissions which would be detrimental to the capacity of the local highway network, local amenity and local air quality conditions. The proximity to good local public transport and walking and cycling routes, highlights that the development site is in a highly sustainable part of the city centre.

It is noted from the supporting information that there would be no need to upgrade any local infrastructure or any major modification to the highway network that would warrant consideration by an EIA.

On this basis, whilst a proposal of this scale and nature would have some impacts (as a result of the density of the proposal) it is considered that this would not be of more than local significance and would not be of a scale of warrant consideration by an EIA.

Cumulation with other development

A screening opinion should be adopted on its own merits, and on the basis of what is being proposed, however, in judging whether the effects of a development are likely to be significant, regard should be had to the possible cumulative effects with any existing or approved development.

The development site forms part of a wider neighbourhood development strategy to regenerate this part of New Islington. The proposals for Downley Drive are to be brought forward alongside a number of other developments – Ancoats Dispensary, Ancoats Mobility Hub and Elisa Yard.

This could result in a number of large-scale developments being brought forward at the same time in close proximity to each other.

In particular, this could result in cumulative impacts from construction traffic, noise and air quality during the construction phase together with socio-economic benefits from use of local labour. The proposals would also help support economic and population growth in the area as well as increasing the supply of affordable housing.

Although this would result in some impacts, these are not considered to be of more than local significance, would be short term and would largely be confined to the construction phase of the development.

These impacts can be suitably mitigated through coordinated management of the highways together measures to manage air quality and noise (such as dust suppression measures, not leaving vehicles idle, silencers on equipment and appropriate working hours).

In terms of the operational phase of the development, it is considered that the impacts would be less significant and would be similar in nature to other surrounding apartment buildings. There would be no onsite parking associated with this development resulting in minimal traffic and emissions.

Use of natural resources

The site is not known to contain any natural resources. In addition, given the scale of the development, it is not believed that a development of this nature would require any excessive use of natural resources in the construction process that are in short supply.

It is noted within your supporting information that any natural resources that would be needed would be minimised through sustainable design and construction. In particular, energy efficient measures, in terms of water and waste minimisation and recycling, would be employed throughout the construction and operational phases of the development.

It is therefore considered the use of natural resources would not be significant in respect of this development and therefore does not warrant consideration by an EIA.

Production of waste

Developments of this scale would inevitably create waste both in the construction and operational phases of the development.

During the construction phase, waste would be minimised and given there is no demolition works required to take place at the site. There will, however, be earthworks requiring some material to be removed off site. Any contaminated material to be moved off site would be done in accordance with the relevant regulations in relation to the disposal and treatment of waste. It is noted from your supporting information that the applicant aspires to achieve 95% recyclable rate for construction waste from their developments.

Once the development becomes operational, the 75 new homes would generate waste. It is anticipated that the impacts of this are predictable and of no more than local significance. A large amount of waste that would be generated would be able to be recycled and therefore minimising the amount of waste that would have to go to landfill. It is considered that any waste that does have to go to landfill would be predictable and would not warrant consideration by an EIA.

On the basis of the above, whilst waste would be created at the development, this would be minimised through careful management of the construction and demolition process along with having a clear management strategy for when the development is operational.

As such, I consider that the production of waste would not be significant, localised in nature and predictable and therefore do not require consideration by an EIA.

Pollution and nuisances

The development, both from the construction process and the operational phases of the development, are not likely to give rise to any pollutants which are hazardous, toxic or noxious. However, there would be dust, noise, vibrations and traffic from these phases which require consideration.

In terms of the construction phase, there would be dust, noise, emissions and vibrations from traffic on the local highway network and the breaking of the ground/site excavation together with the use of plant and machinery. In order to access the site, vehicles would need to travel along routes within the New Islington area which contain a mixture of commercial and residential developments. Vehicle movements and noise is therefore likely to be noticeable to local residents and businesses.

Impact on ground conditions, particular leakages into nearby water courses, can be suitably mitigated to minimise pollution of the ground water and local water courses.

This is likely to result in give rise to disruption to nearby residents and businesses and have an impact on local air quality conditions for the duration of the construction period. However, such effects would only be temporary in nature for the duration of the construction period and mitigated through a construction management plan. Therefore the impacts are considered to be predictable and do not require consideration by an EIA.

In terms of the operational phases of the development, the noise and disturbances from the development would be more domestic in nature. The scale of the development, providing 75 new homes would result in modest impacts when compared to the much large scale residential development in the area. The operational effects are therefore predictable and not considered significant.

Vehicle traffic and carbon emissions from the development would be predictable and of no more than local significance. Car parking spaces would be fitted with electric vehicle charging points as well as 100% cycle parking across the scheme. The development site is also in close proximity to good public transport as well as walking and cycling routes which can be encouraged through a travel plan. This would minimise carbon emissions and significant impacts on local air quality conditions.

The proposed buildings would be designed to be low carbon and to minimise the effects on climate change. It is not considered that the effects of the development on climate change would be significant and any effects are predictable and can be suitably mitigated.

I consider that there would be noticeable impacts from noise, vibrations, emissions and traffic from the construction and operational phases of the development. Construction impacts would give rise to some short term disruption in the local area, however, the effects are predictable and temporary in nature. The operational phase of the development would also generated some impact but these are considered predictable and in line with the effects of other similar scaled developments in the area and would not warrant considered as part of an EIA.

Risk of accidents

The main risks in terms of a development of this nature are the contamination of land and/or water from spillages and leak. However, it is not considered that the construction or the operational stages of the development pose a significant risk in this regard given the existing conditions at the site and the substances that are likely to be used, particularly in the construction process. Measures can be put in place to minimise any risks in this regard.

It is considered that given the scale and nature of the development, such impacts are not likely to be of more than local significance, short in duration and predictable. In addition, the development is not likely to give rise to any risks to human health from dangerous substances.

Location of development

Existing land use

The development site is considered to be previously developed land and is a long standing development opportunity within the Ancoats and New Islington Neighbourhood Development Framework. There are trees and vegetation at the site which would require removal to facilitate the development.

The site is not located within a conservation area, however, the Ancoats conservation area is separated by the Rochdale Canal along the southern boundary. The nearest listed building is the Union Street Bridge (Grade II*). There is likely to be below ground archaeology given the proximity to other site where investigations and assessment have taken place.

The change in scale at the development site is likely to result in a change to the visual appearance of the site. The scale of the building would be compatible with the local context and therefore of no more than local significance and would not warrant consideration by an EIA.

There are no Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) on the site. Indeed, there is limited vegetation of any quality at the site. Whilst there are no statutory designated site for nature conservation within or immediately adjacent to the site, the site lies within 6 km of the Rochdale Canal Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), the Hollinwood Branch Canal SSSI and Huddersfield Narrow Canal SSSI. The development site lies within the impact risk zones of the above sites.

The proximity to the Rochdale Canal mean that the development is likely to impact on this area. The main effects are likely to arise from the construction (from dust and spillages). Such impacts are considered to be minimised through the construction management process and therefore would not resulting in any significant environmental impacts.

There are trees, habitats and open grassland at the development site which would be impacted by the development. The site is not considered to be ecologically sensitive and it is noted that an ecological report would be prepared with the application. The impacts are therefore predictable and can be suitably mitigated as part of the proposal.

The site is located within flood zone 1 '*low risk to flooding*', however, the site does fall within the Manchester critical drainage area and is located in close proximity to the Canal. Whilst there would be some minor impacts from the development on the surface water run off it is not considered that the impacts would be significant particularly given the extent of soft landscaping throughout the scheme. I note a

drainage strategy would be prepared as part of the proposal would be devise any mitigation in this regard.

There is historical evidence of land contamination at the site. However, I am aware that this site is not particularly complex in this regard and therefore low to moderate risk. Best practice method would be employed to minimise risk to ground water. As such, the development proposal does not warrant consideration by an EIA on this basis given that the contamination levels are not significant.

The area around the development site is not known to be heavily congested with traffic and therefore both the effects of the construction and operational phase of the development would therefore be limited and effects which do occur can be appropriately mitigated. The site is in close proximity to a number of public transport interchanges which would support travel options of both construction workers and residents along with on site cycle provision and access to cycle routes.

There are nearby low rise residential properties in close proximity to the development sites. However, given the urban context of the surrounding area, it is considered that any development of this site would be compatible with the use of surrounding sites. There are likely to be effects in terms of outlook, daylight, sunlight and privacy. These effects are not considered to be more than local significance and predictable in nature.

The scale of the building is also not anticipated to impact on local tv signals.

Overall, it is considered that the development sites would have some impacts on the heritage assets and the visual amenity of the local area along with impacting on local traffic, drainage and ground conditions. However, these impacts are considered to be predictable and are not considered to be of significance to require consideration as part of an EIA.

Relative abundance, quality and regenerative capacity of natural resources in the area

The site is not known to contain any natural resources that would be affected by the development.

Absorption capacity of the natural environment

The sites are not designated for its ecological interest and there are no international or nationally protected sites near to the development site.

The removal of the limited vegetation on site may result in short term, but predictable, disruption to habitats for birds and other ecology. However, the sites are not known for their ecological value and therefore such impacts can be managed as part of the process and would therefore not require consideration by an EIA.

The development site does not fall within the Manchester City Centre Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) which is approximately 320 metres from the site.

Whilst the construction phase is likely to generate vehicles movements that would release carbon emissions into the atmosphere, along with dust from the construction process, it is not considered that these impacts would be significant and detrimental to the environment in the long term. The impacts are predictable and manageable and are not considered to result in effects on human health and climate change which would warrant consideration by an EIA.

In terms of the occupation of the development, it is noted that the proposal would result in an uplift in traffic coming and going from the site. It is, however, expected that the traffic would be accommodated into the highway network and not create a significant levels of movement that would warrant consideration by an EIA.

The uplift in traffic is likely to have air quality implications which are considered to be localised in nature and would be considered through an air quality report. Cycle provision, electric car charging and travel planning measures would promote the sustainable location. This would minimise any significant impacts on local air quality conditions from vehicle emissions and any effects are not considered to result in impacts on human health which would warrant consideration by an EIA.

Overall, it is considered that the impacts on the natural environment would be of no more than local significance and the impacts from the construction phase can be carefully managed to minimise any impacts on and nearby sensitive receptors. On that basis the development is unlikely to give rise to any significant impacts and therefore consideration by an EIA is not considered necessary.

Characteristics of the potential impact

There would be no transfrontier impact as a result of the development and impacts of the development are local in nature.

The site clearance, and the erection of the proposed development, would result in a permanent change to the appearance of the site in the local area. The effects would only be reversed if the buildings were removed.

The visual impacts of the new development, particularly from the scale of the apartment building, would alter the visual amenity and character of the local area. However, it is considered that such changes are of no more than local significance with the development reflecting the scale, height, form and materiality of buildings in the local area and envisaged as part of the emerging regeneration aspirations for this part of the city centre.

There would be noise, vibrations and traffic from the construction and operational phases of the development along with associated impacts on the local highway network and local air quality conditions when servicing the development site. However, I consider these impacts are not of a magnitude of more than local significance and therefore do not warrant consideration by an EIA.

In terms of the duration, frequency and reversibility of the impacts, it is acknowledged that the scale of the construction activity, along with the operational phases, would have a local impact on the area that would be greater than the current land use which is vacant land.

However, the construction activities would be short term, predictable and temporary in nature. When the development is complete there would be a permanent change in the visual amenity of the area which could only be reversed if the building was to be demolished.

On that basis, I do not consider that impacts from the development would be of more than local significance and therefore do not require consideration by an EIA.

Paragraph 58 of Appendix 2 of the NPPG (Screening Checklist)

Paragraph 58, contained within appendix 2 of the NPPG, provides a screening checklist as to which types of cases in which an EIA is more likely to be required for particular types of developments.

This goes on to state that an EIA is unlikely to be required for the redevelopment of land unless the new development is on a significant greater scale than the previous use, or the types of impact are of a markedly different nature or there is a high level of contamination.

For sites which have not previously been intensively developed the following criteria is relevant:

- (i) area of the scheme is more than 5 hectares; or
- (ii) it would provide a total of more than 10,000 m² of new commercial floorspace; or
- (iii) the development would have significant urbanising effects in a previously non-urbanised area (e.g. a new development of more than 1,000 dwellings).

The site has been previously development. The redevelopment of the site would result in a development which would change the use, character and appearance of the site and would provide an active use of the site which has been vacant for many years. The site is located in an area where change is expected to take place and the creation of 47 new homes would represent a use of the site which would not result in environmental impacts which are of no more than local significance.

Mitigation if development is not EIA development 'General Provisions relating to Screenings' Under Part 2 Regulation 5

Regulation 5 (5) (b) and paragraph 18 of the NPPG states "if it is determined that proposed development is not EIA development, state any features of the proposed development and measures envisaged to avoid, or prevent what might otherwise have been, significant adverse effects on the environment".

As detailed above it is considered that the potential impacts from a development of this nature are as follows:

- Visual/landscape character;
- Heritage and archaeology;
- Ecology and biodiversity;
- Traffic and access;
- Air quality and pollution;
- Use of resources including water;
- Creation of waste;
- Land contamination;
- Impact on climate change and human health; and
- Noise/dust/emissions from construction and operations of the development.

It is considered that whilst some there would be environmental impacts associated with this development, these can be suitably mitigated against. This is detailed below:

- Visual amenity/landscape character – The site development does not contain any significant green infrastructure of vegetation. The proposed development would alter scale of development on site. The development would suitably mitigate against any visual harm through careful design and change in massing

of the buildings which can be considered through a visual assessment as such the proposal does not warrant any consideration by EIA.

- Heritage and archaeology – The location of the site relative to the nearby conservation area and listed building would be considered within the planning justification document including any effects of the development on the significance of these nearby assets. Targeted archaeology would consider any below ground assets. Any heritage considerations are considered to be of no more than local significance.
- Ecology and biodiversity – It is considered that there would be limited impact on the ecology on the site given is largely vacant nature. The proposal has the opportunity to improve overall biodiversity at the site through new landscaping and biodiversity improvements.
- Traffic and access –Traffic and highway implications from the construction aspects of the site can be mitigated through a highway management plan being implemented for the duration of the construction works. There would be localised impact from the operation of the development due to increase in traffic generated from the site. This would be minimised through the high sustainable location and access to public transport, walking and cycling routes which would be promoted through a travel plan.
- Air quality and pollution – Mitigation can be put in place to minimise impact on local air quality during the construction through a dust suppression strategy and reducing vehicle emissions through not leaving construction vehicles idle. The impact on local air quality would be minimised during the operation of the development by provision of electric car charging, on site secure cycle provision, promotion of the travel plan and ensure adequate ventilation is installed in the apartments to ensure existing air quality conditions and mitigated and minimise the impact on the occupants of the development. An air quality report would be prepared as part of the submission and include relevant mitigation measures.
- Use of resources including water – The proposal would not utilise any resources which are in short supply. There would also be a drainage strategy for the site which would ensure that surface water is managed effectively as part of the development.
- Creation of waste – Waste management strategies would be in place for both the construction and operational aspects of the development which includes ensuring that recycling is an integral part of the scheme. A waste management strategy would form part of the planning submission.
- Land contamination – The land is not complex in this regard and mitigation can be put in place in the form of a remediation strategy to deal with any contamination found.
- Impact on climate change and human health – An Environmental Standards Assessment of the proposed development would establish measures to minimise the impact of the development on climate change and ensure that appropriate strategies are secured to ensure the building is low carbon and incorporates the most up-to-date technologies. Mitigation measures to minimise the impact on human health and climate change, particularly from air

quality impacts, would be required during the construction and operational phases of the development and be considered through an air quality report and environmental standards assessment.

- Noise – The proposal would generate a degree of noise from comings and goings in the local area both during the construction and operations of the development. Mitigation can be put in place during the construction in the form of a construction management strategy. For the occupation of the development, the building would be acoustically insulated and the comings and goings would be commensurate with the residential neighbourhood of New Islington.

CONCLUSION

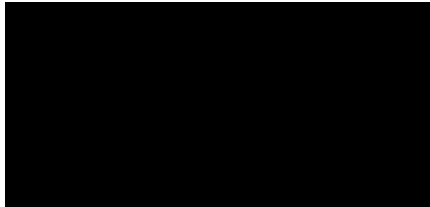
This response is based on the letter of the 14 April 2021 from Mr John Cooper of Deloitte.

It is concluded that this development would have some impacts on the surrounding area. However, it has been judged that these would not be significant to warrant a formal Environmental Impact Assessment. Therefore, the opinion of the City Council, as Local Planning Authority, is that an Environmental Impact Assessment is not required in this instance.

This screening opinion relates to the requirements of an Environmental Impact Assessment only and does not imply or confer any approval of such a proposal.

I trust this information is of some assistance to you. Should you require anything further please do not hesitate to contact **Jennifer Atkinson**.

Yours sincerely



Derek Jones

Section Planning Manager