



**MANCHESTER
CITY COUNCIL**

Julie Roscoe

Director of Planning, Building
Control and Licensing

PO Box 532
Town Hall
Manchester M60 2LA

Kyle Welburn
Turley
Level 5 Transmission
6 Atherton Street
Manchester
M3 3GS

Contact: Miss Jennifer Atkinson
Tel: 0161 234 4517
Fax: 0161 274 0014
Email: jennifer.atkinson@manchester.gov.uk

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Our reference: JA/DMN

Dear Mr Welburn

**TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT
ASSESSMENT) REGULATIONS 2017 ("THE EIA REGULATIONS")**

SCOPING REQUEST UNDER PART 4 REGULATION 15(1)

**'ALBERT BRIDGE HOUSE MANCHESTER' ("THE PROPOSED
DEVELOPMENT")**

**SCOPING OPINION OF MANCHESTER CITY COUNCIL PURSUANT TO
REGULATION 15**

Thank you for your request dated 9 April 2025 for a Scoping Opinion at the above site.

In coming to a formal opinion on the scope of the Environmental Statement ("ES"), Manchester City Council, as Local Planning Authority, has considered the supporting information contained within your '*Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Scoping Report Albert Bridge House*' prepared by yourselves, on behalf of the Applicant Oval Real Estate, and the comments from statutory consultees.

I have now had a chance to consider your scoping request and I outline my response below.

The Proposed Development is considered an EIA development as it falls within the description and thresholds in Schedule 2 10(b) of the EIA Regulations as an 'Infrastructure Project - Urban Development Project' which has the potential to have significant effects on the environment. In accordance with Schedule 2, Categories 10(b) (urban development projects) of the EIA Regulations and owing to the location, scale and nature and of the Proposed Development, I

note that you recognise the need for an EIA and have therefore submitted the Scoping Report for consideration to the City Council, as Local Planning Authority.

Before adopting a Scoping Opinion the City Council, as Local Planning Authority, must take into account the information specified in Regulation 15(6) of the EIA Regulations.

- (a) any information provided by the applicant about the proposed development;
- (b) the specific characteristics of the particular development;
- (c) the specific characteristics of development of the type concerned; and
- (d) the environmental features likely to be significantly affected by the development.

This Scoping Opinion sets out the information that the City Council, as Local Planning Authority, considers should be included in the ES that will be submitted with the subsequent planning application made in respect of the Proposed Development.

In formulating this Scoping Opinion the City Council, as Local Planning Authority, has taken account of, the requirements of the EIA Regulations, the nature and scale of the Proposed Development, the nature of the receiving environment, current best practice in the preparation of environmental statements, and the views expressed by the organisations and bodies that responded to the consultation.

This Scoping Opinion should not be construed as implying that the City Council, as Local Planning Authority, agrees with the conclusions set out in the Scoping Request regarding impacts of the proposal. This Scoping Opinion is without prejudice to any decisions subsequently taken in respect of any planning application submitted in respect of the Proposed Development.

Your report of the 9 April 2025 sets out the proposed chapters that the ES will cover, and the disciplines which you believe should be scoped in and out of the EIA.

These are as follows:

Scoped In

- Noise and vibration
- Townscape and visual
- Daylight, sunlight and overshadowing
- Wind microclimate
- Socio-economics and human health
- Climate change

Scoped out

- Air quality;

- Archaeology;
- Biodiversity.
- Built heritage;
- Ground conditions and contamination;
- Obtrusive lighting;
- Risk of major accidents and / or disasters;
- Transport and accessibility;
- Waste and resources; and
- Water environment.

Below is a consideration of the Scoping Report for the Proposed Development and comments on the approach which you have outlined.

CONSULTATIONS

Regulation 15 (4) of the EIA Regulations require the City Council, as Local Planning Authority, to consult consultation bodies prior to adopting a Scoping Opinion.

Having regard to Regulation 2 of the EIA Regulations, the following consultees were consulted who have specific environmental responsibilities and which the City Council, as Local Planning Authority, considers are likely to have an interest in the development proposal.

- Natural England;
- Environment Agency;
- Greater Manchester Ecology Unit (GMEU);
- Greater Manchester Archaeology Advisory Service (GMAAS);
- Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM);
- United Utilities;
- City Council Highway Services;
- City Council Environmental Health;
- City Council Flood Risk Management;
- City Council Arborist;
- City Council works and skills;
- Aerodrome Safeguarding;
- Design for Security at Greater Manchester Police.

All responses of the consultees contacted by the City Council, as Local Planning Authority, during the EIA scoping process are appended to this letter.

You are strongly recommended to consult further with consultees as appropriate throughout the EIA process as the development proposal evolves. It is thereby recommended all consultee responses are reviewed by you and the applicant in full.

Any subsequent ES submitted with a planning application should reflect the points raised by the consultation bodies where this reflects the requirements of the Regulations. It is recommended that the ES summarises the scoping responses from the consultation bodies and how they are, or are not, addressed in this regard. Any consultation responses received after the date of this letter, that have not been taken into account within this Scoping Opinion, will be forwarded to you and should be given due consideration in the planning application and EIA process.

CONTEXT

This 0.89 hectare site is bounded by the River Irwell, Bridge Street, St Mary's Parsonage and Trinity Bridge. It is in the St Mary's Parsonage Strategic Regeneration Framework Area. It is occupied by Albert Bridge House which was constructed in the 1950s, two surface car parks and Albert bridge Gardens.

Albert Bridge House is an 18 storey office building, flanked by a 6 and 13 storey office building, with a single storey building fronting the River Irwell. The complex has been vacant since October 2022 and was previously occupied by HMRC.

A 65 space pay and display car park, owned by the City Council, is accessed by Bridge Street. A 72 space private car park is accessed from St Mary's Parsonage and is barrier controlled.

Albert Bridge Gardens is located in the north western corner of the site. There is currently limited access to the river corridor through the site. There are 3 trees at the site protected by a Tree Preservation Order (TPO), located to the south west of the site within the Bridge Street Car Park.

This is a highly sustainable location. Salford Central Station is west of the site. Manchester Victoria Station and the Metrolink stop at Exchange Square are a 10 minute walk. There are bus stops including the Free Bus on Bridge Street.

SENSITIVE RECEPTORS

The majority of the site is in Flood Zone 1 and a critical drainage area. The northern boundary is in Flood Zone 3 due to the proximity of the River Irwell. It is in the Manchester Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) where air quality conditions are poor. Giant Hogweed is present.

The site is not in a conservation area, the Parsonage Gardens and Deansgate/Peter Street conservation areas are located close to the site.

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

I note from your Scoping Report that the Proposed Development is based on a number of parameters which are evolving as part of the design process. Should these parameters change, then a further scoping assessment should be undertaken if the scope of the ES needs to reflect this.

The Proposed Development would consist of the following works:

- Demolition of existing structures and site enabling works
- Erection of 3 blocks as follows:
 - o Block A 37 storeys:
 - o Block B 49 storeys;
 - o Block C 18 storeys.

Blocks A and B would deliver circa 800 homes. Block C would deliver a 36,600 sqm office building. There would be ancillary commercial space associated with blocks C and B totaling 140 and 910 sqm respectively.

The Proposed Scheme has been designed to limit the use of cars, by prioritising pedestrian and cycle access / priority. Vehicle access into the parking area for residents / visitors will be off Bridge Street. Servicing will be via a route through the centre of the Site, from Bridge Street to St. Mary's Parsonage.

There would be a river edge landscape, along the northern boundary of the Site, providing connectivity from Bridge Street to Trinity Bridge and opening up the River Irwell. A Garden walk situated between the blocks across the centre of the Site would also be created. A City square within the eastern part of the Site, fronting onto St. Mary's Parsonage and Trinity Square would be included as part of the proposals.

ASSESSMENT OF THE SCOPING REPORT

I can confirm that the approach outlined within the Scoping Report is considered to be generally acceptable, appropriate and proportionate. This is also reflected in the nature of the consultation responses.

You should note the specific points I have made below within the specific discipline areas which reflect the comments of the consultees and those of the City Council, as Local Planning Authority. These matters should also be included and addressed within the relevant chapters of ES.

Discussion of alternatives

Paragraph (3)(d) of Regulation 18, and paragraph 2 of Schedule 4 of the EIA Regulations, require that environmental statements include discussion description of the reasonable alternatives to the Proposed Development and an

indication of the main reasons for the option chosen, that have been considered by the applicant.

I note within section 3 of your Scoping Request that you intend to provide a discussion on alternatives within the ES. This will focus on alternatives considered and project design evolution.

Presentation and content of the Environmental Statement

The purpose of an ES is to enable significant environmental impacts of a proposed development to be fully considered before an application for planning consent is determined.

The ES provides environmental information to aid the decision making process. The ES should be laid out clearly, with minimum use of technical terms (where appropriate) and should provide an objective and realistic description of the likely significant impacts of the proposed development.

The information should be presented so as to be comprehensible to the specialist and non-specialist alike. The ES should be concise with supporting technical information placed in appendices

Mitigation

Paragraph 7 of Schedule 4 of the EIA Regulations states that mitigation measures may fall into a range of categories namely:

- avoidance of impacts;
- reduction in the magnitude of impacts; or
- compensation for losses incurred through unavoidable impacts;

These should be identified as such in the technical chapters of the ES.

Mitigation measures should not be developed in isolation, as they may relate to more than one aspect of the environment (e.g. mitigation to address issues of landscaping, surface water management, air quality and biodiversity).

The ES should set out the mitigation measures required to prevent, reduce and where possible offset any significant adverse effects. The ES should also identify any residual effects that could be expected to persist even with mitigation in place.

The anticipated effectiveness of any mitigation measures proposed should be addressed within the ES. Only mitigation measures that can be shown to be deliverable (i.e. technically and financially viable), and for which the applicant can deliver and implement as part of any planning permission granted, should be taken into account as part of the assessment.

It is further recommended that a section is included in the ES in which the mitigation measures proposed across all the technical chapters are collated and presented as an integrated package.

It is considered best practice to outline in the ES, the structure of the environmental management and monitoring plan.

Cumulative effects

The committed developments summarised in chapter 12 and table 12.1 of your Scoping Report appears to be acceptable.

Cross references and summarising of the findings

All specialist chapters should be cross-referenced to other relevant disciplines (for example traffic impacts on air quality). Consideration of the potential for interactions between the different aspects of the environment is essential to the production of a robust assessment.

The ES should not be a collection of separate specialist chapters, but a comprehensive assessment of the environmental impacts of the proposed components of the wider scheme, and should account for how the identified impacts could be mitigated or avoided, or how suitable compensation could be provided to offset those effects.

In accordance with the requirements of paragraph 6 of Schedule 4 of the EIA Regulations, each technical chapter should include a description of the forecasting methods or evidence, used to identify and assess the significant effects on the environment, including details of any difficulties (e.g. technical deficiencies, lack of know-how, etc.) encountered by the applicant during the preparation of the ES and the main uncertainties involved.

ENVIRONMENTAL MATTERS TO BE SCOPED OUT OF THE ES

The City Council comments as follows, based on the information provided, on the matters proposed to be scoped out of the ES.

- Air quality;
- Archaeology;
- Biodiversity.
- Built heritage;
- Ground conditions and contamination;
- Obtrusive lighting;
- Risk of major accidents and / or disasters;
- Transport and accessibility;
- Waste and resources; and
- Water environment.

Air Quality

Air quality can be scoped out of the EIA. The planning application should be supported by an Air Quality impact assessment. The report will need to include exposure assessment for the receptors being introduced to the area and include assessment of pollutants NO₂, PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}. Construction dust assessment and mitigation measures will need to be included, recommendations with regard to EV charge points and comment with regard to how the development will comply with the IAQ best practice guidelines.

Details of any clean air filters will need to be recommended where required including specification, location and maintenance requirements. It is suggested that at this stage the development will use an all-electric approach rather than a combustion approach using gas boilers so this will need to be confirmed in the AQ assessment. There will be emergency equipment installed which will be diesel generator type back up system.

Archaeology

Archaeology can be scoped out of the EIA. The planning application should be supported by a suitable desk based assessment.

Biodiversity

Biodiversity can be scoped out of the EIA. The planning application should be supported by a suitable assessment.

Built heritage

Built Heritage can be scoped out of the EIA. The planning application should be supported by a suitable assessment.

Ground conditions and contamination

can be scoped out of the EIA. The planning application should be supported by a suitable assessment. A preliminary risk assessment should be submitted with the application followed by an intrusive site investigation including gas risk assessment and water supplier risk assessment along with a remediation strategy where necessary.

In addition, you should note that the site is in a sensitive environmental location immediately adjacent to the River Irwell and above a Secondary A and Principal aquifers. This would need to be adequately considered within the submission.

Obtrusive lighting

Obtrusive lighting can be scoped out of the EIA. The planning application should be supported by a suitable assessment.

Risk of major accidents and / or disasters

Risk of major accidents can be scoped out of the EIA.

Transport and accessibility

Transport and accessibility can be scoped out of the EIA. The planning application should be supported by a suitable assessment and Highway Services have provided a comprehensive response to the areas this should cover. This is attached to this letter.

In summary, the transport statement should cover:

- A multi-modal trip generation assessment with further detail on anticipated public transport, pedestrian and cycle distribution/routes/capacities;
- Include analysis of collision data during the most recent five-year period, with identification of any underlying patterns that might be affected by the development;
- Provide justification for the proposed level of cycle parking. It should be noted that some short-stay cycle parking provision would also be beneficial for visitors. Sheltered and secure cycle parking will be required for staff;
- Provide justification for the proposed level of car parking (including disabled/EVC provision). Parking bays and aisle widths will need to align with MCC standards. Swept-path assessments will also be required; o Swept path analysis of the proposed servicing arrangements / access road access, routing a& egress.
- Include proposed S278 highways engineering drawings, which should demonstrate appropriate swept-path assessment, visibility and retention of safe pedestrian movement around the site access including both primary vehicular access points and emergency access/routes. A summary of the RSA1 findings within the TA would also be useful;
- Discussion of how the development will link to the MCC works along Bridge Street and the existing signalised junction.
- Demonstration that waste and service vehicles can safely utilise the proposed site layout / adjacent highway network;
- Undertake a review of Traffic Regulation Orders on the surrounding streets in the vicinity of the development and identification of modifications;
- Include information on emergency access routes and how these would integrate with the adjacent highway network and developments; o Provide details on/management of taxis, site deliveries and servicing (including engineering drawings).

Waste and resources

Waste and resources can be scoped out of the EIA. The planning application should be supported by a suitable assessment. This should include a review of the MCC GD04 document with regard to the necessary requirements for residential and commercial waste. It is essential that suitable refuse space is provided to meet the criteria and that the domestic waste collection proposals

meet the criteria in GD04 and comply with the MCC waste collection regime. Schemes that do not fully comply with the criteria in this document will not be accepted so it is essential that the developer fully reviews this document and develops the waste strategy to meet the requirement at this stage of development.

Water environment

Water environment can be scoped out of the EIA. The planning application should be supported by a suitable assessment. This should include the commitment made at 2.6.8 (Provision of a standalone Flood Risk Assessment to support the Planning application) and 2.6.8 (Provision of a standalone Drainage Strategy to support the Planning application).

A Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy must be submitted to support the Planning Application. This should demonstrate design compliance with national and local policy.

The Flood Risk Assessment will need to explore whether this extent may need to be adjusted for climate change or other mitigations taken with climate change accounted for. The FRA will also need to account for flood risk from other sources, including surface water and canals,

Summary

I agree that the matters you have identified to be scoped out of the ES are appropriate with the exception of heritage and wind.

The planning application must be supported by appropriate documentation, including any mitigation, to minimise any effects as a result of the Proposed Development from the matters capable of being scoped out. The City Council reserves the right to re-consider this position following a more detailed consideration of the reports which will accompany the planning application.

ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT CHAPTERS - SPECIFIC COMMENTS ON THE TECHNICAL CONTENTS

The ES should be proportionate in its consideration of the aspects of the environment listed under Paragraph 2 of Regulation 4 of the EIA Regulations. Those aspects of the environment that are subject to the most significant impacts from the Proposed Development should be the primary focus of the ES.

Your Scoping Report advises that the ES will cover the following topic areas.

- Noise and vibration
- Townscape and visual
- Daylight, sunlight and overshadowing
- Wind microclimate
- Socio-economics and human health
- Climate change.

Noise and Vibration

The comments within your Scoping Report are noted and are acceptable in terms of their consideration in the ES.

It has been confirmed that plant and mechanical equipment will be selected to not exceed 5dB below the LA90 which we can accept. Under the assessment, receptors will need to include existing commercial, office and residential receptors, other committed development receptors and the proposed occupiers of the application building. Emergency generators and sub stations will also require assessment. Any louvred extract / intake or any plant associated with louvres or located behind louvres will also need to be assessed under this criteria along with any ASHP's. We will recommend the relevant condition and we will review and provide full additional comments on the assessment once submitted with the application

Noise breakout from the proposed commercial units has been considered. The assessment and recommended limits will need to reflect the criteria in our Guidance for Developers document. It has been stated that the landlord will specify tenant controls in the lease agreement. The details of the noise limits at the receptors, internal noise limits and mitigation measures will need to be recommended in the acoustic report and agreed under. Validation will be required to confirm compliance prior to occupation. Details of how noise limits once agreed will be controlled and set will also be required. Receptors will need to include existing commercial and residential properties and the occupiers of the proposed development site. Acknowledgement that there will be consideration to restrictions in the low frequency 63Hz and 125Hz frequency bands has been included. These restrictions will need to reflect our criteria to existing, consented and proposed receptors. We will review the noise breakout assessment and provide further comment once submitted with the application

There will be a requirement for the noise assessment to include residential property insulation assessment, glazing and façade specifications and recommendations in order to comply with our criteria and we will recommend a condition accordingly. Assessment shall consider sources of noise from surrounding roads, plant / equipment, nearby entertainment venues and noise transfer from the proposed ground floor commercial units. There may be other sources of noise which will need to be identified and included in the assessment . The internal noise criteria will not be met with windows open so a scheme of alternative ventilation will be required to ensure suitable ventilation is provided to the residential apartments so that occupiers do not need to rely on openable windows for ventilation purposes other than for purge ventilation. Details of the ventilation scheme will need to be provided and assessment to confirm when in full operation the equipment will not exceed the internal noise criteria. Mechanical ventilation will be required in the residential properties. Assessment of any façade penetrations for building services such as ventilation intake louvres will be required and any necessary acoustic insulation of these areas recommending. This site will also require an AVO overheating assessment which has been confirmed in the scoping document. We will provide further assessment and additional comment once the assessment has been submitted with the full application

Section 6.24 and comments on page 164 refers to delivery times to commercial premises of 07:00 to 2300 which is outside of our general delivery times. We will be recommending a condition with regard to restrictions for hours for collections, deliveries and servicing and the hours will be 07:30 to 20:00 Mon to Sat and 10:00 to 18:00 on Sunday and Bank Hol

If there are any external seating areas associated with the bar / restaurants etc please note, we will not be looking to approve speakers or music of any kind in these areas. We will also need to agree the capacity and intended use / hours of any external areas and will recommend a condition reflecting this

Brief details of the baseline noise assessment have been included within the scoping report but we will need to fully assess and agree these with the full noise assessment.

Townscape and visual

The comments within your Scoping Report are noted and are acceptable in terms of their consideration in the ES.

The impacts of the construction phase should be considered.

Daylight, sunlight and overshadowing

The comments within your Scoping Report are noted and are acceptable in terms of their consideration in the ES.

Wind microclimate

The comments within your Scoping Report are noted and are acceptable in terms of their consideration in the ES.

Socio-economics and human health

The comments within your Scoping Report are noted and are acceptable in terms of their consideration in the ES.

Climate change

The comments within your Scoping Report are noted and are acceptable in terms of their consideration in the ES.

FURTHER INFORMATION

The City Council, as Local Planning Authority, has undertaken a thorough consideration of the information contained within your Scoping Report together with providing comments from relevant statutory consultees. The issuing of this Scoping Opinion does not preclude the City Council, as Local Planning Authority, from requesting further information at a later stage as the development proposals evolve or whilst a future planning application is being formally considered.

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

Yours sincerely



Dave Roscoe

Deputy Director of Planning