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Dear Joshua

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

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

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 the submitted location plan, covering letter, Demolition Method Statement received by the City Council as Local Planning Authority on 20 November 2023.

Demolition works fall within the scope of the EIA Directive and therefore it is necessary to consider whether the demolition project is likely to have significant environmental effects.

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 and Wales) Regulations 2017; however this proposal falls under the threshold under 1 hectare.

Within the National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG), 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. These criteria which must be taken into account in determining whether a development is likely to have significant effects on the environment. The criteria are 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).

The Secretary of States view is that, in general, an EIA will be needed for Schedule 2 developments in three main types of cases, namely:

I. For major developments which are of more than local importance;

II. For developments, which are proposed for particularity environmentally sensitive or vulnerable locations;

III. For development with unusually complex and hazardous environmental effects.

Below is a consideration as to whether an EIA is required to support this demolition application.

CONTEXT

The application site relates to the demolition of unit 9 at Fallowfield Shopping Centre, Birchfield Road. Unit 9 is set back to the rear, south-eastern corner of the retail park, currently in use as a medical centre.

The building relates to a single storey, detached unit of predominantly masonry construction, with a steeply pitched, tiled roof.

The unit is set within the grounds of a wider retail park, part of which is derelict, in anticipation of a new retail supermarket and is adjoined by and associated car park area. The wider site is enclosed by timber rail and post supports.

In terms of the immediate surroundings, the site is bounded by two storey residential properties on the opposite side of Birchfield Road to the west, Birchfields Primary School to north and business premises to the south. Immediately along the eastern boundary of the site is a functioning railway line.

ASSESSMENT

As detailed above, an assessment is provided, based on the three criteria within Schedule 3 of the regulations.

Characteristics of Development

Size of Development

The scope of the works relates to the demolition of a single unit (Class E), anticipated to allow for the construction of a new supermarket and facilitating works.

The submitted Demolition Method Statement that forms part of the application, details the scope of demolition works, asbestos removal, operations to be undertaken, including strip out, disconnection of services, removal of roof coverings, waste disposal and site management.

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 assessing 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 site is located within a busy urban area. Whilst the area around the application site is subject to small-scale development proposals, they are of a limited scale and relate to either the small-scale expansion and redevelopment of existing facilities, signage and household development. It is not therefore considered that any nearby works would result in significant cumulative effects.

Use of natural resources

The site is not a known area containing any natural resources. In addition, given the scale of the development, it is not believed that this would require the excessive usage of any natural resources in the demolition process.

All existing gas and water supplies at the site will be terminated prior to demolition. There will be some use of water (for dust suppression) and fuel for demolition vehicles, but this is not considered to be of a level which would have serious environmental impacts and is only temporary for the duration of the demolition process.

Production of waste

The demolition project is likely to produce an amount of waste in terms of internal strip out and external materials. All other waste materials from the demolition shall be separated and taken off site for disposal.

Whilst there is an amount of waste to be generated at the site, it is not considered that the levels would give rise to a significant environmental impact of the development and is likely to be of no more than local significance.

Pollution and nuisances

The demolition process is likely to create some pollution and nuisance i.e. traffic, servicing, dust, vibrations and noise.

Noise, dust, vibrations are to be kept to a minimum, with no work outside of normal working hours..

The site will be operational during normal construction site hours which will assist in minimising the operational noise impact on any nearby residential properties.

It is considered that through the implementation of best practice measures, any noise impact will be minimal, temporary and limited in duration.

Whilst the demolition will impact on the appearance of the area, these impacts will be local impact and unlikely to be significant.

Risk of accidents

As with any development project there is a risk of accidents.

It is considered that if normal site management, best practice and health and safety protocols are adhered to, there is no reason to believe that there would be any disproportionate increase in risk to health and safety.

Relevant warning signs are to be displayed around the site perimeter, including details of an out of hours contact.

Given the scope of works and the aforementioned measures, an EIA would not be required to assess the impact.

Location of development

Existing land use

The building is not listed and does not fall within a Conservation Area. In addition, there are no Tree Preservation Orders on the site and the site is not known for its ecological, biodiversity or archaeological value.

The site is within an area at low risk of flooding. There should be no excessive surface water run off from the demolition process and any that is created can be accommodated by existing drains around the site.

The works are above ground and the site has not been identified as having historical land contamination i.e. gas and ground conditions. As such, there are no contaminated land issues to preclude demolition taking place.

On this basis, the development site is not considered to be environmentally sensitive site.

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 EIA regulations state that attention should be paid to wetlands; coastal zones; mountain and forest areas; nature reserves; parks; areas designated under European Union Directives on the conservation of wild birds; natural habitats, flora and fauna; areas in which environmental standards have been exceeded; densely populated areas; or landscapes of historical, cultural or archaeological significance.

The site does not possess any of the aforementioned characteristics and there is sufficient absorption capacity within the natural environment to accommodate the development. The impact will be of no more than local significance and on this basis, an EIA is not considered necessary.

Characteristics of the potential impact

The potential significant effects of the demolition must be considered in relation to criteria set out within Schedule 3 of EIA Regulations 2017. Specifically: the extent of the impact (geographical area and size of the affected population); the transfrontier nature of the impact; the magnitude and complexity of the impact; the probability of the impact; and the duration, frequency and reversibility of the impact.

(i) Magnitude and spatial extent of the impact

In this instance, the extent of the impact is considered to be localised only and not of significance.

Construction impacts including noise, dust, vibration and vehicular activity will be limited to the site and surrounding area.

(ii) The nature of the impact

The impacts of the proposed development are outlined below.

Whilst the proposed development works would have the potential to result in increased construction traffic, dust pollution, noise and vibration, all impacts will be short-term, limited and appropriately managed and mitigated. This will include controls on working hours and dust suppression.

In terms of the duration, frequency and reversibility of the impacts, it is acknowledged that demolition activity will have impacts for the duration of the process. However, these will be of a limited duration and limited to normal construction site working hours.

In terms of air quality, guidance contained within the suite of National Planning Guidance (NPG) states that air quality is considered relevant to a planning application, when a proposal may:

- Give rise to potentially significant impact (such as dust) during construction for nearby sensitive locations;
- Significantly affect traffic in the immediate vicinity of the proposed development site or further afield; or
- Expose people to existing sources of air pollutants. This could be by building new homes, workplaces or other development in places with poor quality.

In this case, given the scope of the works, it is not considered that the proposal would have any significant impact upon existing, local air quality levels based on the limited duration and scope of works and with appropriate dust suppression measures.

With respect to the impact upon ecology, the site is considered to be of negligible ecological value.

In terms of archaeology and heritage, the site does not contain any known designated heritage assets or archaeological impacts that would be affected by the development of the site

In terms of flood risk, site is shown as being of low risk of flooding from rivers. In any event, the works proposed are above ground level.

With respect to visual amenity, the proposed works are considered to have a negligible impact. The host building is of little architectural merit and whilst the site would be relatively barren following demolition, the impact is considered neutral and short term in advance of redevelopment.

In terms of noise impact, it is envisaged that noise associated with the demolition is evitable. However, with noise limiting equipment and with working to be carried out during normal construction hours, the impact is anticipated to be within prescribed limits of tolerance and will be limited, short term and localised in nature.

On balance, taking account of all of the aforementioned considerations, it is believed that any impacts will be of a localised nature and not give rise to any significant effects on the environment and as such, do not require consideration by EIA.

(iii) Transboundary nature of the impact

Given the scale and nature of the development, transboundary impacts are not applicable and therefore an EIA on this basis is not required.

(iv) Intensity and complexity of the impact

As detailed within the application submission, the impacts associated with demolition have been thoroughly assessed and understood. Through appropriate best practice measures and successful mitigation, an EIA would not be required.

(v) Probability of Impact

Through assessment of the submitted information, any impact is understood and considered to be of a localised nature and of a short duration only. Through appropriate best practice measures and mitigation, the impacts are considered acceptable and therefore do not require assessment through an EIA.

(vi) Expected onset, duration, frequency and reversibility of impact

Any impact as a consequence of the above is likely to be short term or temporary. On this basis, it is not felt an EIA would be required.

(vii) Cumulation of the impact with the impact of other existing and/or approved development

As already outlined within this screening opinion, there are no other imminent developments either located nearby or in the pipeline that would adversely affect the environment as a consequence of cumulative impact. An EIA is not therefore required on this basis.

(viii) Possibility of effectively reducing the impact

Reducing the impact is possible via best practice measures, effective protocol and mitigation as outline within the application documentation. An EIA would not therefore be required.

Mitigation if Development is not EIA Development ‘General Provisions relating to Screenings; under Part 2, Regulation 5

As required by the EIA Regulations and as prescribed by National Planning Guidance, if it is to be determined that the proposed development is not EIA development, a screening opinion should provide details of the proposed mitigation measures envisaged to avoid or prevent what might otherwise have been significant adverse effects on the environment.

As already outlined, any impacts are considered to be minimal, temporary or localised in nature. It is acknowledged however that there will be some environmental impacts, but these can be suitability mitigated to reduce any likely effects of the proposed development.

Visual Amenity – Consideration of the impact of the proposed development upon the appearance of the street-scene and architectural character is required.

It is not believed that there would be any significant, negative impacts upon visual amenity as a consequence of the proposed demolition.

Ecology

Given the characteristics of the existing units, any impact to ecological features is considered negligible.

The applicant will be advised of their responsibilities under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and Habitat Regulations with respect to whether bats are encountered during works and for work to take account of the bird nesting season.

Noise and Vibration

The control of noise during construction can be mitigated appropriate design, control and insulation of plant equipment.

Air Quality

There are likely to be impacts on air quality during demolition. Through dust suppression methods including the spraying of water, the impact can be limited.

Highway Impact

As the works are contained within a retail park, any disruption to the local highway network is negligible. Controls will be necessary within the shopping centre itself, in particular, along access routes and adjacent to the mini roundabout. The impact upon access routes can be minimised via the implementation of best practice access measures, including the use of a banksman and the hoarding off of the site area. The site incorporates sufficient space within its curtilage for contractor parking.

Impact to the Adjoining Railway Line

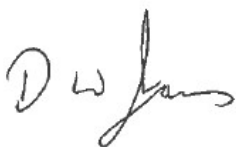
The application has liaised with Network Rail and produced a Basic Asset Protection Agreement (BAPA) to ensure demolition works have no harmful impact to public safety, infrastructure to the operation of the railway line. Network Rail have confirmed the details to be satisfactory and, on this basis, the impact is considered satisfactory.

CONCLUSION

Based on the above, it is concluded that this development will have some local impact on the surrounding area. However, it has been assessed that any impact is not significant enough to be of more than local importance and therefore does not warrant a formal Environmental Impact Assessment. In the opinion of the City Council, as Local Planning Authority, an Environmental Impact Assessment is not required.

The City Council as Local Planning Authority reserves the right to seek an Environmental Impact Assessment for any future planning submission on this site.

Signed



Derek Jones
Strategic Planning and Projects Lead
9 January 2024