



**MANCHESTER
CITY COUNCIL**

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**TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT)
(ENGLAND AND WALES) REGULATIONS 2011**

**FORMAL SCREENING REQUEST FOR ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT
'SCREENING OPNIONS' UNDER PART 2 REGULATION 5**

PROPOSED DEMOLITION OF GREENHEYS BUILDING MANCHESTER

SCREENING OPINION ADOPTED BY MANCHESTER CITY COUNCIL

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 prior notification for demolition application (136962/DEM/2023).

Demolition works fall within the scope of the EIA Directive and therefore it is now 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 2011. A threshold exceeding 1 hectare of development other than a dwellinghouse is defined as a development likely to have significant effects on the environment by virtue of factors such as its nature, size or location.

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. 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).

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 a planning application for the above development.

Context

The application proposes the demolition of the Greenheys Business Centre, no7 and no9 Greenheys Lane and part of the McDougall Centre, along with the immediate landscape ribbon.

The site consists of a vacant commercial building, this being the Greenheys Business Centre, it's associated car park, two terrace dwellings and the single storey rear extension of the McDougall Centre. The topography of the site is flat and the size of the application site is approximately 0.67 hectares. The site lies within Greenheys, an inner-city area located to the south of the core of the City Centre and to the west of the University of Manchester campus. Surrounding uses comprise a mix of residential and commercial development.

The application site is accessed by an internal access road off of Burlington Street to the north, a vehicular access off of Pencroft Way to the east and a third vehicular access to the west off of Greenheys Lane. The demolition is to be undertaken as part of works related to the redevelopment of the application site.

It is considered that the potential impacts from the 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;
- Noise/dust/emissions from construction and operations of the development; and
- Cumulative impacts.

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

ASSESSMENT

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

Size of Development

The site contains a former commercial building and two terrace dwellings and occupies 0.67 ha. The site is currently vacant and falls below the threshold for an EIA as prescribed in the regulations.

It is acknowledged that the demolition works will take place within the application site boundary. Waste materials will be segregated into those that can be re-used, recycled and landfill, and then be taken off site via HGVs.

Upon request it has been confirmed that the demolition works are to take place over the course of a ten week period. A demolition method statement provides detailed information of the programme of works, including site security and site access, use of vehicles, removal of harmful materials and site management details. Said statement has also been accompanied by a covering letter, air quality assessment, arboriculture impact assessment and preliminary ecological appraisal. Given the relatively small scale of the demolition works, it is considered the impacts of it are likely to be local in nature and predictable and therefore do not require consideration by an EIA. Notwithstanding this, further assessment is provided below.

Cumulation with over 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 is situated within the area covered by the Manchester Science Park Strategic Regeneration Framework. This is a strategically important area where a number of development sites are anticipated to come forward. At this present time, the Council is in receipt of an application for the erection of a seven storey building, this being planning application 136934/FO/2023, however, this application is still under consideration and is unlikely to be brought forward for development at this present time. Given the relatively short duration of the construction process it is unlikely to coincide with any major redevelopment proposals in the area.

Use of natural resources

The site is not known to contain any natural resources. In addition, given the scale of the demolition, it is not believed that this would require the excessive use of any natural resources in the demolition process.

All existing services will be terminated prior to the demolition and whilst water will be used for dust suppression and diesel for demolition vehicles 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 waste in terms of rubble, metal, timber and other products.

Within the supporting information submitted with the application it is considered that the amount of waste generated is modest and can be managed appropriately in order to minimise any environmental impacts. Scrap metal, timber and cardboard will all be taken off site to be recycled, As such, the impacts are likely to be localised in nature and predictable and therefore do not require consideration by an EIA.

Pollution and nuisances

The main implications from the demolition process will be from vehicle movements, dust from the demolition material and noise from demolition process and machinery. Water suppression systems will be used should dust suppression measures become necessary.

In terms of noise, the supporting information indicates that the demolition will take place Monday to Friday 07:30 to 17:00 and that acoustic barriers will be erected on site to prevent the transmission of noise to neighbouring properties. A variety of excavators in

the range of 14-42 tonnes will be used to take down the buildings on site, with internal strip outs and works concerning asbestos to be done by hand.

Given the short demolition period and the operating hours, it is considered that whilst there will be some localised impacts from noise and dust, these impacts will be short in duration and predictable for the duration of the temporary period. As such, the impacts will be of no more than local significance and therefore not require consideration by EIA.

Risk of accidents

As the site is in close proximity to residential properties there is potential for accidents from falling debris and moving vehicles. There is also the risk of accidents stemming from debris and moving vehicles.

The site will be enclosed by a hoarding which prevent road users and pedestrian from coming too close to the site, and the demolition activities, and to prevent any unauthorised access when the site is closed.

Location of development

Existing land use

The application site forms part of the Manchester Science Park and comprises a variety of uses, this being residential (Class C3) at no7 Greenheys Lane, hot food takeaway use (Sui Generis) at no9 Greenheys Lane and research and development uses (Class E(g)) at the Greenheys building itself.

The buildings on site are not listed and do not fall within the Conservation Area. The buildings are not considered to be of architectural or historical interest, with no8 and no9 Greenheys Lane, as well as the southern extension of the McDougall Centre showing signs of wear.

Vegetation on site is limited to that of a low lying boundary hedge and a collection of low to medium quality semi-mature and mature trees. The site is not known for its ecological or archaeological value. The supporting information confirms that the buildings present on site varied between having low bat roosting potential to moderate, and that there was limited to very limited potential for nesting birds, hedgehogs, badgers, reptiles or amphibians. The supporting information goes on to state that there is ample room on site for a replacement scheme to make biodiversity enhancements to ensure there is no unacceptable impact on local ecology.

On this basis, the demolition site is not considered to be an environmentally sensitive location and therefore the demolition process does not require consideration by 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

As has been detailed above the site does not lie within any site that has been allocated or known for its ecological or biodiversity value. However, the site has the potential to support bats but the potential to impact on them is considered to be low.

In terms of air quality, the demolition process will create dust and emissions from vehicle movements. It is considered that whilst there will be emissions into the atmosphere, it is not considered that this will be of a significant level that will be detrimental to the environment and will not be of more than local significance.

The submitting supporting information makes clear that widespread footway closures will not be required but that a temporary footpath closure may be necessary to allow for the demolition of the western elevation of the Greenheys Building. This may cause some short term localised disruption but the impact is considered predictable and does not require consideration by an EIA.

It is therefore considered that the impacts on the natural environment will not be of more local significance and the impacts of the construction 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 will be no transfrontier impact as a result of the development.

The loss of the buildings will be permanent and non-reversible in that it would change the visual character of site. However, the site is allocated for redevelopment and thus will not be void within the street scene for an overly long period of time.

There will be noise and traffic from the proposed demolition works which will cause some localised impacts in terms of traffic congestion on the local highway network and noise from the plant and machinery. However, it is considered that these impacts are not of a magnitude that warrant consideration by an EIA.

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, this will be limited with the majority of the waste being taken off site or recycled to repair the building.

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).

Given that the site is currently vacant, there will be a marked change in the scale of activities taking place at the site and their nature. However, the demolition works is significantly below the thresholds listed above.

The levels of traffic and noise from the demolition process will be of a different nature to the neighbouring office, residential and research uses of the surrounding area and noise will be generated from the machinery and plant associated with the proposed demolition works throughout the day. This will also place additional traffic on the highway network and general noise in the local vicinity for a temporary period. That said, whilst there will be noise and disturbance from the site, it is considered that this is not of a scale significantly greater than the previous use and therefore not require consideration by an EIA.

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;
- Noise/dust/emissions from construction and operations of the development; and
- Cumulative impacts.

It is considered that whilst some there will 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 and is characterised by buildings of no visual merit. The proposal seeks to demolish the buildings and level the site. The clearing of the site will have a neutral impact on the local area until the site is developed. The changes to the visual amenity of the local area are modest in the context of the site and do not warrant consideration by EIA.
- Heritage and archaeology – The site is not located in an area known for its heritage assets or below ground archaeology. On this basis, consideration by an EIA is not considered necessary.
- Ecology and biodiversity – It is considered that there will be limited impact on the ecology. The buildings have a low to medium potential to support bats. Should any be found during the demolition process, suitable mitigation can be introduced to protect them. Overall, the proposal will result in a neutral impact on local ecology and biodiversity thereby not warranting consideration by EIA.
- Traffic and access –The proposal will not have any significant impact on traffic flows or car parking in the local area. The short ten week duration of the demolition process will mean there would be some localised impacts on the highway such as the closure of the footway and availability of on street parking. However, such impacts can be managed through careful management of the highway during this time. The proposal will ensure that the highway remains suitable from an operational perspective.
- Air quality and pollution – There will be cars and demolition vehicles present at the site which will generate emissions together with dust from the demolition

process. However, such impacts can be carefully mitigated through appropriate management and dust suppression measures. In any event, the emissions from the site are considered to be short term for duration of the temporary period.

- Use of resources including water – The proposal will not utilise any resources which are in short supply.
- Creation of waste – The proposal is not considered to generate any unnecessary waste and any waste that is generated can be recycled.
- Land contamination – The land is not complex in this regard and there will be no excavation or removal of soil from the site.
- Noise – Noise and disturbance can be carefully managed at the site within the reasonable hours proposed for the demolition process together with management and use of appropriate equipment to minimise noise.
- Cumulative impacts – The development site is located in an area of significant change. However, there is no known level of activity in the area which would have a cumulative impact with this development at this present time.

CONCLUSION

It is concluded that this development will have some impact on the surrounding area. However, it has been judged that these will 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.

There is no known development proposals for the site if demolition is to take place. Any future proposal will clearly need to be the subject of a separate screening for EIA.