



**MANCHESTER
CITY COUNCIL**

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09 April 2026

Our reference: EIASCR/26/003

Dear Mr Timmins

**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 NORTHER/EASTERN GATEWAY WALKING AND
CYCLING ROUTES**

SCREENING OPINION ADOPTED BY MANCHESTER CITY COUNCIL

Thank you for your letter dated 10 March 2026 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.

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

The proposal type is listed in category 10 (f) Construction of Roads 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 which includes more than 1 hectare of development. Your letter of the 10 March 2026 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 involves modifications to the City Centre Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ). The existing CPZ contains 4 zones. The site coverage is approximately 300ha.

Zones 1 and 2 are roughly characterised as the urban core of the City Centre, with a diverse mix of employment, commercial and residential developments associated with the Piccadilly Gardens, Northern Quarter, Central Retail District, Medieval Quarter neighbourhoods. Zones 3 and 4 similarly relate to the regenerated Castlefield, Great Jackson Street, Oxford Corridor and Piccadilly neighbourhoods.

These zones cover the majority of the City Centre, and as such the Castlefield, St Johns, Deansgate, St Peters Square, George Street, Whitworth Street, Albert Square, Parsonage Road, St Anns Square, Upper Kings Street, Stevenson Square, Smithfield, Shudehill and Cathedral Conservation Areas lie within the development zone. There is a high concentration of Grade I, II* and II listed buildings within the development zone, as well as a number of non-designated heritage assets.

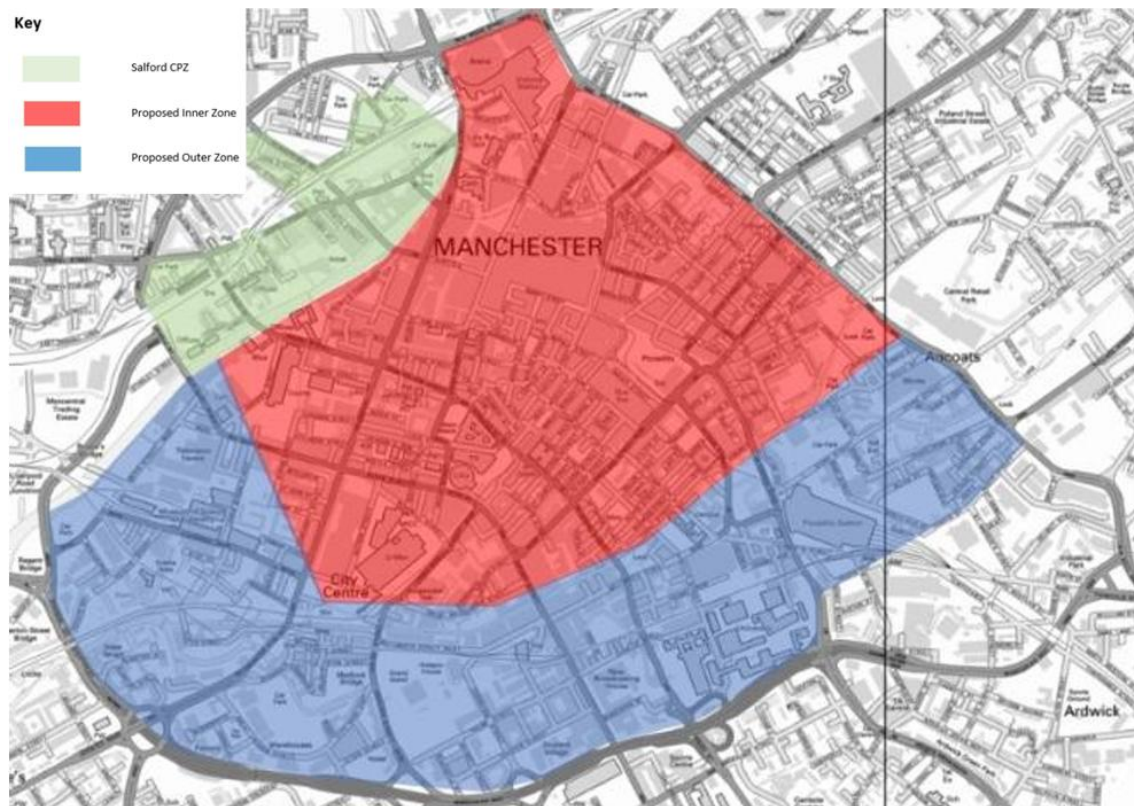
The development site is in a highly accessible location in the city centre with access to public transport together with walking and cycling routes.

Within this area are several ordinary watercourses (open channel and culverted) as well as main rivers. Flood Zones 2 and 3 feature across the north boundary of the CPZ, as well as along the border of Parking Zones 1-2 and Zones 3-4. The CPZ therefore features areas of medium-high risk of flooding, together with critical drainage areas.

The site is located in the Manchester Air Quality Management Area (AQMA). The Rochdale and Ashton Canal (West) are Sites of Biological Importance (SBI). There are no Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) or Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) on the Site. The site is on the fringes of a SSSI Impact Risk Zone. After the applicant after using the step by step guide to using the IRZ dataset, concluded that the works is unlikely to pose a risk to the SSSI.

Zones 1 and 2, and zones 3 and 4 have similarities in land uses, tariffs and maximum hours of stay. Additionally, ticket data indicates that the most popular periods of stay between Zones 1 and 2 are comparable as are the most popular periods of stay between Zones 3 and 4.

Based on this, it is proposed to combine existing Zones 1 and 2 into a new Inner Zone and combine existing Zones 3 and 4 into an Outer Zone.



This would include:

- Provision of new road markings and traffic signing which will include advice to road users and residents.
- Signing and lining alterations.
- Removal of long stay parking on-street in Zone 4

There would not be any reduction of any blue badge spaces/parking.

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

- Traffic and transport;
- Historic Environment and Visual Impact;
- Air Quality;
- Noise and Vibration;
- Ground Conditions;
- Ecology;
- Water resources and drainage; and
- Cumulative effects.

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 size of the development exceeds the threshold of 1 hectares. The removal of long stay parking on-street in Zone 4 would encourage commuter mode shift and contribute to reduced congestion in peak hours and is in line with the City Centre Transport Strategy.

Whilst this would result in modifications to the highway network these are not more than local significance and would not warrant consideration by an EIA.

On this basis, whilst a proposal of this scale and nature would have some impacts, 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.

A number of planning permissions exist within the development site. This could result in a number of large-scale development being brought forward at the same time as the proposal 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. Although this would result in some impacts, these are not considered to be of more than local significance and 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 phases of the development, this is a highly sustainable location and it is considered that the impacts would not be significant. The removal of long stay parking on-street in Zone 4 would encourage commuter mode shift which would contribute to reduced congestion in peak hours and help minimise impact on local air quality. Otherwise, there are no other changes to onsite parking with this development and therefore limited traffic and air quality impacts on the surrounding area.

Use of natural resources

The site is not known to contain any natural resources. The proposed works would not create any significant changes to the topography of the area as the works would generally consist of signing and lining alterations.

It is noted in your Environmental Impact Assessment Screening Matrix document you specify that the materials would be common to works within the Highway Industry and typical of signing and lining highways schemes.

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 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

Physical alterations would consist of some signing and lining alterations, with the potential for new road signs to be installed. Developments of this kind, at this scale would inevitably create waste in the construction.

During the construction phase, waste would be minimised given there are no structures to demolish. Whilst there would be site excavation, and therefore material needing to be removed off site, this would be done in accordance with the relevant regulations in relation to the disposal and treatment of waste (i.e. the Waste Disposal Authority, The Environment Agency, Environmental Health Department, Health and Safety Executive and any other relevant Statutory Authority and Legislation in connection with the excavation and disposal of contaminated material)

All material surplus to the requirements of the Permanent Works would be disposed of in accordance with the requirements of "The Environmental Protection Action 1990" and any subsequent Regulations relevant to the above enacted by the Secretary of State for the Environment.

I note that, notwithstanding that you anticipate that waste produced from the works will be minimal, you acknowledge that some waste may be created if new road signs are installed, and confirm that this waste will comply with the above.

I note the site does not present any specific challenges in this regard that are significant, unusual, complex or any more than local significance.

There would be no generate of waste during the operational aspects of the development.

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 construction process is not likely to give rise to any pollutants which are hazardous, toxic or noxious. However, there would be dust, noise, vibrations and traffic from the construction phases which requires consideration.

In terms of the construction phase, there would be dust, noise and vibrations from the breaking of the ground and site excavation along with the use of plant and machinery.

In addition, construction vehicles would generate traffic with HGVs using the local highway network. This would result in noise, disturbance and emissions in the local

area which could give rise to disruption to nearby residents and have an impact on local air quality conditions.

Vehicles would need to travel along main routes which contain a mixture of commercial and residential developments. Vehicle movements are likely to be noticeable to local residents and businesses in these areas. The characteristics of the local highway network provide direct access onto the main routes minimising disruption in the local area.

Such effects would only be temporary in nature for the duration of the construction period and within normal working hours of 09:00 and 17:00. Contractors would also be required to introduce measures to keep noise and disturbance to a minimum by applying Best Practicable Means (BPM) of noise control during construction works to minimise noise (including vibration) at neighbouring residential properties and other sensitive receptors arising from construction activities.

These effects are therefore predictable and do not require consideration by an EIA.

In terms of the operational phases of the development, the removal of long stay parking on-street in Zone 4 would encourage commuter mode shift which will contribute to reduced congestion in peak hours and minimise traffic and air pollution.

I consider that there would be noticeable impacts from noise, vibrations and traffic from the construction. This would be minimal during the operational stages. Such impacts are not considered to be of a scale which is more than local significance and therefore do not warrant consideration 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 to the canal 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.

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 and Approved Land Use

The development site covers the majority of the City Centre and is considered to be previously developed land and public highway.

The proposed CPZ span the majority of the City Centre, and as such the Castlefield, St Johns, Deansgate, St Peters Square, George Street, Whitworth Street, Albert Square, Parsonage Road, St Anns Square, Upper Kings Street, Stevenson Square, Smithfield, Shudehill and Cathedral Conservation Areas lie within the development zone.

There is a high concentration of Grade I, II* and II listed buildings within the development zone, as well as a number of non-designated heritage assets.

The proximity of these heritage assets would mean that they are viewed in the same context as the development proposal and would therefore require consideration.

It is considered that the development sites would have some impacts on the heritage assets and the visual amenity of the area. However, these impacts are considered to be predictable and are not considered to be of significance to require consideration as part of an EIA.

There is known archaeology at the site. However, it is considered that it is of no more than local significance and therefore do not warrant consideration by an EIA.

The site contains flood zones 2 and 3 '*Medium risk to flooding*' and '*High risk to flooding*' and contains the Manchester critical drainage area, a number of canals and spans the Irwell and Irk in culvert. I note the nature of the proposed works associated with this scheme means the risk posed to these waterbodies will be minimal. It is not considered that the impacts would be significant in view of the scale of the development and the limited amount of hard surface around the sites.

There is historical evidence of land contamination within the City Centre area resulting from its pre- and post-war industrial activity. Additionally, ground contamination may arise from organic compounds which travel as fluids underground (TPH's PAH's etc), so the limitation of works to the highway is not a guarantee that there would be no ground contamination. As this will be managed during construction phases, and works for this project will be positioned within the existing highway and not require deep excavation works which could unearth historic contaminated land, the risk of unearthing historic contamination is considered to be low. The development proposal does not warrant consideration by an EIA on this basis given that the contamination levels are no more than local significance and suitable mitigation can be prepared.

There are nearby residential buildings within the development site. 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 several protected greens spaces within the City Centre. These localized green spaces would not be directly impacted by the proposed works.

Overall, it is considered that the development sites would have some impacts on the heritage assets and the visual amenity of the area along with impacting on drainage, ground conditions and biodiversity. 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 (including soil, land, water and biodiversity)

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

Absorption capacity of the natural environment

The Rochdale and Ashton Canal (West) are Sites of Biological Importance (SBI). I note the nature of the proposed works associated with this scheme means the risk posed to waterbodies would be minimal. It is not considered that the impacts would be significant in view of the scale of the development and the limited amount of hard surface around the sites.

There are otherwise several protected greens spaces within the City Centre. No vegetation has been proposed to be removed, and these localized green spaces would otherwise not be directly impacted by the proposed works. I note that you state additional lighting is not anticipated as all areas are lit by the currently installed street lighting and construction would take place within hours of daylight.

The development site falls within the Manchester City Centre Air Quality Management Area (AQMA). Whilst the construction phase is likely to generate vehicles movements that would release emissions into the atmosphere, along with dust from the construction process, it is not considered that this would be significant and detrimental to the environment in the long term with such impacts being predictable and manageable.

In terms of the operational phase, the removal of long stay parking on-street in Zone 4 would encourage commuter mode shift which will contribute to reduced congestion in peak hours and minimise traffic and air pollution. This would help toward meeting climate change and human health objectives.

Overall, it is considered that the impacts on the natural environment would be of no more than local significance from the operational aspects of the development 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.

Types and Characteristics of the potential impact

The proposed development would result in a permanent change to the appearance of the site which would only be reversed if the developments were to be removed. The visual impacts of the new development, particularly from the scale, would alter the visual amenity of the site and how it is viewed in the local area. In addition, there would be associated impacts on the heritage value of Conservation Areas and listed buildings. 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.

There would be some noise, vibrations and traffic from the construction phase of the development. However, I consider these impacts are not of a magnitude of more than local significance and therefore do not warrant consideration by an EIA.

Therefore, while covering the majority of the City Centre, given the nature of the development it is not considered that the development warrants consideration by an EIA due to the magnitude and spatial extent of the impact.

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

The impact of the physical alterations associated with the development is not considered to be overly intense or complex.

In terms of the probability, expected onset, duration, frequency and reversibility of the impact of the impact, the associated 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 development was to be demolished.

The development would be in the City Centre with existing and approved development. Although it would result in some impacts, these are not considered to be of more than local significance and would be short term and would largely be confined to the construction phase of the development.

It is considered that with appropriate measures the possibility of effectively reducing any associated impacts can be increased.

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 development does not meet this relevant criteria.

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:

- Traffic and transport;
- Historic Environment and Visual Impact;
- Air Quality;
- Noise and Vibration;
- Ground Conditions;
- Water resources and drainage; and
- Cumulative effects.

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:

- Traffic and Transport –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 minimal impact from the operation of the development as there would be cycle and pedestrian infrastructure would be improved.
- Historic Environment and Visual Impact – The development area contains a number of Conservation Areas and heritage assets including, listed buildings and other non-designated heritage assets. There would be minimal above ground development.
- Air quality – 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 removal of parking in Zone 4.
- Noise and vibration – The proposal would generate a degree of noise from comings and goings in the local area during the construction phase of the development. Mitigation can be put in place during the construction in the form of a construction management strategy. During the operations of the development, the comings and goings would be commensurate with local area.
- Ground conditions – There would be limited deep excavation works and ground conditions can be managed through a watching brief.
- Water resources – 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.

CONCLUSION

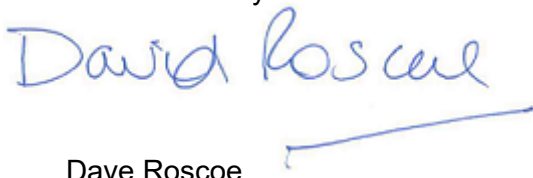
This response is based on the letter of the 10 March 2026 from Mr Oliver Timmins of MCC Highways.

It is concluded that this development would have some impact 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 **Sam Elliott**.

Yours sincerely


 Dave Roscoe

Deputy Director of Planning Building Control and Licensing