MANCHESTER CITY COUNCIL

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17 April 2026

Our reference: EIASCR/26/001

Your reference:

Dear Ms Rowell

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 85 ROCHDALE ROAD MANCHESTER

SCREENING OPINION ADOPTED BY MANCHESTER CITY COUNCIL

Thank you for your letter dated 4 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 "*Request for Environmental Impact Assessment Screening Opinion*".

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 document of the 4 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 site, subject to this screening opinion, is 0.15 hectares and is bounded by Gould Street, Rochdale Road and Downtown Victoria North 1 (87 Rochdale Road)

The site is hard standing and is used as a surface car park. A vacant retail unit (85 Rochdale Road) is also on located the site.

The Marble Arch Inn public house is located immediately to the west of the site. This is a Grade II listed building.

The surrounding area is largely a mix of residential apartment blocks and surface car parks, with some commercial buildings and employment uses.

The application site is not located within a Conservation Area nor is it located close to any Conservation Areas.

The nearest Conservation Areas are as follows:

- Stevenson Square Conservation Area – located approximately 400m to the south of the site
- Cathedral Conservation Area – located approximately 400m to the north-west of the site
- Ancoats Conservation Area – located approximately 370m to the south of the site.

There are two Grade II Listed Buildings are also located within close vicinity of the site boundary:

- Marble Arch Inn, 73 Rochdale Road
- Warehouse on Sharp Street.

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

The site is located in an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA).

The site is not known for its ecology, biodiversity, archaeology or contamination.

The site is considered to be in a highly sustainable location being located close to public transport and the amenities of the city centre.

The proposed development would consist of 153 residential dwellings (Use Class C3), new pedestrian access, landscaping and other associated works.

The development would 17 storeys in height. There would be a secure cycle store in the building.

Demolition of the existing building on site would be required along with other elements of engineering works and infrastructure.

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 0.15 hectares and would see the creation of 153 residential apartments within a building of 17 storeys in height.

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

It is noted that the site is largely vacant and has recently been used as surface car parking. Whilst the site has been previously developed, the proposal would represent a change in the use of the land with a development of a different scale and character.

Notwithstanding this, it is not considered that the development would not result in any significant visual or amenity impacts that would warrant consideration by an EIA. The development site is located in a regeneration area where a level of development activity is likely to take place 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.

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, there are likely to be less vehicle trips associated with the use. This would minimise traffic, noise, emissions and impact on local air quality conditions.

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 Victoria North (previously known as Northern Gateway). This strategy identifies a number of key sites which would come forward for development.

Your supporting information provides details of a number of planning permissions in close proximity to the development site. 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. 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 up to 5 car parking spaces onsite parking which would generate less traffic and emissions than the existing use.

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 given there are only a modest amount of existing structures to be removed from the site. 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 (particularly contaminated waste).

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

Once the development becomes operational, 153 residential apartments 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 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 in the local area which contain a mixture of commercial, residential and schools developments. Vehicle movements and noise is therefore likely to be noticeable to local residents, businesses and other sensitive receptors.

This is likely to result in give rise to disruption to nearby residents, businesses and others have an impact on local air quality conditions.

Such effects would only be temporary in nature for the duration of the construction period and therefore 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, than the previous uses at the site which have been more commercial in nature. The scale of the development, providing 153 residential apartments within a building up to 17 storeys would be similar in scale and size to other building in the local area. The operational effects are therefore predictable and not considered significant.

Vehicle traffic and emissions from the development would be low given the limited on site car parking which would not worsen existing air quality conditions. There would a secure cycle stands internally to the building together with being in walking distance to public transport nodes.

The proposed building 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 contains commercial uses and a surface level car park and other minor structures. There is minimal vegetation at the site.

The current condition of the site is in anticipation of the sites redevelopment as part of the implementation of the Northern Gateway SRF.

The nearest listed building to the development site are the Marble Arch Inn, 73 Rochdale Road AND Warehouse on Sharp Street (both Garde II).

There may be some limited items of below-ground archaeology, of local significance only on the site, but requiring preliminary survey work. The impact on the historic environment is considered to be of no more than local significance and would not warrant consideration by an EIA.

There are no Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) on the site. It is noted that the limited vegetation at the site is of low quality. The site does not contain any international or national ecological designations. There is some evidence of bat activity at the site and in the wider area but the findings indicate that this can be suitably mitigated through replacement roosts of habitats which would be lost.

It is not considered that the loss of the vegetation and impact on local ecology and biodiversity is of more than local significance and therefore does not warrant consideration by an EIA.

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 in view of the scale of the development and the limited amount of hard surface around the sites. I note a drainage strategy would be prepared as part of the proposal would be devise any mitigation in this regard including use of SuDS including consideration of green/blue roof and rain gardens.

There is historical evidence of land contamination at the sites. 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 are 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 would also be links with the recently approved Mobility Hub which is intended to support car parking and travel options associated with new residential developments in the Poland Street Zone.

There are nearby buildings 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 no immediate buildings which would be affected by the development in terms of daylight and sunlight effects. 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, the Conservation Area and the visual amenity of the area along with impacting on 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. Indeed, the site mainly comprises of hardstanding.

The bare ground and removal of the limited vegetation on site may result in short term, but predictable, disruption to habitats for birds and bats. However, the site is not known for its 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 falls within the Manchester City Centre Air Quality Management Area (AQMA). The construction and operational phases of the development are likely to have impacts on the 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 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 which would warrant consideration by an EIA.

In terms of the occupation of the development, it is noted that the proposal would be car free. Cycle spaces 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 which would only be reversed if the

development was to be removed. The visual impacts of the new development, particularly from the scale, would alter the visual amenity and character of the site in the local area. In addition, there would be associated impacts on the historic environment. 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 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 a car park.

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 reserved 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 m^2 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 when compared to the current use. The site is located in an area where change is expected to take place.

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 and is characterised by hardstanding and vacant land. The proposed development would alter the site and result in a development of scale. The development would suitably mitigate against any visual harm through careful design and change in massing of the building which can be considered through a visual assessment as such the proposal does not warrant any consideration by EIA.

- Heritage and archaeology – The development is located in an area where there are a number of listed buildings and other non-designated heritage assets along with being located in a conservation area. A heritage assessment and targeted archaeology would consider this further. 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 minimal impact from the operation of the development as there would be limited on site car parking together with an effective travel plan and cycle provision to take advantage of the city centre location.

- 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 the limited on site car parking, 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.

- 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 including consideration of sustainable drainage options.

- 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.

- 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, particularly impacts from air quality, would be required during the construction and operational phases of the development.

- 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.

CONCLUSION

This response is based on the document of the 4 March 2026 from Vanessa Rowell of WSP.

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 **Jennifer Atkinson.**

Yours sincerely



Dave Roscoe

Deputy Director of Planning, Building Control and Licensing