MANCHESTER CITY COUNCIL

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12 August 2026

Our reference: OTH-2026-001123

Your reference:

Dear Ms Goodwin

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 PICCADILLY GARDENS REDEVELOPMENT MANCHESTER

SCREENING OPINION ADOPTED BY MANCHESTER CITY COUNCIL

Thank you for your letter dated 22 July 2026, which was updated on the 18 August 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 "*Piccadilly Gardens Redevelopment, Manchester EIA Screening Report*".

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 or the overall area of the development exceeds 5 hectares.

Your document of the 22 July 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 3.18 hectares and comprises Piccadilly Gardens – an areas of public open space/public realm in the centre of Manchester, associated roads and the transport hub.

Piccadilly Gardens has undergone several phases of change. The area was historically occupied by the Manchester Royal Infirmary and the adjoining Manchester Royal Lunatic Asylum.

The original Gardens made use of the former hospital basement and foundations to create a sunken garden, establishing a landscaped civic space within the city centre. The Gardens have since been subject to redesign and adaptation, reflecting changing requirements for public realm, transport interchange, accessibility and city centre regeneration.

The development site comprises an area of public realm, incorporating amenity grassland, a ‘splash pad’ water feature (which is not currently in use), tree planting, and hardstanding associated with pavements and surrounding road, tram and rail infrastructure. There is also a children’s play space.

Though the site is not located in a Conservation Area, it lies immediately adjacent to two Conservation Areas. Directly to the north-east, lies the Stevenson Square Conservation Area and Smithfield Conservation Area to the north of the site.

The development site contains the following listed buildings:

- Wellington Statue (1271115) – Grade 2 Listed Building
- Queen Victoria Monument (1246945) – Grade 2 Listed Building

- Watt Statue (1246946) – Grade 2 Listed Building; and
- Peel Statue (1271114) – Grade 2 Listed Building.

The following assets are located adjacent to the development site:

- 5-11 Oldham Street, 1-3 Oldham Street and 15 and 17 Piccadilly (1271118) – Grade 2 Listed Building
- 1 Piccadilly (1246874) – Grade 2 Listed Building
- Rylands Buildings (Debenhams), 109-127 Market Street (1219831) – Grade 2 Listed Building
- Electricity Junction Box, Tib Street (1485437) – Grade 2 Listed Building
- No.10 Mosley Street (1220063) – Grade 2 Listed Building
- 12 Mosley Street (1197928) – Grade 2 Listed Building
- Harvest House (1220153) – Grade 2 Listed Building

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

The Proposal

The proposal would consist of the redevelopment and reconfiguration of Piccadilly Gardens including new ancillary pavilion building, comprehensive public open space works including decommissioning and removal of the fountain, new play area and hard and soft landscaping.

Construction of the development is anticipated to be phased and temporary in nature (anticipated to be 12 – 18 months in duration). It is expected that construction would be planned to provide maintain some pedestrian movement and access through the development site.

The works would also comprise transport improvements in the area surrounding the gardens including new pedestrian crossings; the widening of some pedestrian crossings; replacement of the surface of some pedestrian crossings; repair and replacement of bollards; replacement of guardrails; refurbishment of bus shelters; installation of large digital customer information screens showing live departures; updates to wayfinding totems; improvements to planting beds and moveable raised planters; replacement of tree covers, crown-lifting of trees and upgrades to drainage; provision of new public toilets; and improvements to street furniture.

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 3.18 hectares. 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 currently in use as public open space together with an existing transport hub and associated road network. There would therefore be no change in use of the land and the use would remain commensurate with its current use.

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 site also forms part of the city centre which is dominated by dense, urban developments.

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, it is likely that the impact on the traffic network would be similar or better given the highway improvements. This would minimise traffic, noise, emissions and impact on local air quality conditions.

Whilst there would be modification to the highway network it would be of no more than local significance and would 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.

There are a number of planning permissions is close proximity to the site which could be brought forward at the same time as this development.

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 existing conditions or better given improvements to the road network.

Use of natural resources

Your screening requests not that the site is within a highly urbanised environment with extensive hard landscaping and made ground.

The construction process would comprise the removal, reuse and replacement of hard landscaping.

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 (including the fountain) 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, there is likely to be waste generate associated with the public use of the space and transport interchange. This is likely to be commensurate with existing conditions. This will be managed through municipal waste collection and cleaning regimes, supported by the provision of appropriately located waste and recycling bins to encourage segregation of waste by pedestrians and users to improve recycling rates.

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 users.

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. A construction management plan would minimise the effects of construction particularly from use of machinery, plant, dust management and preventing machines from idling.

There are also likely to be some small scale, localised and temporary disruption from the transport interventions which would generate dust, traffic and general disruption to the public.

When the use becomes operational, the impacts would be similar to existing or better with the transport improvement and public realm works helping to support movement around the city centre.

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 that are currently generated at the site 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 Piccadilly Gardens (including areas of hard and soft landscaping), the local highway network and the transport hub.

The are numerous trees, planting and areas laid to lawn at the site. Some of the trees and vegetation would be removed and new areas of landscaping introduced. Whilst there will be changes to the local environment it is not considered that this has broader implications for the townscape beyond the immediate development site.

Though the site is not located in a Conservation Area, it lies immediately adjacent to two Conservation Areas. Directly to the north-east, lies the Stevenson Square Conservation Area and Smithfield Conservation Area to the north of the site.

The development site contains the following listed buildings:

- Wellington Statue (1271115) – Grade 2 Listed Building
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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.

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 public transport interchange forms part of the development site and whilst there will be temporary disruptions, it would support travel options for construction workers.

There are nearby buildings in close proximity to the development sites. This contain businesses and residents. The area also contains a high footfall for commuters into and out of the city centre. There would be some short term, temporary disruption from the construction impacts and well as temporary alterations to the road network. When the development becomes operational, there will be improvement to public realm and the local highway network which would help improve pedestrian flows in this part of the city centre.

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 and small areas of small landscaping and trees.

The bare ground and removal of the vegetation and trees 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, the development would be commensurate with existing conditions and the improvements would the transport hub would help improve access and movement in the local area.

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 creation 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 would not significantly 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.

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.

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 development would alter the site and result in new development that is not of a magnitude that would cause visual harm that would warrant consideration through an EIA. This can be appropriately tested through the design and access statement and other visual aids.

- 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. 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 given 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 given the development would be commensurate with the existing land use.

- 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. 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. .

CONCLUSION

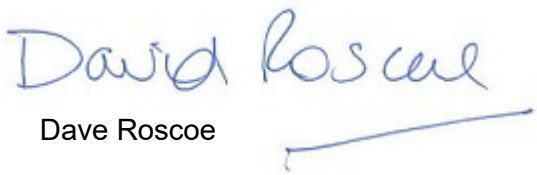
This response is based on the document of the 18 August 2026 from Kate Goodwin of Enabl.

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