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Our reference: OTH-2026-000907

Dear Mr Timmins

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

OTH-2026-000907 - REQUEST FOR SCREENING OPINION UNDER PART 2 REGULATION 6 OF THE TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT) REGULATIONS 2017 (AS AMENDED)

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT AT MEDLOCK STREET ACTIVE TRAVEL SCHEME

SCREENING OPINION ADOPTED BY MANCHESTER CITY COUNCIL

Thank you for your letter dated 1 May 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, 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 include more than 1 hectare of development. The site covers an area of approximately 1.1ha in total and therefore exceeds the 1 ha threshold. Your letter of 1 May 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 are identified within paragraph 18 of the guidance. This references the selection criteria in relation to Schedule 3 of the Regulations. These criteria must be taken into account in determining whether a development is likely to have significant effects on the environment. The criteria are as follows:

I. Characteristics of Development (e.g. its size, use of natural resources, quantities of pollution and waste generated);
II. Location of Development (e.g. environmental sensitivity of geographical areas);
III. Characteristics of the potential impact (e.g. its magnitude and duration).

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 site area is approximately 1.1 hectares (ha). The development involves the implementation of the Medlock Street Walking and Cycling Scheme and covers the highway extending from the Medlock Street/Mancunian Way junction to the Albion Street/Whitworth Street West junction (including the Albion Street-Whitworth Street West signalised junctions). This route has been identified as a critical corridor for enhancing connectivity between the City Centre, university districts, and the existing active travel network.

The site is not within a conservation area. Grade II listed Manchester South Junction and Altrincham Railway Viaduct crosses the site between the Hewitt Street and Whitworth Street West Junctions and there are a number of listed buildings within the vicinity of the site including: Rochdale Canal Lock Number 90 (Grade II); 13-17 Albion Street (Grade II); Castlefield Railway Viaduct from G-Mex to Dawson Street (Grade II).

A bridged/culverted section of the River Medlock runs underneath part of the site, emerging to the east of the Medlock Street/City Road East/Albion Street junction. The site is not within a flood zone but borders Flood Zones 2 and 3, which are to the east of the site between City Road East and Little Peter Street. A section of the site between River Street and City Road East is at high risk of surface water flooding.

The site is located in the Manchester Air Quality Management Area (AQMA). There are no Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) or Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) on the site.

Three design options have been produced at the feasibility stage of the scheme and are listed below:

- **Option 1** (High Quality) – Consisting of a CYCLOPS junction at the Whitworth Street junction, full cycle segregation kerb along Medlock Street and Albion Street. Segregated cycle track, northbound from Mancunian Way Roundabout. Segregation on approach to Mancunian Way roundabout, via removal of central reservation. Reduction of number of lanes and footway widening.
- **Option 2** (Medium Quality) - Consisting of a Two stage right turn Junction (LTN 1/20 par. 10.6.28) at the Whitworth Street West junction, with full kerb segregation along Medlock Street. Segregated cycle track, northbound from Mancunian Way Roundabout. Shared use on the southbound approach to Mancunian Way roundabout.
- **Option 3** (Low Quality) – Consisting of a Two stage right turn Junction (LTN 1/20 par. 10.6.28) at the Whitworth Street West junction. Light cycle segregation along Medlock Street. Shared use on the southbound approach to Mancunian Way roundabout.

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

- Traffic and transport;
- Historic Environment/cultural heritage
- Landscape and Visual;
- Air Quality;
- Noise and Vibration;
- Ground Conditions/pollution;
- Natural Resources;
- Waste;
- Water resources; 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 proposed three options contain a variety of measures that would enhance safety and amenity for cyclists and pedestrians, which would encourage commuter mode shift and contribute to reduced congestion in peak hours in line with the City Centre Transport Strategy.

Whilst this would result in modifications to the highway network these modifications 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 which border 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, as this project is an active travel scheme and aims to reduce traffic congestion and promote active travel, it is anticipated that there would be no negative cumulative impacts caused. The proposed works would encourage commuter mode shift which would contribute to reduced congestion in peak hours and help minimise impact on local air quality.

Use of natural resources

The proposed works would not create any significant changes to the topography of the area. Some works may involve changing existing levels for footway widening and segregated cycleways but these changes would be minor and are not considered to be significant. Where levels are altered, appropriate drainage would be installed to capture surface water runoff.

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, such as concrete, steel, rolled asphalt, plastics etc. 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.

There are no areas on or around the site which contain important, high quality o scarce resources which could be affected by the project.

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 include upgrading crossing points with dropped kerbs and tactile paving provision and introducing continuous (raised) footway side road entry treatments. 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 large 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 you anticipate that the waste created would be usual construction waste such as concrete, tarmac and soil and that any materials that can be reused or recycled will be.

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.

The site runs over the River Medlock via a bridge/culvert design. No alterations are planned to the bridge/culvert and therefore the contamination risk should remain the same. I note that the existing highway gully network would continue to drain the site (unless existing gullies are to be upgraded). Therefore, it is not anticipated that the pollution risk to this main river would increase.

The limitation of works to the highway is not a guarantee that there would be no ground contamination, as ground contamination can be due to organic compounds which travel as fluids underground (TPH's PAH's etc). I note that this would be monitored during construction phases.

From the information available, there are no areas on or around the location which are already subject to pollution or environmental damage, e.g. where existing legal environmental standards are exceeded, which could be affected by the project.

In terms of the operational phases of the development, the works would encourage commuter mode shift which would 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 no 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 river 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 is within the City Centre and is considered to be previously developed land and public highway.

The Grade II listed Manchester South Junction and Altrincham Railway Viaduct crosses the site between the Hewitt Street and Whitworth Street West Junctions and there are a number of listed buildings within the vicinity of the site including: Rochdale Canal Lock Number 90 (Grade II); 13-17 Albion Street (Grade II); Castlefield Railway Viaduct from G-Mex to Dawson Street (Grade II).

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 proposal 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 no known archaeology at the site. Any remains that are found shall be subject to appropriate consideration. Any remains that may be found are not considered to be of any more than local significance and therefore do not warrant consideration by an EIA.

The site runs over the River Medlock via a bridge/culvert design. It is not within a flood zone but does have a small area at risk of surface water flooding and it is within the Manchester critical drainage area. I note that the existing permeable areas within the site are not expected to majorly increase and therefore any

increase in surface water volume or increase in flood risk to the River Medlock would be negligible. It is not considered that the impacts would be significant in view of the nature and scale of the development.

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. It is noted that this would be monitored during the construction phases. No alterations are planned to the bridge/culvert and therefore the contamination risk should remain the same. The existing highway gully network will continue to drain the site (unless existing gullies are to be upgraded). Therefore, it is not anticipated that the pollution risk to this main river will increase. 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 residential buildings bordering 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

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 would be no green spaces within the vicinity of the site that would be affected by the proposed works.

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 improved layout of the highway, including improved walking and cycling routes, would improve traffic flows and promote active travel methods, which would contribute to reducing congestion in peak hours and minimising 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 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 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, 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, the associated construction activities would be short term, predictable and temporary in nature. When the development is complete there would be a permanent albeit not significant change in the visual amenity of the area.

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.

It identifies that the construction of roads of more than 2km in length are more likely to have significant effects. The proposed development would involve the construction of roads of less than 2km in length, would take place in a highly urbanised area and would be in keeping with the existing and adjacent uses and surroundings. The site has also previously been intensely developed. It is considered therefore that any impacts would be low.

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/cultural heritage
- Landscape and Visual;
- Air Quality;
- Noise and Vibration;
- Ground Conditions/pollution;
- Natural Resources;
- Waste;
- Water resources; 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 traffic flows and the cycle and pedestrian infrastructure would be improved.

- Historic Environment/Cultural Heritage – It is considered that there would be no significant implications for cultural heritage or archaeology and mitigation measures are therefore not required, providing works do not physically attach to the listed structure on the site.

- Landscape and Visual - The landscape and visual impact of the proposal would not be significantly different to the existing and it is considered that no specific mitigation measures would be required.

- Air Quality – Releases of emissions to the air during construction should be managed and controlled through the implementation of a method statement. Appropriate mitigation measures should be put in place to ensure the suitable management of the construction phase including provisions to deal with dust emissions, site logistics and traffic management to mitigate against increased air pollution during construction. The impact on local air quality would be minimised during the operation of the development by the improvement to traffic flows and walking and cycling routes.

- Noise and Vibration – The proposal would generate a degree of noise in the local area during the construction phase of the development. Mitigation should be put in place during the construction in the form of a construction management strategy using best practice construction methods to reduce these impacts to an acceptable level. During the operation phase of the development, the comings and goings would be commensurate with local area.

- Ground Conditions/Pollution – Risks of contamination to land or water should be controlled by employing best practice construction management techniques on site to prevent accidental spillage that may cause contamination. Should any contamination be discovered that is not previously identified then it should be treated or appropriately disposed of off-site.

- Natural Resources - The proposal would not utilise any resources which are in short supply. The impacts from the construction phase should be mitigated through a sustainable design and construction approach to the development that accords with current legislative requirements and best practice advice.

- Waste - A method statement for site waste management should be in place prior to commencement of development to explain how waste would be managed, including appropriate provision for recycling, during the demolition and construction phase of the development, and should detail how operational waste would be stored and transported off site.

- Water Resources – There should be a drainage strategy for the site which should ensure that surface water is managed effectively as part of the development.

- Cumulative Effects – At the construction stage there could be impacts from other developments taking place in the vicinity of the site. These impacts should be mitigated against through a construction management plan. In terms of the operational phases of the development, it is considered that the impacts would not be significant and would be similar in nature to the surrounding area.

- Transboundary Effects – There would be no transboundary effects.

CONCLUSION

This response is based on the letter of the 1 May 2026 from Mr Oliver Timmins of MCC Highways.

It is concluded that this development would have some impacts 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 **Lucy Harrison.**

Yours sincerely



Julie Roscoe

Director of Planning Building Control and Licensing