

Appendix A – Previous Screening Decision



Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)

The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment)
Regulations 2011 (as amended)

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT SCREENING OPINION

APPLICATION REFERENCE: 16/00209/SO

Name and address for correspondence:	Applicant name:
Harris Lamb Grosvenor House 75-76 Francis Road Edgbaston Birmingham B16 8SP	Sam Silcocks

Part 1 - Particulars of Application

Date of Application: 22nd February 2016

Proposal:	Screening opinion in respect of a proposed residential development for up to 150 dwellings, means of access, on-site infrastructure, potential to deliver a rail platform for East Lancashire Railway and landscaping
Location:	Former railway siding, Heywood Road, Castleton, Rochdale

Regulation 5 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment)
Regulations 2011 (as amended)

Part II - Particulars of decision

The proposed development does not fall within Schedule 1 of the above regulations.

The proposed development falls within the description of paragraph 10(b) of Schedule 2 of the above regulations.

The proposed development would not be located in a sensitive area and having taken into account the criteria in Schedule 3 of the regulations, would not be likely to have significant effect on the environment by virtue of factors such as its nature, size and location.

The proposed development for which planning permission is sought is not EIA development and an Environmental Statement would not be required for the proposed development.

Date Decision Issued 5th April 2016

Head of Planning

Reasoning:

The application relates to an 11.3 ha parcel of land which is a former railway siding (no longer operational). A large proportion of the site lies within the Green Belt on the Rochdale Unitary Development Plan. Approximately one-third of the site (north east) lies in the defined urban area. The site is mainly bounded by trees and open countryside. However there is a pocket of brownfield land which makes up a proportion of land to the south, and there is some housing on the northern boundary.

The majority of the site is covered by a combination of hardstanding, rail lines and storage areas. There are also a handful of buildings/building frames. The remainder of the site consists of some low profile soft landscaping. The only access to the site is currently from Heywood Road from the north eastern corner of the site. This in turn provides access onto Manchester Road.

The proposal relates to the erection of up to 150 residential dwellings. It is understood there would be a variety of infrastructure normally associated with housing development, and the proposal may include a new railway platform. No significant level of detail accompanies the Screening Opinion request, but there is considered to be sufficient information to make a decision in accordance with EIA Regulations.

Whether EIA Would Be Required

- The development does not fall within Schedule 1 of the regulations.
- The proposed development falls within the definition of an urban development project as listed at Category 10(b) of Schedule 2. However, it does NOT exceed the relevant thresholds in this category of 5 hectares site area or 150 dwellings.

Notwithstanding the above, the screening opinion has been undertaken in accordance with the selection criteria set out in Schedule 3 to the Regulations. The screening opinion has taken into account the information submitted with the letter dated 17 February 2016, additional supplementary information and the case officer's knowledge of the site.

The site is not a Sensitive Area, as defined by Regulation 2(1).

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE DEVELOPMENT

The screening opinion is in respect of the proposal to construct up to 150 dwellings and potentially a new railway platform.

Whilst it is envisaged that there would be additional traffic, noise, dust and air quality implications from the construction of the development and from the ongoing use of the site by residents, in their daily activities and from daily traffic generation, it is noted that these are no different to any other similar residential development. The development is not considered to be particularly complicated or unique in its character. It is considered that such implications can be appropriately assessed in the submitted reports, and it is noted that these impacts are also controlled by separate legislation.

In view of the scale and form of the proposed development, it is not expected that the proposal is likely to result in materially different, additional, unexpected or unusual environmental impacts or raise issues that would be considered to require an Environmental Statement.

LOCATION OF THE DEVELOPMENT

As set out above, the site is not located within a sensitive area as defined by the regulations. Whilst part of the site lies in the Green Belt, it is considered that the characteristics and sensitivity of the site are not more than of a local significance and the detailed implications could be reasonably and properly assessed as part of a normal planning application and within appropriately detailed statements regarding traffic implications; the potential noise/acoustic, dust mitigation, odour and air implications, landscape and visual impact assessment. The nature of the residential use is considered complementary to adjacent residential land uses and not particularly unique in its implications. The site is previously developed.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE POTENTIAL IMPACTS

In respect of ground conditions and contamination, the Council's contaminated land officer does not consider the scheme to be significantly complex. Whilst the site is a former steel yard/railway siding and is likely to be contaminated, it is not considered that the implications of site remediation would lead to significant environmental effects.

With regards to the transport implications of the proposed development, there are a range of mitigation measures which could be considered. The traffic arising from a development of up to 150 dwellings would not lead to significant environmental effects.

Whilst there are dwellings in close proximity of the site to the north, the construction phase of any permitted development would not lead to significant environmental effects. Similarly the proximity of housing to any new housing development would not lead to significant environmental effects.

With regards to arboricultural and ecological implications, the site is not located within a statutory or non-statutorily designated site of nature conservation importance.

In terms of landscape and visual implications, it is noted that the site lies partly within the Green Belt but the site is not in any locally or nationally defined area of landscape importance. The environment effects of the development on the landscape are not considered to be significant.

With regards to the flood risk and drainage implications, it is noted that the site is located within flood zone 1 and is therefore at low risk of flooding. It is envisaged that the detailed design of a surface water drainage scheme to manage surface water could be required through the application process.

In terms of heritage and archaeology, the proposed development is not in close proximity of any heritage assets.

The extent of the impact - The extent of the impact will be limited to the site and adjoining urban area of Castleton. The principal impact will be on the local highway network and the scale of the development reflects our review on the ability of the surrounding highway network to accommodate a development on this site.

The transfrontier nature of development - The development will not have any significant physical impact beyond the site itself and the immediate area. The scheme will provide economic and social benefits to the wider area through creation of construction jobs, future expenditure from residents and indirect employment associated with the development. The platform would also form an important component in the regeneration aspirations for Castleton.

Magnitude and Complexity of the Impact – It is anticipated that there will be no impact that cannot be addressed by normal mitigation measures. The impacts will be typical of those associated with medium scale residential led developments.

Probability of the impact - There will inevitably be environmental impacts associated with the proposed development as the intensity of use will increase. However, this does not necessarily mean that the impacts will be significant.

The duration, frequency and reversibility of the impact – The proposed development will result in the permanent redevelopment of a previously developed site.

Based on the above it is envisaged that all of the potential environmental implications could be suitably mitigated by way of appropriate assessments and conditions associated with any subsequent planning application and there are unlikely to be any significant or particularly complex environmental implications to warrant more detailed assessment.

ACCUMULATION

It is noted that there are no existing permissions for residential and other forms of development on the adjoining sites to the east and south that may lead to an accumulation of the above environmental implications.

CONCLUSION

Schedule 3 of the 2011 Regulations sets out a series of criteria of environmental effects that should be considered when reaching a decision as to whether a planning application should be supported by an Environmental Statement. The PPG provides further guidance on the application of Schedule 3. It confirms that not all of the identified criteria will be relevant in every case. Each case should be considered on its own merit in a balanced way and the authority should obtain the evidence to justify that decision.

The PPG advises that “Only a very small proportion of Schedule 2 development will require an assessment”. It also goes on to say:

“Environmental Impact Assessment is unlikely to be required for the redevelopment of land unless the new development is on a significantly 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. Sites which have not previously been intensively developed:

- i) area of the scheme is more than 5 hectares; or*
- ii) it would provide a total of more than 10,000 sq m 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)."*

In this case the proposed development is significantly under the indicative threshold of 1000 dwellings, although it involves the development of more than 5 hectares of land. It is established that the proposed development comprises an urban development project as defined by Schedule 2 of the above Regulations and is not located within a sensitive area. On this basis and having taken into account the criteria in Schedule 3 of the regulations, it is considered that the proposal would not have significant effects upon the environment by virtue of factors such as its nature, character, size or location. Furthermore, when considered cumulatively, it is not considered that the development would comprise EIA development as set out in the above regulations.

The proposal is therefore not considered to be EIA development and an Environmental Statement is not required in this instance.