

1 ENVIRONMENT IMPACT ASSESSMENT

1.1 SCREENING CRITERIA

- 1.1.1. When preparing this application, we have considered the proposed development in context of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (the “EIA Regulations”). There are two schedules under the Regulations which set out the criteria used to determine whether EIA Screening is required: Schedule 1 and Schedule 2.
- 1.1.2. The site has been previously screened for 150 dwellings in 2016 (ref: 16/00209/SO). The LPA concluded that the proposed development was not EIA development and so an Environment Statement would not be required for the proposed development. Notwithstanding this supporting statement considers this proposal, which is for 191 dwellings, 41 more than the earlier screening request. It also considers the site with respect to the latest EIA regulations. A copy of the previous decision is enclosed at **Appendix A**.

SCHEDULE 1 – EIA SCREENING NOT REQUIRED

- 1.1.3. The first of these Schedules is Schedule 1. Schedule 1 sets out specific types of development for which EIA Screening is required. The proposed development does not fall within the definition of Schedule 1 development and therefore it does not trigger the requirement for EIA Screening.

SCHEDULE 2

- 1.1.4. The second is Schedule 2. Schedule 2 development is that which is “*likely to have significant effects on the environment by virtue of factors such as its nature, size or location*”.
- 1.1.5. It is defined as Development described in column 1 of the Schedule 2 Table (see Table 3-1 below), where:
- a) *Any part of that development is to be carried out in a sensitive area; or*
 - b) *Any applicable threshold or criterion in the corresponding part of column 2 of that table is respectively exceeded or met in relation to that development”.*
- 1.1.6. In relation to Part a, the development is not within a “sensitive area” as defined in the EIA Regulations.
- 1.1.7. The table in Schedule 2 includes the following, which is of relevance to the proposed development:

Table 3-1: Schedule 2 Thresholds and Criteria

Column 1 – Description of Development	Column 2- application thresholds and criteria
10. Infrastructure projects	
(b) Urban development projects, including the construction of shopping centres and car parks, sports stadiums, leisure centres and multiplex cinemas.	(ii) the development includes more than 150 dwellings (iii) The overall area of development exceeds five hectares.

- 1.1.8. The proposed development exceeds the above thresholds in Column 2, and so it is therefore necessary to screen the development.
- 1.1.9. In determining whether the development is likely to give rise to significant environmental effects, reference should be made to Schedule 3 of the EIA Regulations. This identifies three categories of criteria:
- **Characteristics of the development**, with particular regard to: size, cumulative effects, use of natural resources, production of waste, pollution and nuisances, risk of accidents and risk to human health;
 - **Location of the development** with regard to the environmental sensitivity of the area; and
 - **Characteristics of the potential impact**, having regard in particular to the extent of the impact, its trans-frontier nature, magnitude and complexity, probability and duration, frequency and reversibility.
- 1.1.10. The development team has assessed the proposal against these criteria and we set out our findings in Section 1.2 below. We conclude that the proposed development would not have a significant environmental impact on the local area, and therefore it will not form EIA development requiring an Environmental Statement.

1.2 SELECTION CRITERIA

- 1.2.1. The Planning Practice Guidance [PPG] provides further guidance as to when an EIA is needed, in which it confirms that the focus should be on those effects which are significant. It also provides, as an Annex, a series of Indicative Screening Thresholds. Indicative criteria are listed, which aims to assist in determining whether likely effects are significant.
- 1.2.2. PPG (paragraph 018, ID 4-018-20170728) confirms that not all criteria from Schedule 3 will be relevant in every case.
- 1.2.3. The same paragraph of PPG states:
- “Only a very small proportion of Schedule 2 development will require an Environmental Impact Assessment. While it is not possible to formulate criteria or thresholds which will provide a universal test of whether or not an assessment is required, it is possible to offer a broad indication of the type or scale of development which is likely to require an assessment. It is also possible to provide an indication of the sort of development for which an assessment is unlikely to be necessary. To aid local planning authorities to determine whether a project is likely to have significant environmental effects, a set of indicative thresholds and criteria have been produced. See the indicative thresholds and criteria. The table also gives an indication of the types of impact that are most likely to be significant for particular types of development.”*

- 1.2.4. The table's indicative criteria and threshold are summarised below in respect of infrastructure projects 10.(b)(ii) *"the development includes more than 150 dwellings"* and 10.(b)(iii) *"The overall area of development exceeds five hectares"*.

Table 1-2 – Indicative Criteria

Development type	Indicative criteria and threshold	Key issues to consider
10. Infrastructure projects		
(b)(ii) the development includes more than 150 dwellings (b)(iii) "The overall area of development exceeds five hectares":	EIA 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 m² of new commercial floorspace; or (iii) the development would have significant urbanising effects in a previously non-urbanised area (e.g. a new development of more than 1,000 dwellings).	Physical scale of such developments, potential increase in traffic, emissions and noise.

- 1.2.5. Of the 'indicative criteria and thresholds', part (i) is of relevance (WSP emphasis added in Table 1-2), as the overall site area exceeds 5ha.
- 1.2.6. However, PPG is clear that each development will need to be considered on its own merits, regardless of whether or not a development exceeds the indicative thresholds.
- 1.2.7. The following subsections assess the proposal against Schedule 3 Selection Criteria for Screening Schedule 2 Development, to consider whether or not the proposed development would have a significant environmental impact on the local area.

1.3 CHARACTERISTICS OF DEVELOPMENT (SCHEUDLE 3, PART 1)

(a) The size and design of the whole development

- 1.3.1. The site is approximately 9.02 ha. The proposal is for 191 dwellings including substantial areas of public open space.
- 1.3.2. The site benefits from a Places for Everyone (PfE) allocation for around 125 high quality homes. The proposal exceeds this number however the scheme delivers a high-quality, design led layout that accommodates 191 units. The gross density is appropriate and in keeping with the area, with a nett density of circa 37 dwellings per hectare (dph), and a gross density of circa 21 dph. Previous structures have been cleared and the site has remained vacant for many years.

(b) Cumulation with other existing development and/or approved development

- 1.3.3. The site is one of two PfE allocations within Castleton, the other being Trows Farm (Ref: JPA 23). Significant work has been undertaken in preparing the PfE allocations, which has robustly assessed the growth potential of Castleton. The Trows Farm site has been subject to EIA screening which concluded it was not EIA development. The cumulative impacts of Castleton Sidings and Trows Farm would not result in significant environmental impacts.

- 1.3.4. The northeast corner of the site neighbours existing residential development on the Fairways, there is Green Belt to the north and west, and the railway line forms the eastern and southern boundary of the site. It is therefore unlikely there will be any newer commitments in the immediate area to consider.

(c) The use of natural resources, in particular land, soil, water and biodiversity

- 1.3.5. The proposed development would not involve any significant or unusual use of natural resources and would not result in the use of natural resources that are considered to be in short supply. A site-specific drainage strategy is submitted with the planning application which has been agreed by the LLFA, subject to further details provided by condition. There are no anticipated significant effects on the surrounding drainage network. The western part of the site will remain free from future built form but will provide an extensive area of open space that will deliver ecological and landscape enhancements. A central area of open space will be provided within the residential area. Circa 3.83ha of public open space will be provided in total.

(d) The production of waste

- 1.3.6. There will be no hazardous waste as a result of development and construction waste will be dealt with in accordance with best practice.

(e) Pollution and nuisances

- 1.3.7. The development is for a residential and open space use and so the potential for pollution and nuisance is minimal. A Construction Management Plan (CMP) will be in place during construction to minimise pollution and nuisance to nearby properties. A CMP has been submitted to be reviewed and agreed as part of this application.

(f) The risk of major accidents and/or disasters relevant to the development concerned, including those caused by climate change, in accordance with scientific knowledge

- 1.3.8. The proposed development is for 191 dwellings with associated infrastructure and open space. The risk of major accidents or disasters is minimal for this type of development.

(g) The risks to human health (for example, due to water contamination or air pollution)

- 1.3.9. The technical reports conclude that there would be no significant risks to human health as a result of the development.
- 1.3.10. As set out above, the characteristics of the development (a-g) do not trigger the need for an EIA.

1.4 LOCATION OF DEVELOPMENT (SCHEDULE 3, PARAGRAPH 2)

- 1.4.1. This subsection assesses the environmental sensitivity of geographical areas likely to be affected by the development, with particular regard to the selection criteria as set out below.

(a) The existing and approved land use

- 1.4.2. The site comprises previously developed land, with all buildings cleared from the site. There are remnants of the former railway sidings in the form of tracks, steels and hard standing. It is located adjacent to the settlement boundary of Castleton, with residential development forming the northern boundary, the railway line forming the eastern and southern boundaries and the golf course and Green Belt to the north-west. The development site is well contained by built form, mature landscaping and railway infrastructure on three sides. A new Green Belt boundary

is defined in the PfE allocation, with the area of open space provided to the west remaining within the Green Belt. This scheme respects the landscape visual work undertaken that underpins the PfE allocation. The urbanising effects would be contained and positioned in areas of previously developed land.

- 1.4.3. The application is supported by a suite of documents that demonstrate the proposed development can suitably be accommodated on the existing site.

(b) The relative abundance, availability, quality and regenerative capacity of natural resources (including soil, land, water and biodiversity) in the area and its underground

- 1.4.4. The submitted ground investigations report sets out the ground conditions present on site. It sets out recommended remediation and survey work to mitigate contamination on site, which will ready the site for residential development. There is no evidence of shallow coal seams or historic shallow coal workings recorded. It is likely that any coal seams will be at significant depth and thus highly unlikely to have been worked at this location. There is a low risk in respect of subsidence.

- 1.4.5. Blackish brown pseudo fibrous PEAT is present in the site, the residential layout has been designed to work around these areas, for instance by using the area for open space rather than building foundations.

(c) The absorption capacity of the natural environment

- 1.4.6. Having regard to the particular areas identified within the Schedule (i-viii), there would be no impact upon absorption capacity on the natural environment.

- 1.4.7. The application site is not within a sensitive location as defined in PPG, nor is it in an environmentally sensitive location or where national or internationally agreed environmental standards are affected. The closest sensitive site is Rochdale Canal (SAC and SSSI). There will be no impact on the canal, in part due to the distance to the canal and also the nature of this proposal. The submitted Habitat Regulation Assessment and Environmental Air Quality Assessment is consistent with this conclusion.

1.5 TYPE AND CHARACTERISTICS OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS

- 1.5.1. Schedule 3 states that the likely significant effects of the development on the environment must be considered in relation to characteristics and location of development criteria discussed above, having regard to the impact of the development on the factors specified in Regulation 4(2), taking into account criteria a-h below:

(a) The magnitude and spatial extent of the impact (for example geographical area and size of the affected population likely to be affected);

(b) The nature of the impact;

(c) The transboundary nature of the impact;

(d) The intensity and complexity of the impact;

(e) The probability of the impact;

(f) The expected onset, duration, frequency and reversibility of the impact;

(g) The cumulation of the impact with the impact of other existing and / or approved development; and

(h) The possibility of effectively reducing the impact.

- 1.5.2. The site investigations and technical work undertaken to support the planning application, demonstrate that the proposals will not result in significant effects in any of the considerations set out within the regulations.
- 1.5.3. The magnitude, extent and nature of the impact is localised and all anticipated impacts can be satisfactorily mitigated.
- 1.5.4. A construction management plan will be in place throughout construction to minimise effects on the local environment. Any temporary disruption would be offset by the benefits the development would deliver.
- 1.5.5. Section 8 of the Planning Statement provides further detail of the potential impact from the proposals, detailing specific site constraints. The technical work undertaken and recommendations conclude that no unusual or significant effects are considered likely that would give rise to a need for EIA.

1.6 SUMMARY

- 1.6.1. The development proposal constitutes a Schedule 2 development as it is an urban development project proposal that includes more than 150 dwellings (part ii), and the overall area of development exceeds five hectares (part iii).
- 1.6.2. An assessment of the potential impacts has been undertaken in accordance with the Regulations and PPG. The assessment has been undertaken to the best of our knowledge based on available information at the time of writing.
- 1.6.3. The site can accommodate the proposed quantum of development at a density in keeping with local context and that is appropriate to this site. The scheme will be a high-quality development with a strong design approach reflected in the submitted design codes. The proposal will deliver a range of social, environmental and economic benefits which is discussed further within Section 4 of the Planning Statement.
- 1.6.4. The site is not within a sensitive area as defined in the Regulations.
- 1.6.5. The planning application is supported by technical reports and assessments to assist the council to assess the level of environmental impact associated with the works. From this assessment and the technical work undertaken, it can be determined that the scale, nature and location of the proposed development would not result in significant effects that would require assessment in accordance with the EIA Regulations. Therefore, the preparation of an Environmental Statement is not required for the proposed development.
- 1.6.6. The information outlined above and within the EIA Screening request is sufficient for the Council to assess the impact of the proposed development and to confirm that it is not EIA development. In accordance with Regulation 6(6) of the 2017 EIA Regulations, notification of the Council's Screening Opinion should be provided within three weeks of the date of receipt of this request.