

APPLICATION NO	CASE OFFICER	DATE
25/00949/SO	Tom Hiles	09/10/2025

Address: Junction 19, M62 Heywood Interchange/Simister Island Rochdale

Proposal: Request for screening opinion in relation to a temporary compound to support the construction works of the M60/M62/M66 Simister Island Interchange Scheme

STATEMENT OF REASONS

To be read in conjunction with associated Decision Notice

The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (England and Wales) Regulations 2017 (as amended) allows scope for an applicant to request a formal opinion from the Local Planning Authority about whether a proposed development requires an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). National Highways have requested a Screening Opinion to enable consideration of the above proposal.

Under the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (Regulations) as amended, "EIA development" is development which is either Schedule 1 development or Schedule 2 development that is likely to have significant effects on the environment by reason of factors such as its nature, size or location.

The proposed development is **not** schedule 1 development, although it relates to the Simister Island project which is itself schedule 1 development (the construction of a motorway).

The proposed development **is** a form of development defined in schedule 2, part 13 (a):

any change to or extension of development of a description listed in Schedule 1 (other than a change or extension falling within paragraph 24 of that Schedule) where that development is already authorised, executed or in the process of being executed, subject to the consideration of whether either:

- (i) The development as changed or extended may have significant adverse effects on the environment; or*
- (ii) in relation to development of a description mentioned in a paragraph in Schedule 1 indicated below, the thresholds and criteria in column 2 of the paragraph of this table indicated below applied to the change or extension are met or exceeded.*

The development (comprising the M60 Simister Island project subject of the DCO) as changed or extended may have significant adverse impacts on the environment, and therefore meets point i) above and is therefore relevant development.

If a proposed project is listed in the first column in Schedule 2 of the 2017 Regulations and exceeds the relevant thresholds or criteria set out in the second column the proposal needs to be screened by the Local Planning Authority to determine whether significant effects on the environment are likely and hence whether an Environmental Impact Assessment is required.

Projects listed in Schedule 2 which are located in, or partly in, a sensitive area also need to be screened, even if they are below the thresholds or do not meet the criteria. 'Sensitive areas' are Sites of Special Scientific Interest and European sites; National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty; and World Heritage Sites and scheduled monuments. The site is not in any of these specified sensitive areas.

This Screening Opinion has been undertaken in accordance with the selection criteria set out in Schedule 3 to the Regulations and with reference to the applicant's supporting details received on 19th September 2025. Consideration has been given to NPPG guidance, including the indicative screening thresholds set out therein.

Where development is schedule 2 development it must be considered by the LPA against the selection criteria set out in schedule 3. The development is considered likely to raise potential concerns in terms of the matters indicated below.

1. Characteristics of the development

(a) the size and design of the whole development	✓
(b) cumulation with other existing development and/or approved development	
(c) the use of natural resources, in particular land, soil, water and biodiversity	✓
(d) the production of waste	✓
(e) pollution and nuisances;	✓
(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;	
(g) the risks to human health (for example, due to water contamination or air pollution).	

2. Location of development

(a) the existing and approved land use;	✓
(b) the relative abundance, availability, quality and regenerative capacity of natural resources (including soil, land, water and biodiversity) in the area and its underground;	
(c) the absorption capacity of the natural environment, paying particular attention to the following areas—	✓
(i) wetlands, riparian areas, river mouths;	
(ii) coastal zones and the marine environment;	
(iii) mountain and forest areas	
(iv) nature reserves and parks;	
(v) European sites and other areas classified or protected under national legislation	✓
(vi) areas in which there has already been a failure to meet the environmental quality standards, laid down in assimilated law and relevant to the project, or in which it is considered that there is such a failure;	

(vii) densely populated areas;	✓
(viii) landscapes and sites of historical, cultural or archaeological significance.	

3. Types and characteristics of the potential impact

(a) the magnitude and spatial extent of the impact (for example geographical area and size of the 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;	
(h) the possibility of effectively reducing the impact	

PROPOSAL

The temporary compound would comprise works required to use the site as a temporary construction compound to be used in connection with the National Highways M60 Simister Island project, subject of a recently approved Development Consent Order. The works would include:

- The installation of 36 site cabin units to provide office and welfare facilities, to include an office and administration centre for the Simister scheme.
- An existing sewer treatment package treatment plan would be refurbished and brought back into use as a cess pit.
- Ancillary works would include installation of street lighting and CCTV columns and flood lighting, and installation of associated power cabling through ducts.
- Site stores compound including material storage yards and plant yards
- Materials testing laboratory
- CCTV traffic control facility
- Vehicle recovery unit including customer care centre
- Waste management and segregation areas

These works would be undertaken on a site recently used as a highways compound, making use of existing on-site infrastructure. The development would be temporary

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Greater Manchester Ecology Unit

I am satisfied that the temporary construction compound can be scoped out from any environmental assessment that may be required. The compound is already in place and utilised for a previous scheme. Likely receptors such as the Rochdale Canal

SAC are sufficiently distant that the only likely effect is theoretical. Standard construction best practice will remove any theoretical risk from pollution and dust. It will also reduce longer distant traffic along the M60/M62 that could have theoretically resulted in air quality impacts upon Holcroft Moss, part of Manchester Mosses SAC or South Pennines SPA/SAC.

Environment Agency

We do not currently undertake EIA Screenings as this activity fall outside of our consultation guidance.

Natural England

It is Natural England's advice, on the basis of the material supplied with the consultation, that the proposed development has potential likely significant effects on statutorily designated nature conservation sites or landscapes and further consideration is required. Schedule 3(2) of the Town & Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 requires consideration of the selection criteria for Schedule 2 EIA development and identification of 'environmental sensitivity'. The proposed development is located within/partly within or has the potential for adverse effects on the following designated nature conservation sites or designated landscapes:

- Rochdale Canal Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
- Rochdale Canal Special Area of Conservation (SAC)

Natural England has not assessed the significance of any impacts on these designated sites or landscapes. The proposed development may therefore be likely to have significant effects on the interest features for which these sites are notified or the purposes of designation and we advise you to consider further whether an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is required

RBC Environmental Health – Noise and Light

No response

Characteristics of development

The overall site area for the proposal is approximately 4.8ha and will comprise a temporary highways works compound on land which has most recently been used for the same purpose, adjacent to the M62 motorway. In terms of operational development, the compound will involve:

- ② The installation of 36 site cabin units to provide office and welfare facilities, to include an office and administration centre for the Simister scheme. Ancillary facilities will include a CCTV traffic control facility, a motorway vehicle recovery unit including customer care centre, waste management and segregation areas, and a materials testing laboratory.
- ② An existing sewer treatment package treatment plan being refurbished and brought back into use as a cess pit.
- ② Ancillary works including installation of street lighting and CCTV columns and flood lighting, and installation of associated power cabling through ducts.

The development would be temporary nature and is expected to be in use 44 months between March 2026 and October 2029. Following the end of its use the site would be restored to its previous condition and returned to agricultural use.

Location of development

The site measures approximately 4.8ha in area and has previously been developed for use as a highways works compound for a previous National Highways motorway project, which is understood to have been undertaken under permitted development rights. Structures and equipment associated with the previous use as a construction compound have mostly been removed, leaving haul routes, car parking areas, storage and laydown areas, drainage ditch and basin in-situ. After completion of the Simister Island project, the land would be reinstated to farmland.

The location is characterised by its position to the immediate south-east of junction 19 and adjoining the south side of the M62 motorway where it runs through an otherwise generally rural area to the south-east of Heywood's built-up area.

Aside from the motorway to the immediate north, the context of the site is as follows.

- ② The site is in the vicinity of a number of residential areas, in particular suburban estates around 150m away on the north side of the motorway extending towards central Heywood, as well as rows of houses on either side of Middleton Road to the south-west of the site, the closest of which is around 80m away at the closest point.
- ② There are farms and agricultural fields to the north-east, north-west, south and south-west
- ② There is a large golf course to the east
- ② There is a residential development underway on Manchester Road around 0.7km to the west of the site.

The site lies within the Green Belt and is subject of GM Joint Minerals DPD policy 8 – safeguarding for coal.

The site is in the vicinity of ecologically protected areas, comprising Hopwood Woodlands LNR, Glade & Oaken Bank Woods SBI, Hopwood Clough SBI, and Rochdale Canal SAC / SSSI, though none of these are adjacent to the site.

The site lies adjacent to an Air Quality Management Area which runs alongside the M60 to the north as well as partway up Middleton Road further to the north

There are a number of European and protected sites within 1km of the site, including Hopwood Woodlands LNR, located 70m to the south.

Potential impacts

The site area for the development would be large but would largely comprise open parking and storage areas and low-height site cabins, and as such the actual volume of built development would be relatively modest. The compound would be utilitarian in appearance, reflecting its purpose. In terms of its visual appearance, it is expected the compound would be organised and well-managed, and details of this would be submitted and controlled through the planning process.

It is not envisaged that there would be a significant use of natural resources in either the construction or operation of the proposed development that are generally considered to be in short supply. The development would be temporary and the land would be reinstated to its previous condition after decommissioning, returning the site to agricultural use. For these reasons the development would not sterilise underlying mineral resources, including the coal resources underlying the site, subject of GM Joint Minerals DPD policy 8.

By its nature the development and the most recent use of the site, it would not give rise to significant issues on terms of waste production, pollution or nuisances. The latter of these are likely to be limited to effects on air quality, noise and lighting arising from vehicle movements and site operations, and are unlikely to be significant. The submission indicates that air pollution arising from the operation of the development would comply with relevant limits for highways projects. Noise and light impacts will be limited to the surrounding area could be appropriately controlled through planning conditions.

The screening report notes that the development would be operated in compliance with the DMRB Materials Assets and Waste standard, and as such waste recovery is anticipated to be at least 90%, diverting waste from landfill wherever possible. Further details of construction waste management would be provided in a construction environmental management plan at planning application stage and this is considered a proportionate means of controlling and mitigating impacts of the development in terms of production of waste.

The development would not give rise to any significant environmental considerations in terms of the existing use of the site as a highways works compound, as it would continue this existing use.

Landscape and visual impacts would be limited, arising from the installation of cabins, parking of vehicles etc, and use of external lighting, and would have a limited spatial extent, with some views towards the site being possible from the surrounding countryside. Any impacts would be temporary in nature. The site is not within or adjacent to any nationally protected landscapes. The impact of external lighting could be appropriately mitigated through controls on the details of any such lighting through the planning application stage.

All of the impacts associated with the development would be strictly temporary and subject of an expected defined operational phase. The landscape impacts would be reversible and are intended to be so by the eventual removal of all elements from the site, as well as its reinstatement to farmland.

The cumulative impacts in all regards are considered likely to be minimal. While the development will operate in conjunction with other temporary compounds (subject of the DCO), as the impacts of the development would be mainly localised, it is not considered that there would be significant cumulative impacts with the other compounds. Given the modest nature of the proposed operational development and

the temporary nature of the use, it is not considered that significant cumulative effects would be likely, including in combination with significant developments in the local area, such as the South Heywood masterplan scheme (16/01399/HYBR) and Northern Gateway (25/00418/OUT).

The screening report notes that the operation of the site would have the potential to affect the protected European sites through changes to hydrology and air quality, but notes that existing and intended drainage arrangements on site would prevent hydrology impacts. The report notes that the protected sites are not sensitive to changes in air quality, due to the particular reasons for their protected status. Natural England's comments regarding the potential for the development to have adverse effects on the Rochdale Canal SSSI/SAC are noted. However, such impacts have been considered and clearly discounted by Greater Manchester Ecological Unit in their own consultation response.

The site is proximate to a number of residential areas, of varying density. Given the temporary nature of the intended development, it is not considered that it would conflict with the functioning of these areas in the long-term.

The development would not result in any effects to any designated heritage assets outside the site, including their settings.

Conclusion

The development subject of the screening opinion request has been screened in accordance with Schedule 3 and considered in cumulation with existing and future development.

The assessment concludes that the proposal, whether alone or in cumulation with the existing and proposed development, would be unlikely to give rise to significant effects on the environment.

Therefore, Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council concludes that the proposed development is not EIA development within the meaning of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017.

Report Completed	06/10/2025	Signed: TH
Authorisation	14/10/2025	Signed: AC