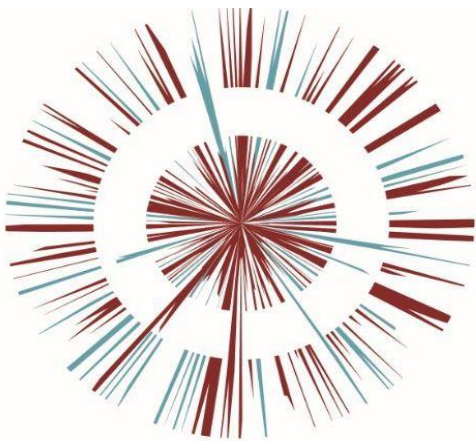




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Omega St Helens Ltd / T. J. Morris Limited



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5 APPROACH TO EIA

5.1 INTRODUCTION

- 5.1.1. This chapter outlines the approach to the EIA, in particular the objectives and overall strategy for the EIA developed by WSP and the wider Project Team.
- 5.1.2. The approach to consultation is also outlined in this chapter, together with the approach to proportionate assessment including the assessment criteria and the methodology for assessing cumulative effects.
- 5.1.3. The EIA has been undertaken in accordance with the EIA Regulations 2017 (Ref. 5.1), National Planning Practice Guidance (Ref. 5.2), IEMA's Environmental Impact Assessment Guide to Shaping Quality Development (Ref. 5.3) and IEMA's Environmental Impact Assessment Guide to Climate Change Resilience and Adaptation (Ref. 5.4).
- 5.1.4. A detailed overview of the application site's status in relation to relevant planning policy is discussed within the Planning Statement (**OPP DOC.6**).
- 5.1.5. In addition, this EIA has been undertaken alongside other processes and consents where relevant to the Proposed Development. These include: Water Framework Directive, Flood Risk Assessment and relevant ecological surveys and reporting which will inform protected species licencing where required.

5.2 OBJECTIVES OF THE EIA

- 5.2.1. The key objectives of the EIA are as follows:
- Set the legal framework;
 - Document the consultation process;
 - Consider the alternatives to the Proposed Development;
 - Establish baseline environmental conditions at the application site and within the surrounding area;
 - Identify likely significant environmental effects during the design process so that some effects can be avoided, prevented, reduced or, if possible, offset prior to the assessments within the ES (i.e. demonstrating an iterative approach to EIA);
 - Identify, predict and assess the environmental effects associated with the Proposed Development: beneficial and adverse; permanent and temporary; direct and indirect and short / medium / long term; significant or not significant;
 - Identify, predict and qualitatively assess the cumulative effects of the Proposed Development including those associated with the other developments;
 - Identify suitable mitigation measures to avoid, prevent, reduce or, if possible, offset likely significant adverse effects on the environment and identify the likely significant residual effects following the implementation of these measures; and
 - Identify monitoring measures where likely significant residual adverse effects are identified.
- 5.2.2. Although not a requirement of the EIA Regulations 2017, opportunities for enhancement are also explored.

5.3 SCREENING (REGULATIONS 5, 6 AND 7) AND SCOPING (REGULATION 15)

SCREENING

- 5.3.1. As set out in Section 1.3 of **Chapter 1: Introduction**, Section 5 of the EIA Regulations 2017 (Ref 5.1) provides that the Local Planning Authority may determine whether an EIA is required for a 'development', typically with reference to Schedule 1, or the combined provisions of Schedule 2 and 3. The Proposed Development meets the description and applicable threshold for the purposes of the definition of a Schedule 2 infrastructure project – 10(a): Infrastructure estate development projects where the area of the development exceeds 0.5ha.

EIA SCOPING REPORT

- 5.3.2. As set out in Section 1.3 of **Chapter 1: Introduction**, an EIA Scoping Report was submitted to St. Helens Council on 29 October 2019 alongside a request for a formal Scoping Opinion in accordance with the EIA Regulations 2017. As part of St. Helens Council's responsibility under Regulation 15 of the EIA Regulations 2017, consultation was undertaken with the following external consultees:

- St. Helens Council – Countryside Development and Woodlands Officer;
- St. Helens Council – Lead Local Flood Authority;
- St. Helens Council – Scientific Officer (Contaminated Land);
- St. Helens Council – Scientific Officer (Environmental Health Noise);
- St. Helens Council – Public Right of Way Officer;
- St. Helens Council – Highways Officer
- St. Helens Council – Air Quality Officer;
- St. Helens Council – Conservation Officer;
- The Coal Authority;
- United Utilities;
- Historic England;
- Natural England;
- Highways England;
- Warrington Borough Council;
- Environment Agency;
- Merseyside Environmental Advisory Services; and
- Greater Manchester Ecology Unit.

SCOPING OPINION

- 5.3.3. The EIA Scoping Report (**Appendix 1.1**) outlined that the Proposed Development has the potential to result in likely significant effects on the environment associated with the following factors:

- Air Quality (**Chapter 6**);
- Noise and Vibration (**Chapter 7**);
- Cultural Heritage (**Chapter 8**);
- Biodiversity (**Chapter 9**);
- Landscape and Visual (**Chapter 10**);
- Water (**Chapter 11**);
- Transport (**Chapter 12**);
- Major Accidents and Disasters (**Chapter 13**);

- Land and Soils (**Chapter 14**); and
- Cumulative Effects (**Chapter 17**).

- 5.3.4. These factors and their associated likely significant environmental effects have been taken forward and assessed within this ES.
- 5.3.5. The Scoping Opinion, received on 11 December 2019, requested that Population and Health should be scoped into the ES, this has now been included as **Chapter 15**. The Scoping Opinion requested that Climate should be addressed in each chapter, however, it was considered more appropriate to include it as a separate chapter if this factor is to be scoped in, therefore Climate has been included as **Chapter 16**.
- 5.3.6. The Scoping Opinion is presented in **Appendix 1.2**. Where possible the responses relevant to this ES are summarised in the respective chapters.

ONGOING SCOPING

- 5.3.7. As EIA is an iterative process taking place alongside the design of the Proposed Development, the process of scoping the assessment has been ongoing. The changes made to the Proposed Development between the issue of the EIA Scoping Report and the submission of the ES are described in **Table 5-1**:

Table 5-1 – Changes in the Proposed Development

EIA Scoping Report	ES
The area of the Proposed Development was stated as 186.4ha	Amended to 'approximately 75 ha'
The area for the detailed planning application site was stated as 81,569 sq.m	Amended to 81,570 sq.m
The area for the outline planning application site was stated as 123,745 sq.m	Amended to 123,930 sq.m
Statement that the outline planning application would have a 30% B2 to 70% B8 ratio	Amended to 30% B2 / 70% B8 split across the entire application site
Statement that Unit 1 would include a two-storey office	Amended to ancillary office development comprising of a 3-storey structure
Statement that Unit 1 would include 632 car parking spaces and 164 HGV parking spaces	Amended to 576 parking spaces, including up to 35 disabled spaces, 48 motorcycle and 156 cycle spaces. Provision will also be made for up to 39 electric vehicle spaces and 383 HGV / trailer parking spaces.
Statement that the area for the detailed planning application would be fully operational by spring 2022	Amended to the end of 2021
Statement that the outline planning application would be over two – five units	Amended to three separate warehouse buildings are envisaged
Statement that the maximum building height for Unit 1 will be 39m to the ridge	Amended to 41 m

EIA Scoping Report	ES
Statement that the maximum building height for Units 2 – 4 will be no greater than 15m	Amended to 19 m

FACTORS/ELEMENTS SCOPED INTO AND OUT OF THE ASSESSMENT

- 5.3.8. Following receipt of the Scoping Opinion, consultation and ongoing scoping, the factors and elements scoped into and out of the EIA are set out in the respective technical chapters.

5.4 CONSULTATION

- 5.4.1. As part of the EIA process and in addition to the formal consultation undertaken in conjunction with the scoping process, technical consultation with a range of statutory and non-statutory consultees has been ongoing. Details of the technical consultation undertaken for each assessment is provided in the respective technical chapters.

5.5 APPROACH TO THE ASSESSMENT OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 5.5.1. This section outlines the phases of the Proposed Development that have been assessed, together with the approach to the baseline conditions, future baseline conditions, cumulative effects and design tolerances. It also sets out the overarching approach to the EIA, together with project specific requirements for the assessment of effects.
- 5.5.2. The Proposed Development has been assessed against the description, design principles and tolerances and supporting plans as detailed in **Chapter 3: Description of the Proposed Development**. The maximum extent of the planning application boundary and building footprint / height has been assessed as the worst-case situation. There is therefore some degree of flexibility to allow the Proposed Development to evolve (i.e. reduce in size) if necessary.
- 5.5.3. In order to avoid duplication of assessment, assumptions have been made in relation to measures to be implemented under existing or pending consents.

BASELINE SCENARIO

- 5.5.4. Baseline information (environmental characteristics and conditions) has been collated, based upon surveys undertaken and desk based information available at the time of the assessment. Chapters 6 to 16 provide details of the baseline information and a summary is provided in **Chapter 2: The Existing Site**. Any limitations establishing the baseline are described in technical chapters 6 to 16.
- 5.5.5. The baseline conditions for the purpose of the ES are as of September 2019. There are slight variances across the ES depending on the use of existing data obtained through other sources and the dates when surveys were undertaken, which represent baseline scenarios earlier or later than 2019. This has been clearly outlined within technical chapters 6 to 16.
- 5.5.6. The dates of surveys and the dates when data sources have been accessed are provided within technical chapters 6 to 16. The baseline conditions have remained constant during the collation of desk based data and surveys.

FUTURE BASELINE

- 5.5.7. Schedule 4(3) of the EIA Regulations 2017 requires consideration of the likely evolution of the current state of the environment (baseline scenario) in the absence of the Proposed Development, as far as natural changes from the baseline scenario can be assessed with reasonable effort on the

basis of the availability of environmental information and scientific knowledge (the ‘future baseline’). Whilst there are considerable limitations to the predictions that can be made about natural baseline conditions at a future point in time, some assessments require projections to account for future change, such as traffic growth.

- 5.5.8. The future baseline of the application site is likely to remain relatively unchanged as arable land, with the existing areas of woodland becoming more mature. Additional changes could include background traffic growth or change in population of certain species.
- 5.5.9. Due to the afore-mentioned limitations, necessary assumptions and lack of evidence associated with the future baseline (i.e. it cannot be accurately measured), a detailed consideration of the effects of the Proposed Development against the future baseline would generally not result in a robust assessment. However, consideration has been given, in descriptive terms, within each relevant technical chapter to likely significant environmental effects arising from the Proposed Development in relation to the future baseline.

ASSESSMENT OF MAJOR ACCIDENTS AND DISASTERS

- 5.5.10. Schedule 4(8) of the EIA Regulations 2017 states that the ES must include the following:

“A description of the expected significant adverse effects of the development on the environment deriving from the vulnerability of the development to risks of major accidents and/or disasters which are relevant to the project concerned.... Where appropriate, this description should include measures envisaged to prevent or mitigate the significant adverse effects of such events on the environment and details of the preparedness for and proposed response to such emergencies”.

- 5.5.11. The assessment of major accidents and disasters has been scoped in to the assessment, and is presented in **Chapter 13: Major Accidents and Disasters**.

PHASES OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 5.5.12. As a hybrid planning application, it is likely that those proposals subject to the full planning application (Unit 1) will be brought forward prior to those elements subject to the outline planning application. To allow for a reasonable worst case within the ES, all assessments have assumed Unit 1 will be operational by the end of 2021, and therefore an opening year of 2021 has been assumed for relevant assessments (e.g. **Chapter 6: Air Quality**, **Chapter 7: Noise and Vibration** and **Chapter 12: Transport**). The outline planning application elements will depend on market conditions but for the purposes of this ES, it has been assumed they will be operational by the end of 2024.

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

- 5.5.13. The classification of each effect identified has been assessed based on the magnitude of change (or impact) due to the Proposed Development and the sensitivity/value of the affected receptor to change, as well as a number of other factors that are outlined in more detail below. The classification of residual effects has been assessed with regard to the extent to which additional mitigation measures will avoid, prevent, reduce or, if possible, offset adverse effects.
- 5.5.14. The assessment of likely effects presented in technical chapters 6 to 16 and have taken into account a number of criteria to determine whether or not the likely effects are significant. Wherever possible and appropriate, the effects have been assessed quantitatively. The following criteria have been taken into account when classifying the likely effects:

- Relevant legislation and planning policy;
- International, national, regional and local standards;
- Likelihood of occurrence of the effect;
- Geographical extent of effect;
- Sensitivity and/or value of the receptor;
- Magnitude and complexity of the impact;
- Whether the effect is temporary or permanent;
- Duration (short, medium or long-term), frequency and reversibility of effect;
- Whether the effect is direct or indirect, secondary or transboundary;
- Inter-relationship between different effects (both cumulatively and in terms of likely effect interactions); and
- The outcomes of consultations.

5.5.15. Where factor specific methodology deviates from this approach, for example as a result of following factor specific guidance, this is set out in the methodology section of the technical chapter.

SENSITIVITY/VALUE OF RECEPTORS

5.5.16. The sensitive receptors considered within this ES are identified within technical chapters 6 to 16. The sensitivity of these receptors to change is also defined within technical chapters 6 to 16 and has been determined where available and appropriate by quantifiable data, the consideration of existing designations and professional judgement. The categories used (high, medium, low, and negligible), unless otherwise stated, are shown in **Table 5-2**.

MAGNITUDE OF CHANGE (IMPACT)

5.5.17. The magnitude of change (impact) is predicted as a deviation from the established baseline conditions, as a result of the Proposed Development. The magnitude of these changes is also defined within technical chapters 6 to 16 and has been determined where available and appropriate by quantifiable data, available appropriate national and international standards or limits (World Health Organisation (WHO) Limits, European Union (EU) Quality Standards, etc.) and professional judgement. The scale used (large, medium, small, negligible and no change), unless otherwise stated, is shown in **Table 5-2**.

5.5.18. The magnitude of change identified is based on the peak potential magnitude of change, i.e. the greatest likely magnitude of change that may be experienced by a sensitive receptor (existing or proposed).

CLASSIFYING EFFECTS

5.5.19. Determining the classification of effects has been undertaken using professional judgements (assumptions and value systems) that underpin the attribution of significance. Each effect has been assessed against the sensitivity of the receptor and the magnitude of change, as shown in **Table 5-2**. Where more than one effect classification exists for any given scenario (e.g. minor to moderate), professional judgement is used to assign a single effect classification.

Table 5-2 - Matrix for classifying effects

		Value/Sensitivity			
		High	Medium	Low	Negligible
Magnitude	Large	Major	Moderate to Major	Minor to Moderate	Negligible
	Medium	Moderate to Major	Moderate	Minor	Negligible
	Small	Moderate	Minor to Moderate	Minor	Negligible
	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible
	No change	No change	No change	No change	No change

5.5.20. The terms as used within **Table 5-2** have been defined below, applying to both beneficial and adverse effects:

- **Major effect:** where the Proposed Development could be expected to have a substantial improvement or deterioration on receptors;
- **Moderate effect:** where the Proposed Development could be expected to have a noticeable improvement or deterioration on receptors;
- **Minor effect:** where the Proposed Development could be expected to result in a perceptible improvement or deterioration on receptors;
- **Negligible:** where no discernible improvement or deterioration is expected as a result of the Proposed Development on receptors; and
- **No change:** where no change is expected as a result of the Proposed Development on receptors.

5.5.21. Unless otherwise stated in the technical chapters of this ES, effects that are classified as **moderate or above** are considered to be **significant**. Effects classified as **minor or below** are considered to be **not significant**.

5.5.22. Tables summarising the likely potential effects associated with each factor, required additional mitigation measures and residual effects are provided at the end of each technical chapter. The tables provide a clear distinction of the type of effect:

- Beneficial or adverse;
- Permanent or temporary;
- Direct or indirect;
- Short, medium or long-term;
- Secondary, cumulative or transboundary; and
- Significant or not significant.

5.5.23. In terms of the duration of an effect, short-term has been considered as one year or below, a medium-term effect has been considered to be between one and 10 years in duration and a long-term effect has been considered to be greater than 10 years in duration. Any variation to these definitions arising, for example, from differences in assessment methodology or guidance, is explained in technical chapters 6 to 16.

MITIGATION AND MONITORING

- 5.5.24. Additional (secondary and tertiary) mitigation describes actions that will require further activity in order to achieve the anticipated outcome, and measures that will be required regardless of any EIA assessment, as it is imposed, for example, as a result of legislative requirements and/or standard sectoral practices. Examples of secondary mitigation include additional detailed design, for example to comply with proposed lighting limits or developing a travel plan for the Proposed Development. Examples of tertiary mitigation include considerate contractor's practices that manage activities which have potential nuisance effect (e.g. through the implementation of a Construction Environmental Management Plan).
- 5.5.25. Where likely significant adverse effects have been identified in the assessment, measures to avoid, prevent or reduce and, if possible, offset likely significant adverse effects on the environment are described. Monitoring is required where there are significant adverse residual effects. In some cases, for instance where there is uncertainty of residual effects remain, it may also be appropriate to implement monitoring.
- 5.5.26. Proposed additional mitigation and monitoring measures are set out within technical chapters where necessary. **Chapter 3: Description of the Proposed Development** sets out the proposed 'embedded' (environmental design) (primary) mitigation measures that are considered to be an inherent part of the Proposed Development. The mechanism by which the measures are to be secured and implemented and the party responsible for their delivery is also recorded.

5.6 CUMULATIVE EFFECTS

- 5.6.1. Schedule 4(5)(e) of the EIA Regulations 2017 states that the ES should include a description of the likely significant effects of the development on the environment resulting from:
'the cumulation of effect with other existing and / or approved projects, taking into account any existing environmental problems relating to areas of particular environmental importance likely to be affected or the use of natural resources.'
- 5.6.2. Regulation 4(2)(e) refers to the need to assess:
'the interaction between the factors referred to in sub-paragraphs (a) to (d) [where these sub-paragraphs refer to topic-specific factors].'
- 5.6.3. There is no widely accepted methodology or best practice for assessing cumulative effects, although various guidance documents exist. The following approach has been adopted for the assessment of cumulative effects, based on previous experience, the types of receptors being assessed, the nature of the Proposed Development, the other developments under consideration and the information available to inform the assessment. The approach was outlined in the EIA Scoping Report (**Appendix 1.2**). The assessment of cumulative effects is presented in technical chapters 6 to 16 and **Chapter 17: Cumulative Effects**.
- 5.6.4. Effect interactions, or intra-project effects, are the combined or synergistic effects caused by the combination of effects of the Proposed Development on a particular receptor which may collectively cause a greater effect than individually. In-combination, or inter-project effects are the combined effects of the Proposed Development on a common receptor together with other developments.

- 5.6.5. Further details regarding the scope and methodology of the assessment of cumulative effects, the identification of relevant committed developments and a description of those included within the assessment are provided in **Chapter 17: Cumulative Effects**.
- 5.6.6. Through analysis of St. Helens Council (Ref. 5.5) and Warrington Borough Council (Ref 5.6) online planning portals, two other developments have been identified and are considered within the cumulative effects assessment. These are presented in **Table 5-3**.

Table 5-3 - Other developments included within the cumulative effects assessment

Planning Ref	Address	Status	Proposal
2015/26469	Omega South Zone 3-6, Warrington	Granted	Outline Planning (major) – Outline Planning Application for the creation of up to 1,100 residential units and mixed-use zone to include retail/food and drink uses (Use Classes A1; A2; A3: A4 and A5), Hotel (Use Class C1), Extra Care Facility (Use Class C2) and Non-Residential Institution (Use Class D1) with associated access, parking, landscaping and infrastructure proposals (all other detailed matters are reserved for later approval)
2016/27313	Lingley Mere, formerly Lingley Mere Business Park	Granted	Outline Planning – Application for Outline Planning Permission with some matters reserved for proposed demolition of all existing on site buildings and structure and redevelopment to provide up to 275 Class C3 residential units, together with associated landscaping, open space and supporting infrastructure, including the creation of a new vehicular road into Lingley Mere Business park. All matters reserved for future approval except access

5.7 ENHANCEMENT

- 5.7.1. Although not a requirement of the EIA Regulations 2017, opportunities for enhancement are also explored. However, enhancement measures are not taken account of in the assessment of likely significant effects.

5.8 LIMITATIONS AND ASSUMPTIONS

- 5.8.1. Schedule 4(6) of the EIA Regulations 2017 states that an ES should include *'...details of difficulties (for example technical deficiencies or lack of knowledge) encountered compiling the required information and the main uncertainties involved...'*
- 5.8.2. Where there are limitations or assumptions used within the EIA, these are clearly identified in this ES. Assumptions specific to certain assessments have been identified in the appropriate technical chapters 6 to 16.

5.9 COORDINATED ASSESSMENT WATER FRAMEWORK DIRECTIVE ASSESSMENT

- 5.9.1. Whilst the over-arching objectives of EIA and Water Framework Directive assessment are similar, the scope, level of detail and terminology used varies. As such, these processes have been undertaken separately. However, the scope presented within this ES has been developed to ensure that the needs of these processes have been considered to ensure a coordinated assessment compliant with Regulation 27 of the EIA Regulations 2017.
- 5.9.2. The Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC) (Ref. 5.7) was transposed into UK legislation by the Water Environment Regulations 2017 (Ref. 5.8). The Directive aims to prevent the deterioration of aquatic ecosystems and associated wetlands through reducing pollution of surface and ground water whilst contributing to flood mitigation. Under Water Framework Directive legislation, no deterioration of waterbodies is permitted.
- 5.9.3. The Proposed Development adjoins and incorporates an unnamed watercourse that is designated as a statutory Main River. A review of the Environment Agency Catchment Data explorer indicates this watercourse forms part of the Whittle Brook catchment which in turns forms part of the Mersey Estuary basin (Ref 5.9). The watercourse is currently defined as having moderate ecological status and good chemical status.
- 5.9.4. Along with the presence of a Main River and therefore a Water Framework Directive receptor, the current development proposals include the modification and realignment of this watercourse through the application site. The alignment is required to allow the formation of the various development plateaus on which the logistics buildings and warehouses will sit. The diversion will require approximately 570 m of the watercourse to be diverted, and the design of the channel will aim to replicate natural, good quality riparian habitat, bed structure and channel morphology. However, due to the significance of the diversion, the impact upon the Water Framework Directive receptor is required to be assessed and a Water Framework Directive assessment will be completed for the Proposed Development.

5.10 REFERENCES

- Ref. 5.1: Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017. Statutory Instrument 2017 No. 571
- Ref.5.2: Planning Practice Guidance [online]. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/planning-practice-guidance>, Accessed 29 October 2019
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- Ref.5.8: The Water Environment (Water Framework Directive) (England and Wales) Regulations 2017. Statutory Instrument 2017 No. 407
- Ref.5.9: Whittle Brook (Mersey Estuary) Overview – Catchment Data Explorer, Environment Agency [online]. Available at: at <http://environment.data.gov.uk/catchment-planning/WaterBody/GB112069060990>, Accessed 29 October 2019



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