

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT APPRAISAL SCREENING OPINION
(under the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment)
(Scotland) Regulations 2017)

Address: 1 Redheughs Avenue, South Gyle Edinburgh, EH12 9RH	Applicant/ Agent: [REDACTED] [REDACTED]
Summary Description of Development: Construction of a Green Data Centre with associated infrastructure, landscaping, servicing, car and cycle parking; formation of public park with sports facilities; and formation of active travel routes	
Date of Receipt of Screening Request: N/A	
Application or Pre- Application: Application	
Reference Number (Application/ PAN): 25/04239/PPP	
Sufficient Information to Make Assessment: Yes	

Declaration:

We have screened the proposals and determined that EIA is not required for this submission, for the reasons detailed below.

Signed.....(Planning Officer)

Signed(Team Manager)

Date

IDENTIFYING THE DEVELOPMENT:

1. Is the development of a type described in Schedule 1?

NO

*Yes – Proceed to declaration EIA is required
No – Proceed to next question.*

2. Is the development of a type listed in column 1 of schedule 2 which:

- a) is located wholly or in part on a 'sensitive area' as defined in regulation 2(1) (see paragraph 45;

OR

- b) meets one of the relevant criteria or exceeds one of the relevant thresholds listed in the second column of the table in Schedule 2.

NO

If No, proceed to declaration.

The development is a 'Schedule 2 Development' as defined under Regulation 2 (1) of The Town and Country (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017. It is classed as an 'Urban development project' under section 10 – Infrastructure projects part b) of the table.

The related application reference 25/04239/PPP is for planning permission in principle where the area of development is 5.68 hectares in total. As this area of development exceeds the 0.5 hectares threshold in column 2 of these regulations, a screening opinion is required in accordance with schedule 3.

Consideration of EIA

3. Is the development likely to have a significant effect on the environment taking into account the following areas?

Selection Criteria for Screening Schedule 2 Development	
In accordance with Schedule 3 of the Regulations the following selection criteria are used to inform the screening opinion:	
Characteristics of development	
1. The characteristics of development must be considered having regard in particular to—	
	<i>Likely significant effects - Yes/ No?</i>
a) the size and design of the whole development;	No The Townscape and Visual Appraisal (TVA) anticipate the developments size and design would have a moderate adverse effect within 1 km of the site with impacts reducing further away. Lighting levels and illuminance identified in the submitted lighting strategy are not anticipated to be significant. Noise impacts from construction and operation (traffic, plant / ancillary equipment) in the Noise Impact Assessment (NIA) anticipate low impacts on residential properties. These matters can be assessed in further detail through an Approval of Matters specified in Condition (AMC) and planning conditions. This includes detailed design matters (building height, scale, materials and position), light (light spill plans & illuminance restrictions if necessary) and noise (detail of mitigation measures and implementation).
b) the cumulation with other existing development and/or approved development;	No

	There is a potential cumulative visual impact from the proposed development and approved developments (extant planning permission 20/02068/FUL for mixed-use development and planning permission 24/00820/FUL for an arena (class 11) with associated uses). This may impact on views in the TVA from the south of the site. However, this area is largely brownfield, identified for re-development in City Plan 2030 (LDP) and has no specific landscape, historic or environmental designation. There are potential cumulative construction impacts (noise, vibration, dust) from this development and those approved above. However, the nature of development (office & storage) does not give rise to any specific significant impacts. The Air Quality Assessment (AQA) outlines potential mitigation measures and further details regarding this could be assessed through the current planning application, or any subsequent AMC stage should permission be granted.
c) the use of natural resources, in particular land, soil, water and biodiversity;	No Data centre developments have potential to use large amounts of water to control the buildings temperature. Similarly, there is potential for a large energy consumption. With respect to this, separate consents and agreements will be required with NESO (National System Operator), SPEN (Scottish Power Energy Networks) and SW Scottish Water. Energy and water usage are estimations at this stage as the design of development is indicative only.

	Paragraph 138 of Scottish Governments' planning circular 1/2017: EIA regulations states 'if those effects (on the environment) are not identifiable at the time of the principle decision, assessment must be undertaken at the subsequent stage.' Therefore, further consideration of these matters will be required as part any subsequent AMC (Approval of Matters Specified in Conditions) application. Development will be located on land of limited environmental value given its brownfield characteristics where recent demolition has occurred. Environmental impacts are likely to occur through developing existing green, open space which includes tree removal. However, ecological impacts can be assessed through the planning application through review of the ecological assessment report. Mitigation can be provided through compensatory planting / greenspace imposed through planning conditions. Soil impacts will occur as green, open space identified as capable of producing a wide range of crops (James Hutton Institute) will be developed. However, as this is a proportionally small area of land (0.25 ha) that is surrounded by development significant impacts are not anticipated. Whilst the site is identified as containing surface water flood risk, the land is mainly brownfield and surrounded by development. Flood risk can be appropriately assessed through the Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) and Surface Water Management Plan (SWMP) accompanying the planning application. A further detailed FRA and SWMP can also be imposed through condition to consider with any subsequent AMC application.
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d) the production of waste;	No As above, data centre developments use a large amount of energy and subsequently potentially produce large heat waste. The buildings energy performance would be considered through building standards legislation with compliance demonstrated through a UK approved methodology calculation. Scottish Government' NPF4 outlines Green Data Centres as likely to have a negligible impact on achieving national greenhouse gas emission reduction targets. On this basis, impacts from waste heat are not considered likely to result in a significant environmental effect. Mitigation can be secured by planning condition for details of a waste heat recovery plan and the sustainability credentials of the development.
e) pollution and nuisances;	No The development is categorised as a national development under the 'Digital Fibre Network' within NPF4. It is stated here this development will likely have an overall negligible impact on achieving national greenhouse gas emission reduction targets. Whilst data centres generate a large amount of energy the carbon impact will be reduced through use of renewable energy in Scotland. Further consideration of this matter can be assessed through consideration of a carbon life cycle assessment through any subsequent AMC application. The energy-performance of the data centre would also require assessment through any separate

	building warrant application where there are restrictions on heating / cooling systems that do not emit carbon emissions. On this basis no significant impacts are anticipated.
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;	No The site is not within an area identified as containing any specific flood risk. The drainage strategy takes account of climate change and can be considered through the planning application and later AMC application. No other specific risks of major accidents are identified.
g) the risks to human health (for example, due to water contamination or air pollution).	No The developments' construction would generate dust with impacts on air pollution. However, there is nothing specific about the development to suggest impacts would be significant whilst the site is not within a designated Air Quality Management Area (AQMA). Similarly, anticipated vehicular trips in the submitted Transport Statement are not considered significant. The site is also well connected to sustainable transport modes which helps encourage transport by sustainable means. No specific risk to water contamination are identified.
Location of development	
2. The environmental sensitivity of geographical areas likely to be affected by development must be considered having regard in particular to—	
	<i>Likely significant effects - Yes/ No?</i>
a) the existing and approved land use;	No.

	The site is not in an area of environmental sensitivity. The existing office land use is a well-established land use in the area surrounding the site. The proposed storage use is compatible with this urban context. It will be surrounded by other developments and will be spatially detached from environmental designated areas to the west.
b) the relative abundance, availability, quality and regenerative capacity of natural resources (including soil, land, water and biodiversity) in the area and its underground;	No Developing greenspace would have impacts on soil and land. However, the site has no specific environmental designation. The area of greenspace is a proportionally small part of the whole brownfield site. Similarly, associated tree loss has potential for adverse biodiversity impacts. These impacts can be assessed through submitted ecological impact assessment and tree survey with the application. Mitigation can be secured by condition for replacement planting and greenspace.
c) the absorption capacity of the natural environment paying particular attention to the following areas—	
(i) wetlands, riparian areas, river mouths;	No
(ii) coastal zones and the marine environment;	No
(iii) mountain and forest areas;	No
(iv) nature reserves and parks;	No
(v) European sites and other areas classified or protected under national legislation;	No
(vi) areas in which there has already been a failure to meet the environmental quality standards, laid down in Union legislation and relevant to the project, or in which it is considered that there is such a failure;	No
(vii) densely populated areas;	No

	Existing densely populated areas are located to the sites' north and east. A proposed populated area would be located to the south / south-west. These areas are separated from the development whilst the its detailed design (noise, light, scale) can help reduce impacts. No significant effect is likely.
(viii) landscapes and sites of historical, cultural or archaeological significance.	No The site is not in an area with any specific landscape, historic, cultural or archaeological designation. Given the developments' scale, its urban context and separation distances retained to areas of designation no significant effects on these matters are likely.
Types and characteristics of the potential impact 3. The likely significant effects of the development on the environment must be considered in relation to criteria set out in paragraphs 1 and 2 above, with regard to the impact of the development on the factors specified in regulation 4(2), taking into account—	
	<i>Likely significant effects - Yes/ No?</i>
(a) the magnitude and spatial extent of the impact (for example geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected);	No The development would be approximately 80 metres from nearest residential property of approved planning permission 20/02068/FUL and over 150 m from existing residential properties. Potential impacts (noise, light, visual) from the development have been outlined in planning application 25/04239/PPP. These impacts are not atypical of the site's urban environment. In tandem with these separation distances retained no significant impacts are anticipated.
(b) the nature of the impact;	The nature of the impact will be visual as the developments scale, mass and illumination will be visible in short and long views. Additionally, there will be a sensory impact as the development and associated

	infrastructure will create noise and vibration. However, the development will be in an urban area where such impacts already occur. The extent of these impacts is not anticipated to be unusual in this context or cause a significant effect.
(c) the transboundary nature of the impact;	No The development is not in proximity to any country or area boundary. Impacts (visual, sensory) are not anticipated to be perceived to any significant extent out with the sites immediate urban area.
(d) the intensity and complexity of the impact;	No The impact would be intense as it is anticipated the development would operate during day and night-time hours. However, the nature of impact (visual, sensory) is not considered particularly complex in the site's urban context near commercial and office use. The overall effect would not be significant.
(e) the probability of the impact;	No The probability of impact is low.
(f) the expected onset, duration, frequency and reversibility of the impact;	No Planning permission would be granted on a permanent basis therefore the impact would be irreversible. As above, the developments operational hours would likely be continuous therefore the impact would be frequent. Additionally, there would be temporary construction impacts. However, such impacts are not considered significant given the characteristics of development and sites urban context detailed above.

(g) the cumulation of the impact with the impact of other existing and/or approved development;	No There would be a cumulative visual and sensory impact from the development in tandem with other approved developments detailed in section 1. Such effects are not considered significant in the sites urban context.
(h) the possibility of effectively reducing the impact.	Climate Change -Detail for the developments cooling system could be imposed as a planning condition to assess its sustainability credentials. -A Waste heat recovery plan could also be conditioned to assess the feasibility of re-using excess heat from the development. -A Carbon life cycle assessment could be imposed by condition to assess carbon emissions from the development. Visual -Detailed design matters could be imposed by condition to assess the buildings scale, position, height and materials. -Limitations to the building's height can be imposed through planning condition. -Compliance with the submitted lighting plan to limit the developments level of illuminance. Noise -A condition for full detail of noise mitigation measures and a time period for their implementation to reduce noise impacts from the development.

Overall Conclusion:

The proposal has been screened in accordance with Schedule 3 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (EIA) (Scotland) Regulations 2017 and no EIA is required.

4. Screening Opinion

On the basis of the information provided and the assessment carried out in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017) and Circular 1/2017 it is concluded that an EIA will not be required for this proposal.

The key points for this opinion are:

- The works are for the construction of a Green Data Centre with associated infrastructure, landscaping, servicing, car and cycle parking; formation of public park with sports facilities; and formation of active travel routes
- They have been assessed against the criteria in schedule 3 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017
- It is not considered that the proposal will have a significant effect on the environment, and an Environmental Statement is not required.
- The site is brownfield land, and in an urban environment which is not defined as a sensitive area.
- As defined in NPF4, the development will likely have a negligible impact on achieving national greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets.
- Necessary mitigation can be secured through the planning application process in relation to waste heat, sustainability, noise, light, design, flood risk and planting as outlined above.
- As the development is a multi-stage consent (planning permission in principle) further consideration of these matters would be made at a subsequent stage (Approval of Matters Specified in Conditions).