

EIA SCREENING OPINION

LPA	London Borough of Havering	
1. CASE DETAILS		
(i) Planning Application No.		
Z0003.23		
(ii) Site Address		
Land at Fen Lane, Opp Top Meadow Golf Course		
(iii) Description		
Proposed development of up to 390,000 square metres of data centre floorspace (Class B8 use) and associated built development, electrical substations, distribution and infrastructure equipment, battery storage or grid balancing infrastructure, renewable energy technology and green energy production, together with indoor agriculture farming operations, green energy production, highways works, engineering works, hard and soft landscaping, and formation of associated parkland/enhanced biodiversity habitat and visitors centre at North Ockendon, Havering, Greater London.		
Are the applicable thresholds/criteria in Column 2 exceeded/met?		YES
If yes, which applicable threshold/criteria?		Area of the development exceeds 0.5 hectare
Has the LPA or SoS issued a Screening Opinion (SO) or Screening Direction (SD)? (In the case of Enforcement appeals, has a Regulation 37 notice been issued)		NO
If yes, is a copy of the SO/SD on the file?		N/A
If yes, is the SO/SD positive?		N/A
Has the appellant supplied an ES for the current or previous (if reserved matters or conditions) application?		NO

WHEN COMPLETING THIS DOCUMENT IN RELATION TO AN ENFORCEMENT APPEAL, THE UNDERSIGNED OFFICER HAS HAD REGARD TO THE PROJECT AS ALLEGED IN THE RELEVANT ENFORCEMENT NOTICE WHEN REFERING TO THE PROJECT / DEVELOPMENT.

A Screening Criteria Question	B Response to the Screening Criteria Question in Column A (Yes/No and explanation of reasons) Briefly explain reasons and, if applicable and/or known, include name of feature(s) and proximity to site(s)		C Is a Significant Effect Likely? (Yes/No and explanation of reasons (nb if the answer in Column B is 'No', Column C is not applicable)) Is a significant effect likely, having regard particularly to the magnitude and spatial extent (including population size affected), nature, intensity and complexity, probability, expected onset, duration, frequency and reversibility of the impact and the possibility to effectively reduce the impact? If the finding of no significant effect is reliant on specific features or measures of the project envisaged to avoid, or prevent what might otherwise have been, significant adverse effects on the environment these should be identified in bold.
3.1 Will construction, operation or decommissioning of the project involve actions which will cause physical changes in the topography of the area?	Yes	Reasons The project will result in the change of use of the land from agricultural land use, to data centre Class B8 (storage and distribution) use and the reconfiguration of existing arable land uses on the remainder of the land for ancillary purpose.	Yes Reasons The redevelopment provides an extensive data centre building of up to 21m in height including power plant, substations and other ancillary structures on a 191hectare site within the Metropolitan Green Belt, areas designated as a Countryside Conservation Area, Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (Borough) and Minerals Safeguarding Area this would amount to a fundamental change to the land use and the topography of the site.
3.2 Will construction or operation of the project use natural resources above or below ground such as land, soil, water, materials/minerals or energy which are non-renewable or in short supply?	Yes	Whilst the development would utilise the existing land, it would use water, materials and energy in the construction process.	Yes The benefit of an energy efficient development in the long term does not outweigh the impacts that the construction project would have on resources.
3.3 Are there any areas on/around the location which contain important,	Yes	The land is agricultural arable land in close proximity to a river	Yes

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high quality or scarce resources which could be affected by the project, e.g. 3.4 forestry, agriculture, water/coastal, fisheries, minerals?				
4.1 Will the project produce solid wastes during construction or operation or decommissioning?	Yes	Development of the site will involve excavation and regrading of the land which will produce solid waste during the construction phase	Yes	The net increase of development will result in an increase in the amount of waste generated. The type of waste generated will, however be dissimilar in nature to that produced by the existing agricultural use.
5.1 Will the project release pollutants or any hazardous, toxic or noxious substances to air?	Yes	There is potential for limited contamination on site. During the construction phase of the development, there will be extensive vehicular movements which are likely to release pollutants	Yes	The increased traffic during the construction period is likely to result in breach in IEMA guidelines. A detailed Air Quality Assessment will be required during the planning application process.
5.2 Will the project cause noise and vibration or release of light, heat, energy or electromagnetic radiation?	Yes	Additional noise and vibration is likely to take place during the construction phase. Heat energy would be released by the cooling plant serving the data facility. There may be some light spillage onto the adjacent open space as a result of the development.	Yes	There will be an increase in noise during the construction period however this will be temporary.
5.3 Will the project lead to risks of contamination of land or water from releases of pollutants onto the ground or into surface waters, groundwater, coastal waters or the sea?	No	This is a mixed use development comprising of data centre, distribution and infrastructure equipment, battery storage or grid balancing infrastructure, agriculture farming operations, green energy production and engineering works uses and therefore unlikely to lead to risks of contamination. If any contamination is found to exist on site, this can be controlled through an appropriate remediation strategy.	No	A contamination report will confirm any likely impacts and an appropriate remediation strategy will be agreed via the planning application process to deal with land contamination investigation and remediation. In addition, planning conditions relating to surface water drainage would be attached to

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5.4 Are there any areas on or around the location which are already subject to pollution or environmental damage, e.g. where existing legal environmental standards are exceeded, which could be affected by the project?	No		No	
6.1 Will there be any risk of major accidents (including those caused by climate change, in accordance with scientific knowledge) during construction, operation or decommissioning?	Yes	Likely – Due to the nature of the building at 21m high cover some 390,000Sq.m of floor space	No	The risk of accidents on the site would be limited and there are appropriate health and safety measures in place during the construction phase.
6.2 Will the project present a risk to the population (having regard to population density) and their human health during construction, operation or decommissioning? (for example due to water contamination or air pollution)	Yes	The proposal seeks an intensive use of the site across several use types. The existing agricultural use is proposed to be reduced and in form of an indoor agriculture farming operations, be it on a smaller scale.	Yes	As the social demographic changes would be limited to largely data centre and indoor farming development on this site. Notwithstanding this, the proposed uses are likely to have a significant impact on the environment as result of changes in hydrology, increased traffic or air quality impacts and during construction phase.
7.1 Are there any water resources including surface waters, e.g. rivers, lakes/ponds, coastal or underground waters on or around the location which could be affected by the project, particularly in terms of their volume and flood risk?	Yes	The Mar Dyke is an Environment Agency designated Main River, with an estimated upstream catchment of 28.28km ² adjacent to the site. The flood zones associated with the river extend significantly into the site.	Yes	Site is located within Flood Zones 2 and 3
8.1 Are there any protected areas which are designated or classified for their terrestrial, avian and marine ecological value, or any non-designated	Yes	Council records show that the site constraints include TPO's (Trees) There are no known natural resources within the immediate vicinity of the site. The western and eastern most confines of the site	Yes	The proposals are likely to have a detrimental impact on any nearby protected views. The

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/ non-classified areas which are important or sensitive for reasons of their terrestrial, avian and marine ecological value, located on or around the location and which could be affected by the project? (e.g. wetlands, watercourses or other water-bodies, the coastal zone, mountains, forests or woodlands, undesignated nature reserves or parks. (Where designated indicate level of designation (international, national, regional or local))).		are identified as an Archaeology Priority Area within the Greater London Archaeology Advisory Service (GLAAS).	applicants will provide a visual impact assessment as part of the proposals
8.2 Could any protected, important or sensitive species of flora or fauna which use areas on or around the site, e.g. for breeding, nesting, foraging, resting, over-wintering, or migration, be affected by the project?	Yes	There are a number of trees in and around the site that have the potential to support nesting birds and roosting bats. A reptile survey found Common lizard and grass snake and support for bat roost within the development site..	Yes As part of the application the Council will ensure that the ecology and biodiversity are enhanced on site through the carrying out of UK Habitat Classification Survey, Condition Assessment including River Condition Assessment and Hedgerow Regulations survey. SLR proposes the additional tree and botanical surveys; BS5837:2015 tree surveys, lower plants, hedgerows and detailed botanical surveys, as required to inform the baseline conditions.
9.1 Are there any areas or features on or around the location which are protected for their landscape and scenic value, and/or any non-designated / non-classified areas or features of high landscape or scenic value on or around the location which could be affected by the project? ¹ Where designated indicate	Yes	The land to the east and south of the site is defined as being part of Thames Chase with the associated planning policies being focussed on recreation, together with forest creation and management, and also within Metropolitan Green Belt, areas designated as a Countryside Conservation Area, Site of Importance for Nature Conservation	Yes There is the potential for impact on the designated and protected landscape within and in the vicinity of the development site. A robust Landscape Visual Impact Assessment and landscape character assessment is required. A visual impact assessment will be undertaken as part of the planning application, which will assess

¹ See question 8.1 for consideration of impacts on heritage designations and receptors, including on views to, within and from designated areas.

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level of designation (international, national, regional or local).				and manage the implications of the development on this view.
9.2 Is the project in a location where it is likely to be highly visible to many people? (If so, from where, what direction, and what distance?)	Yes	The site is within Metropolitan Green Belt, areas designated as a Countryside Conservation Area, Site of Importance for Nature Conservation and therefore it is anticipated that it will be highly visible. Furthermore, the site is within the Thames Chase corridor and therefore is considered that it will be highly visible	Yes	The site is located on a Green Belt Land and agricultural land surrounded by expanse of open land and vegetation. Also, the development quantum is significant and would unlikely blend in with the existing rural environment.
10.1 Are there any areas or features which are protected for their cultural heritage or archaeological value, or any non-designated / classified areas and/or features of cultural heritage or archaeological importance on or around the location which could be affected by the project (including potential impacts on setting, and views to, from and within)? Where designated indicate level of designation (international, national, regional or local).	Yes	Blankets farmhouse, to the east of the site; Bury Farmhouse, to the west; Old England, to the north; Little Tillingham to the north-east; and The group of four Listed buildings, west of North Ockendon village; the most significant of these comprises the Grade I Listed Church of St Mary Magdalene, while the others, all Grade II, comprise The Rectory and two discretely Listed lengths of garden wall associated with former Ockendon Hall are considered to have local cultural importance. All of the site is within Countryside Conservation Area, Site of Importance for Nature Conservation.	Yes	The development will have the potential to impact on historic and cultural importance features in the area. These potential operational phase impacts will have to be addressed within the technical assessment and ES chapter
11.1 Are there any routes on or around the location which are used by the public for access to recreation or other facilities, which could be affected by the project?	Yes	Home Farm is located adjacent to the southern edge of the site. One Public Right of Way, which extends northwards from Home Farm, Fen Lane, is located within the boundary and cross through the site. There would likely have to be rerouting of the existing Right of Way during construction.	Yes	There is though, an opportunity to improve on the public right of way path within the site as a result of the development

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11.2 Are there any transport routes on or around the location which are susceptible to congestion or which cause environmental problems, which could be affected by the project?	Yes		No	A key consideration will be the impacts of the construction phase which, whilst temporary. The data centre alone will employ at least 100 fulltime staff bringing with it use of private vehicles. It is not considered that the development of the site will result in any significant impacts. The potential transport implications will be considered within a Transport Assessment (TA).
12.1 Are there existing land uses or community facilities on or around the location which could be affected by the project? E.g. housing, densely populated areas, industry / commerce, farm/agricultural holdings, forestry, tourism, mining, quarrying, facilities relating to health, education, places of worship, leisure /sports / recreation.	Yes	The entire site is agricultural land used for arable farming.	Yes	The impact of the project on neighbouring residential amenities will be thoroughly scrutinised during the planning process. In addition, any impacts on the open space/Green Belt will be examined and the LPA will seek justification for the loss of openness and agricultural land by way of VSC put forward for the development. Notwithstanding this the proposal is unlikely to have a significant detrimental impact on these neighbouring functions.
12.2 Are there any plans for future land uses on or around the location which could be affected by the project?	No		No	
13.1 Is the location susceptible to earthquakes, subsidence, landslides, erosion, or extreme /adverse climatic conditions, e.g. temperature inversions, fogs, severe winds, which could cause the project to present environmental problems?	No		No	

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14.1 Could this project together with existing and/or approved development result in cumulation of impacts together during the construction/operation phase?	No	No The cumulative impacts of any surrounding developments will be assessed at planning application stage. However, this are not considered to detrimentally impact the development at the site
15.1 Is the project likely to lead to transboundary effects? ²	Yes	No Potentially some non-significant impacts at a local scale.

² The Regulations require consideration of the transboundary nature of the impact. Due to the England's geographical location the vast majority of TCPA cases are unlikely to result in transboundary impacts.

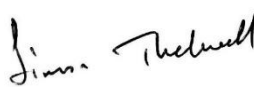
The development would be both permanent and irreversible. The development would have the potential to have some significant environmental impacts upon the surrounding area for an extended period of time.		
If a SO/SD has been provided do you agree with it?	N/A	
Is it necessary to issue a SD?	N/A	
Is an ES required?	Yes	
	OUTCOME	
Is likely to have significant effects on the environment	ES required	Yes
<u>Not</u> likely to have significant effects on the environment	ES not required	N/A
More information is required to inform direction	Request further info	Yes
In light of the above considerations and the relatively significant impacts which the development would have on environmental resources in the locality and on a wider scale, it is the opinion of the Council that the proposed development would constitute Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Development and an Environmental Statement (ES) would therefore be required.		

Based on the consideration of criteria for proposals within Section 10 (b) and guidance contained within the National Planning Practice Guidance it is considered that an **EIA WOULD BE REQUIRED**.

The above opinion has been formulated on the basis of the information supplied with the screening opinion request submitted to the London Borough of Havering and accepted on 27/07/2023 – application ref: Z0003.23.

This Screening Opinion has been adopted by Havering Council

Complied by
Raphael Adenegan - Principal Planner
Date: 17/08/20223

Signed:.... 

Name and Position: Simon Thelwell, Head of Strategic Development

Date: 17th August 2023