



Appendix 3.5

GENERAL EIA ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Appendix 3.5: General EIA Assessment Criteria

1.1 Identifying Impacts and Effects

1.1.1 The Development has the potential to create a range of 'impacts' and 'effects' with regard to the physical, biological and human environment. The definitions of impact and effect used in this assessment are as follows:

- **Impact** – a change that is caused by an action. For example, excavation works would lead to a removal of underlying soils and lithology (impact). Impacts can be classified as direct, indirect, secondary, cumulative and inter-related. They can be either positive (beneficial) or negative (adverse); and
- **Effect** – is used to express the consequence of an impact. For example, removal of soils and lithology (impact) has the potential to disturb underlying buried heritage sensitive receptors (effect).

1.1.2 For consistency, the findings of the various studies undertaken as part of the EIA adopt the following terminology to express the nature of the effect:

- Adverse: Detrimental or negative effect to an environmental resource or receptor;
- Negligible: No significant effect to an environmental resource or receptor; and
- Beneficial: Advantageous or positive effect to an environmental resource or receptor.

1.1.3 Following their identification, significant beneficial or adverse effects have been classified on the basis of their nature and duration as follows:

1.1.4 In the context of the Development, short (up to 24 months duration) to medium (up to 48 months duration) term effects are generally determined to be those associated with demolition and construction activities, and the long term effects are those associated with the completed and occupied Development.

1.1.5 Local effects are those effects affecting receptors within and in close proximity to the Site, whilst effects on receptors in the wider study area are considered to be at a district level. Sub-regional effects are those affecting adjacent boroughs/wards, whilst effects on OCC are considered to be at a regional level.

1.2 Defining Magnitude of Impact and Sensitivity of Receptor

Magnitude of Impact

1.2.1 For impacts assessed in this ES, a magnitude of impact was assigned, taking into account the spatial extent, duration, frequency and reversibility of the impact, where relevant. Scales of magnitudes of impact were defined in each chapter of this ES where this is possible, otherwise professional judgement was applied to the following scale:

- No change;
- Negligible;
- Low;
- Medium; and
- High.

Sensitivity of Receptor

1.2.2 The environmental effects of the Proposed Development are assessed in relation to sensitive receptor which are defined as the physical or biological resources or user groups that would be affected by the potential impacts of proposed development. These include human beings (e.g. future site users), built resources (e.g. buildings) and natural resources (e.g. controlled waters). The criteria used for identifying potentially sensitive receptors include:

- their proximity to the Site;
- the presence or absence of impact pathways;
- the extent and duration of potential exposure to environmental impacts; and,
- their vulnerability and ability to respond to change.

1.2.3 The identification of sensitive receptors was informed by baseline studies carried out as part of the EIA. Assessments consider both existing and future sensitive receptors, within the Site and in the surrounding area. A summary of sensitive receptors is provided within each baseline assessment sections of the ES topic chapters.

1.2.4 The sensitivity of a receptor was based on the relative importance of the receptor, taking into account:

- Legislative/designated status;
- The number of individual receptors;
- The characteristics/rarity; and
- Ability to absorb change.

1.1.10 Sensitivity was defined within each topic according to the following scale:

- Negligible;
- Low;
- Medium; and
- High.

1.3 Evaluation of Significance

1.3.1 The assessment of environmental effects has been undertaken in accordance with definitive standards and legislation where such material is available. In cases where it is not possible to quantify effects, qualitative assessments have been carried out and are based on the available knowledge of the Site and potential effect, alongside professional judgement.

Where uncertainty exists, this is detailed in the 'Assumptions and Limitations' under 'Assessment Methodology' in the respective technical chapters.

- 1.3.2 Each technical chapter provides the specific criteria, including sources and justifications, for quantifying the level of effect significance. Where possible, this has been based upon quantitative and accepted criteria, together with the use of value judgements and expert interpretations to establish to what extent an effect is significant.
- 1.3.3 There is no statutory definition of what constitutes a significant effect and guidance is of a generic nature. However, it is widely recognised by EIA practitioners that 'significance' reflects the relationship between the magnitude of an impact and the sensitivity (or value) of the affected resource or receptor. Statutory designations and any potential breaches of environmental law take precedence in determining significance because the protection afforded to a particular receptor or resource is already established as a matter of law, rather than requiring a project or site-specific evaluation.
- 1.3.4 Specific criteria for the assessment of each potential effect gives due regard to the following:
 - Extent and magnitude of the effect;
 - Effect duration (whether short, medium or long term);
 - Nature of effect (whether direct or indirect, reversible or irreversible);
 - Performance against environmental quality standards;
 - Whether the effect occurs in isolation, is cumulative or interactive;
 - Sensitivity of the receptor; and
 - Compatibility with environmental policies.
- 1.3.5 Where adverse or beneficial effects were identified, these were generally assessed against the scale set out in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1: Description of the level of significance of environmental effects.

Level of Significance	Descriptions
Major	Large effects (by extent, duration or magnitude) and/or a highly pronounced change in environmental conditions. Effects, both adverse and beneficial, which are likely to be important considerations at a regional level because they contribute to achieving regional or council wide objectives, or, could result in exceedance of statutory objectives and/or breaches of legislation.
Moderate	Intermediate effects (by extent, duration or magnitude) and/or pronounced change in environmental conditions. Effect that is likely to be an important consideration at a local level.
Minor	Noticeable but small effect or change in environmental conditions. These effects may be raised as local issues but are unlikely to be of importance in the decision-making process.
Negligible	No discernible change or neutral effect on environmental conditions. An effect that is likely to have a negligible influence, irrespective of other effects.

1.3.6 The matrix presented in Table 1.2 was generally applied throughout this ES to determine the scale or magnitude of effects. Where different assessment criteria were used, this is clearly stated within the relevant chapter.

Table 1.2: Significance of Effects Matrix

Sensitivity / Value of Receptor	Magnitude of Effect			
	High	Medium	Low	Negligible
High	Major	Major / Moderate	Moderate	Negligible
Medium	Major / Moderate	Moderate	Moderate / Minor	Negligible
Low	Moderate	Moderate / Minor	Minor	Negligible
Negligible	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible