

### **What is a Screening Opinion?**

A Screening Opinion is issued by the Council and advises whether an Environmental Impact Assessment is required to be submitted with a planning application or not.

The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (England and Wales) Regulations 2011 require local planning authorities to consider whether certain projects are likely to have a significant effect on the environment and if so, ensure that the applicant carries out an assessment and prepares and submits a report identifying and assessing the effects. The process is the Environmental Impact Assessment and the report is known as the Environmental Statement.

A developer can apply to the Council to determine whether an Environmental Impact Assessment is required prior to submitting a planning application. This is known as a request for a Screening Opinion. The applicant is required to submit sufficient information on the proposal so that the Council can understand the potential of the proposal to have a significant effect. If a developer does not make a request for Screening Opinion, the Council will issue a Screening Opinion on major developments when a planning application is made. The Council is required to issue a Screening Opinion within 21 days unless an extension is agreed with the developer.

The information submitted with a request for a Screening Opinion is often limited, usually a red line identifying the land and a brief description of the development proposed and possible effects. The Council can ask for further information if this is considered necessary to issue a Screening Opinion.

If the proposal has a number of issues then the Council may consult technical consultees to seek their advice with regard to the potential for significant impact. Consultation with the public will occur if and when a planning application is made.

Criteria for making a decision with regard to the need for Environmental Impact Assessment are set out in the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2011. The consideration is based upon a proposed development's characteristics, location and potential impacts.

A Screening Opinion must be made public for 2 years.

A Screening Opinion does not consider the detail of the impact of the development, this is a matter for consideration once the planning application is made and the Environmental Statement will help inform this process.