

Public

Environmental and Social Data Sheet

Overview

Project Name:	<i>LUTON MASS PASSENGER TRANSPORT</i>
Project Number:	<i>2018-0017</i>
Country:	<i>UK</i>
Project Description:	Construction of a mass passenger transit (MPT) line, approximately 2.1km in length, from Luton Airport Parkway station to Luton Airport.
EIA required:	no
Project included in Carbon Footprint Exercise ¹ :	no

Environmental and Social Assessment

Environmental Assessment

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

In accordance with EU Directive 2001/42/EC on Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes (the SEA Directive), transposed in the UK via the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004, Luton Borough Council, the public authority responsible for Luton Mass Passenger Transit (MPT) project, prepared a Sustainability Report as part of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) process for the Luton Local Plan 2011-2031. Under the same regulation the Promoter carried out a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) as a requirement of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 that applies to local developments, such as the Luton MPT project.

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)

The Luton MPT project was screened out, having taken into account the selection criteria in Annex III to Council Directive 85/337/EEC (as amended by Council Directive 97/11/EC), as per the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations (2011) in December 2016². Both Luton Borough Council and Central Bedfordshire Council, as relevant competent authorities for environmental matters for this project, provided formal screening responses in accordance with the EIA regulations above considering the type of project and the expected impacts, concluding that this project does not require the submission of an EIA for review and approval in accordance with the EIA Directive applicable to the date .

Birds and Habitats Directives

¹ Only projects that meet the scope of the Pilot Exercise, as defined in the EIB draft Carbon Footprint Methodologies, are included, provided estimated emissions exceed the methodology thresholds: above 100,000 tons CO₂e/year absolute (gross) or 20,000 tons CO₂e/year relative (net) – both increases and savings.

² This national regulation from 2011 is in accordance with the original EIA Directive (85/337/EEC) and its amendments to date of publication of the national EIA Regulations in 2011 in the UK.

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An assessment in accordance with Council Directive 2009/147/EC on the conservation of wild birds and Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora has been carried out too as part of the sustainability appraisal analysis carried out in March 2016.

There are no international designated sites (collectively known as Natura 2000 network of European Sites) within 10km of the Luton MPT site, and no sites designated for bat species within 30km. The closest international designated site is Chiltern Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation (SAC), located approximately 13km southwest of the Luton MPT site. According to the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and the screening out decisions by the competent authorities involved (Central Bedfordshire Council and Luton Borough Council), no sites will be directly impacted by the proposed scheme.

Environmental Impacts and biodiversity issues

Although a full EIA has not been developed because no major negative environmental impacts are envisaged for the project neither during construction nor operation, considerations on environmental impacts were analysed in the Sustainability Appraisal document –in particular the cumulative environmental impacts- and in the Construction Environmental Management Plan issued as a reference for Contractors tendering for the works. Topics like protected species, air quality, cultural heritage assets; surface and ground water features, visual amenities and landscaping have been taken into account.

All the negative environmental impacts foreseen are minor. Nevertheless, prevention and mitigation measures have been proposed for some of them, so that the residual impacts are brought to a minimum.

Positive environmental impacts mainly refer to reduced emissions from traffic being removed from the roads due to modal shift from private to public transport. Time savings for passengers are also important, especially due to the future reliability of the MPT system that will allow for reduced time buffers for the transfers between the railway line into the airport.

Climate Change

The proposed scheme is likely to improve the carbon emissions relative to the current conditions on the road network. This would be partly due to significant modal shift to less carbon intensive transport. Some additional traffic relief and ease of existing congestion from surrounding roads is anticipated from the reduction of road journeys to and from the airport. This relief is likely to also benefit to the traffic on the nearby existing motorway, as car trips to the airport may reduce.

A Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) was also developed by the Consultants assessing the project. There are several potential sources of flood risk for a site, including flooding from rivers, groundwater flooding, pluvial flooding or flooding from infrastructure failure. This FRA indicates that the proposed site is at low risk of any kind of flooding.

Social Assessment, where applicable

No social issues are expected under this project: No need for resettlement for people affected by the project. There are no court cases pending or protest actions initiated against the project.

Public Consultation and Stakeholder Engagement

The planning application for this project was made jointly to Luton Borough and Central Bedfordshire Councils, and at the time, extensive consultation with neighbouring local authorities and other key stakeholders was carried out.

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Two public exhibition events were held on 2nd and 5th November 2016. These provided members of the public, local businesses and stakeholders an opportunity to view and comment on the current proposals. Feedback was available through a number of channels, including: in person at the staffed exhibitions, online via LLAL's website, email and post. Attendees were encouraged to fill out a feedback form, either via the available hard copies, online or by post. The consultation period ran until 16th November. In total 95 responses were received.

Passengers were also asked for feedback on the proposals over two days at the airport on 9th and 10th November 2016. A total of 264 responses were received. The majority of passengers surveyed were supportive of the MPT.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The responsible authority for this project carried out a SEA at an early stage and as part of the Planning Application for the Project, the Promoter developed the studies that concluded with the screened out decision of the Project by the competent authorities in accordance with the requirements of the EIA Directive applicable to the date the screening decision was made.

Some positive impacts are expected as an outcome for this project: reduced emissions from traffic being removed from the roads due to modal shift from private to public transport and time savings for passengers travelling from and to the airport by train.

Notwithstanding the above, some preventing and/or mitigations measures for some of the minor negative environmental impacts are proposed, and in line with that, the Bank will require the promoter to fulfil this undertaking:

- The Promoter shall undertake to satisfy all the environmental mitigation measures that must be discharged according to the relevant planning decision notices approved (most of these relate to measures to mitigate the temporary impacts during the construction phase and will fall to the contractor whilst some relate more to operations and will fall on the O&M provider).

Under these conditions above, the project is acceptable for EIB financing in Environmental and Social terms.