19.0 CONCLUSIONS

This section provides a tabulated overview of the key aspects of the baseline environmental conditions and the mitigated environmental impacts of the proposed distribution centre. Importantly this section identifies the relative magnitude and significance of the predicted impacts and an overall impact assessment of the proposed development is included in the final subsection. It is important to note that impacts can be positive as well as negative.

The criteria used in this assessment are as follows:

- ***Major Positive*** ●●● or ***Major Negative effect*** ●●● – where the development would cause a significant improvement (or deterioration) to the existing environment;

- ***Moderate Positive*** ●● ***or Moderate Negative effect*** ●● – where the development would cause a noticeable improvement (or deterioration) to the existing environment;

- ***Minor Positive*** ● ***or Minor Negative effect*** ● – where the development would cause a barely perceptible improvement (or deterioration) to the existing environment; and

- ***Insignificant*** ● – no discernible improvement or deterioration to the existing environment.

The impact assessment also implicitly includes consideration of whether or not the impacts are permanent, temporary, direct or indirect.

19.1 OVERVIEW OF THE DEVELOPMENT

The 42 ha site comprises three principal areas; the Foundry Lane Estate to the west, the Reclamation Site (or "The Mound") in the centre and the Mathieson Road Site (sometimes known as the West Bank Dock Estate) on the eastern part of the development area. The Foundry Lane and Mathieson Road sites are currently occupied by industrial units whilst the Reclamation Site is vegetated and planted with trees, but effectively constitutes a large accumulation of galigu chemical waste from other development projects around the area.

The intention of the proposed development is to provide a high quality inter-modal freight park which involves the demolition of a number of old, redundant and possibly unsafe buildings on this part of the West Bank Dock Estate and the construction of a number of a new combined high bay and low bay distribution warehouse for a single occupier and a second warehouse unit for a separate occupier (due to be re-housed from the existing buildings). These will be purpose built warehouse facilities with associated infrastructure services and ancillary activities that will effectively constitute a complete redevelopment of the site.

The development will generate a substantial number of new jobs and bring about a significant physical improvement to a large, currently underused site that has significant improvement potential. The proposed development will, however, involve substantial physical alterations to the site levels, demolition of buildings and infrastructure and major construction activities in order to realise the new proposals and this in turn has the potential to give rise to a range of negative environmental impacts. New developments can also lead to positive impacts and frequently the development involves a balance between both negative and positive impacts.

The table at the rear of this section presents each of the aspects of the development where potential impacts were predicted during the Scoping Exercise and subsequently assessed during this EIA. The table provides an overview of the following aspects of each technical area assessed:

- Baseline environmental conditions;

- Predicted environmental impacts for both the construction phase and operational phase;

- Identification of the relative magnitude of the impact for both the construction and operational phases;

- Identification of whether the predicted impact is positive or negative or whether there is no predicted impact.

It should be noted that in considering the impacts of the proposed development the predictions are based upon a comparison of the conditions that would prevail if the development does not proceed (i.e. the ongoing status of the baseline conditions) against those that will prevail if the development does proceed as described.

19.2 OVERALL CONCLUSION

The development proposals have been assessed in relation to their potential to impact upon the environmental conditions that currently prevail on the site and in the surrounding area. Implicit in this assessment has been the need to understand the environmental sensitivity of the area around the proposal site.

The environmental impacts of the construction phase of the project are typically minor and negative and are largely a function of the inevitable disruption caused by a major infrastructure project. The long lasting/permanent impacts associated with the development are positive and in some cases major positive impacts. In terms of specifics in addition to the obvious developmental improvements and employment opportunities therein, the following concluding points are pertinent with regard to environmental impact:

- The development will involve substantial construction works that will generate noise and disturb contaminated site soils and may intrude in to the shallow groundwater regime. The potentially negative aspects of these works will be controlled and minimised via a construction management plan that will implicitly involve environmental protection/pollution prevention measures. This will be agreed with the regulatory authorities;

- The construction works will generate a substantial quantity of waste materials and particularly contaminated soils and notably galigu. Where possible these will be treated on site (with the appropriate authorisations) and re-used. This will stabilise these materials and reduce their leaching potential and avoid the need for importing materials with the attendant transport implications;

- The new development will incorporate an improved drainage system and a greater area of hardstanding, each of that will reduce infiltration and contaminant leaching potential and lessen the incidence of rainwater mixing with contaminated soils. This will have the significant benefit of improving the quality of water discharges from the site;

- The new development will involve the re-alignment of Steward's Brook along a new purpose built channel that will join Marsh Brook. This will seal the watercourse from site derived contaminants that cannot be remediated and will also facilitate (require) the substantial upgrade and remediation of Marsh Brook (which is also contaminated). This has net environmental benefits that outweigh the negative impact of "green" bank-side being lost in the section of the original Steward's Brook that will be infilled; and

- Whilst the development will generate greater traffic movements than occur at present, it also facilitates much greater efficiency of goods transport in the area by optimising road and rail freight transfer and optimises the use of a strategically important site.

The overall environmental impact of the proposed development post-mitigation is considered to be positive (beneficial for the environment as a whole). The majority of the negative environmental impacts assessed during the EIA have been removed through the design of appropriate mitigation measures and those that remain are low to moderate in impact and associated with the temporary construction phase. As such they are transient in nature and generally short lived. There are no identified long term residual negative impacts associated with the proposed development.