

PLOT R2 PLANNING STATEMENT

to accompany a planning application for:

'Erection of research & development building (Use Class E) including office, laboratory & production space, function space and café, new access, car parking, servicing, boundary treatments, hard and soft landscaping and other associated works'

at

**LAND OFF MICHAEL FARADAY AVENUE
KINGSWAY BUSINESS PARK
ROCHDALE**

Wilson Bowden Developments Ltd
Forest Business Park
Bardon Hill
Leicestershire
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April 2024

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Plot R2 forms part of the overall Kingsway Business Park located adjacent to Junction 21, M62 to the south of Rochdale. The Business Park is a comprehensively planned business environment, being developed by the Kingsway Partnership (Homes England, Rochdale Development Agency, Rochdale Council and Wilson Bowden) following the allocation of the land through the Rochdale Unitary Development Plan during the 1990s. (An allocation which has been continued and repeated through all subsequent reviews of the Council's plans).
- 1.2 The principle of development at Kingsway Business Park has also been established by the grant of outline planning permission for the comprehensive development of the overall site for commercial purposes.
- 1.3 Outline permission was first granted on 17th December 1999 (LPA reference: 98 / 35130); it was renewed in October 2009 (LPA reference: 09 / 052264). The outline permission was comprehensively updated and refreshed again in August 2014 (LPA reference 14 / 00586 / FUL), and then varied in December 2016 (LPA reference 16/01085/ VRCON) and again in September 2018 (LPA reference 18/00943/VRCON).
- 1.4 Since the grant of the original outline permission, significant development has taken place across the site. Indeed, Kingsway Business Park is now an established business location in the Rochdale area, accommodating occupiers like JD Sports, CR Lawrence, EON, Dachser, Asda, Danish Crown and many others.
- 1.5 The overall site therefore has a very firm 'development plan' status and a clear planning pedigree in the form of an extant outline permission for employment development and a series of full permissions following the outline permissions.
- 1.6 Against this background, the Planning Statement is prepared to provide the planning case to support the proposed development for the:

'Erection of research & development building (Use Class E) including office, laboratory & production space, function space & café, new access, car parking, servicing, boundary treatments, hard and soft landscaping and other associated works'

at Plot R2, off Michael Faraday Avenue, Kingsway Business Park. It should be noted that this application is for Rochdale Borough Council as the promoter of this project. The proposed scheme was formally endorsed by Rochdale Councils' cabinet at its meeting of 19th December 2023.

- 1.7 The Planning Statement describes the development and assesses the proposals against the development plan and the extant outline planning permission. The material benefits of the proposals are also explained.

1.8 The Planning Statement should be read with the other supporting information including:

- Design and Access Statement (including Crime Impact and Heritage Assessments)
- Transport Statement and Framework Travel Plan
- Flood Risk Assessment & Sustainable Drainage Strategy
- Ecological Assessment, BNG and Habitats Regulation Assessment
- Ground Condition Summary Report
- Noise Impact Assessment
- Energy Statement; and
- Application plans and drawings

1.9 In addition, the following appendices are referred to:-

Appendix 1: Parameters Plan – 2014 \ 2018 Outline Permission.

Appendix 2: Master Plan – 2014 \ 2018 Outline Permission.

Pre-Application Discussions

1.10 The scheme proposals were discussed informally at a presentation to the Head of Planning on 7th February 2024.

Key Background

1.11 Rochdale Borough Council has been successful in attracting a significant funding under the Towns Deal from DLUHC and managed by a Towns Board. The project is intended to deliver a c. 42,657sq ft (GIA) R&D facility on a c.2.5 acre site located on Plot R2, Kingsway Business which will be owned and operated by the Borough Council.

Advanced sustainable materials and smart intelligent machinery form the cornerstone of modern manufacturing, serving as the catalyst for precise and environmentally conscious production. Materials and machinery play an essential, cross-disciplinary role in fostering innovation and driving sustainable manufacturing practices. Enhancing capabilities in sustainable materials and manufacturing will be instrumental in unleashing the industrial potential of burgeoning sectors and novel materials. Moreover, advancements in sustainable manufacturing techniques, including robotics and autonomous systems, offer unparalleled opportunities for product and process enhancements while ensuring a greener tomorrow.

Within this context, the development will respond to and align with a range of policy drivers at national, regional, local and sectoral levels. Rochdale and its neighbouring local authority areas are home to a nationally significant concentration of machinery manufacturing firms. The scheme will be strategically located at the heart of one of Greater Manchester's priority Mayoral Development Zones (MDZ), Atom Valley. It represents a significant opportunity to maximise the already approved £15m Town Deal and Investment Zone funding allocation to drive genuine Levelling Up in accordance with the latest Government agendas.

The proposed facility has the potential to be transformational for Rochdale and the wider advanced manufacturing ecosystem regionally and nationally, supporting innovation-led regeneration and industry development, and delivering a wide range of quantified and non-quantifiable benefits. The scheme is also aimed at unlocking the delivery of a more significant innovation campus development opportunity at Kingsway Business Park.

This proposal seeks to propel UK industry into the next generation of advanced sustainable materials and manufacturing technology and enable it to take a lead internationally. The Atom Valley Centre will co-locate a range of Research Technology Organisations together to genuinely collaborate, translate and diffuse innovation that will unlock jobs, productivity improvements and deliver prosperity for its customers.

These aspirations are reflected in the Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan adopted in March 2024.

1. Drive innovation in next generation advanced materials and manufacturing companies, and catalyse a globally competitive cluster of machinery manufacturers through the co-location of industry led R&D at the heart of Atom Valley;
2. Create highly skilled, high-quality jobs, and through close collaboration with local further education and training providers which will provide enhanced career pathways for the local population;
3. Will incubate a range of RTOs and programmes that will collaborate together, deliver R&D programmes, inspire and support manufacturing firms and create business cases for substantial assets of their own across Atom Valley and Greater Manchester;
4. Enhance advanced manufacturing and engineering training opportunities for students through enhanced exposure to state-of-the-art equipment and technologies and will dovetail with Hopwood Hall College' new Advanced Manufacturing Centre for vocational skills, align to the work of Rochdale Training Association, the Greater Manchester Institute of Technology and the Atom Valley Education Challenge Consortium; and
5. Contribute to enhancing the profile of the local area and make it more attractive to prospective investors and in-movers to the area.

2.0 SITE AND PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The Site

- 2.1 Plot R2 is located on the eastern side of the overall Kingsway Business Park and immediately to the south of the Metrolink, which utilises the former Rochdale-Oldham railway line, close to the Kingsway Business Park tram stop. It is the first plot on this part of Kingsway to be subject to an individual specific planning application.
- 2.2 At present, Plot R2 has an unkempt appearance with undulating levels, but clearly forms part of a larger vacant area within the wider business park environment. Access to the site is currently achieved via Michael Faraday Avenue which provides a loop road connection to two points of John Milne Avenue (A6193) – the main estate distributor road. Michael Faraday Avenue is not currently an adopted highway but will be by the time this scheme is open, subject to permission being granted.
- 2.3 The proposed plot backs onto the tram line which lies on a northwest-southeast alignment. To the west and east of Plot R2, and south beyond Michael Faraday Avenue the land is currently vacant but earmarked for further commercial development. Beyond the tram line, further north, lie residential areas within Milnrow including, principally, Leyfield Road and Turbary Walk.
- 2.4 Being part of the overall Kingsway site, Plot R2 already benefits from outline planning permission for development. Indeed, as can be seen from the Parameters Plan at Appendix 1, the outline approval established permission for office uses on this Plot, with buildings of 12 metre haunch heights, all associated servicing and parking, and a plot level of 147.6m AOD.

Proposed Development

- 2.5 This is a full planning application consisting of the development of a single Research & Development (Class E) building of some 2,415sqm (gross external at ground floor, less at first floor). The maximum height of the building would be 13.15m – to top of stair wells providing roof access from a Plot level of 148.5m AOD. The planning application site extends to some 1.44ha as it includes a length of Michael Faraday Avenue which is not yet an adopted highway (see Site Location Plan). The proposed building provides for the following elements:

- A large workshop for occupiers' projects, trials, demonstrations and research;
- Metrology space for the measurement and testing of products and processes;
- 6 no. flexible workspace areas/laboratories aimed at start-ups;
- General office space;
- A design and analysis studio;
- Lecture theatre and meeting rooms; and
- Café and support facilities.

The building will be utilised by several external occupiers – probably on short-term letting arrangements for the duration of a particular project, research or trial, in particular co-locating a range of RTO's together within the building to deliver co-ordinated business support to manufacturers, alongside the wider manufacturing ecosystem and short or long-term letting arrangements that enable the delivery of CR&D programmes.

The lecture theatre and meeting rooms are designed to enable R&D related events, functions and training activities and the café will support such uses as well as providing for employees based at the site.

- 2.6 Access is provided into the site via Michael Faraday Avenue on the eastern side of the plot which will provide a controlled and secure access for both cars and occasional goods vehicles. A total of 86 car parking spaces have been provided which includes 18 electric vehicle charging spaces and 7 disabled spaces. Secure, covered cycle parking spaces are provided outside the entrance to the building. A new hard-surfaced, drained and lit pedestrian path from the Metrolink tram stop to Michael Faraday Avenue will be provided as part of the scheme, realigned from its current position.
- 2.7 Landscaping to the site boundaries is provided via a detailed landscaping scheme included within this application. This covers the north, east and south boundaries as well as ornamental landscaping within the car park.
- 2.8 As a high-profile Research & Development building, and the first of its kind at Kingsway Business Park, particular attention has been paid to the design of the scheme in terms of its external appearance and materials. This is described in more detail within the accompanying Design & Access Statement.

3.0 PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

The Principle of Development

- 3.1 As has already been confirmed and demonstrated, the longstanding outline planning permission at the Kingsway site has been developed and renewed against the backdrop of the formal 'development plan' in Rochdale over many years. As such, the national and local policies seeking to achieve sustainable development and to build a strong and competitive economy are fundamentally embedded within the outline permission at the site.
- 3.2 Section 38 (6) of the Act, makes it clear that when determining applications, regard must be had to the development plan, and unless material circumstances indicate otherwise, then the determination must be made in accordance with the Plan.
- 3.3 The outline planning permission, granted in August 2014, (and varied in 2016 and 2018), was accompanied by a 'Master Plan' and 'Parameters Plan' which expressly identified the flexible approach to employment development across the Kingsway Business Park in accordance with the Development Plan. In particular, the 'Parameters Plan' confirmed that Plot R2 could be developed for office use (See Appendix 1) – Class B1 in recent years and now been subsumed into a new broader Class E which includes R&D uses. The characteristics of the proposed building are, in any event, very similar to those of an office.
- 3.4 In addition to establishing the acceptable land uses, the accompanying 'Parameters' and 'Master Plans' approved in 2014 (and confirmed in 2016 and 2018) also identified a single development plateau for Plot R; the potential for buildings of 12m 'haunch' height; service yards; all associated ancillary parking etc; and all being capable of operating 24/7. In other words, the permission incorporated a wide range of flexibility to accommodate office/employment development on Plot R.
- 3.5 The current proposals seek to extend development beyond the parameters described above in one main way – which is the height of some buildings as follows:
- 3.6 Accordingly, whilst a new full application is necessary to cover the proposed development, the use and nature of the scheme is entirely appropriate on the Kingsway site, appropriate to Plot R2 and very similar to that endorsed in 2014.

Rochdale Core Strategy and Development Plan Considerations

- 3.7 Rochdale Borough Council's aspirations for the overall strategic Kingsway Business Park were originally confirmed in successive adopted UDP policies (initially in the 1990s, in Policy EC / 6 of the first UDP and, then later, in Policy EC / 7 of the UDP Review). These policies confirmed: -

"Land between the A664 Kingsway, M62 Motorway, B6194 Broad Lane and the Rochdale – Oldham Railway Line is allocated and has outline planning permission for high quality general and light industry, offices, distribution and storage, research and development and associated and complimentary uses".

- 3.8 In more recent years, the Council's Core Strategy has reaffirmed the policy commitment to achieving a high-quality mixed-use Business Park site, capable of meeting the flexible employment needs of the Borough. Indeed, as a strategic site, this allocation represents one of the Council's primary opportunities to provide a supply of land to attract major, modern industries to the Borough. The allocation of the Kingsway Business Park site is also confirmed in the Draft Site Allocations Plan under AL/EMP/1.
- 3.9 Hence, as part of the allocated Kingsway site, Plot R2 benefits from a strong development plan status which ensures that the presumption in favour of sustainable development applies to the proposed scheme.

Drainage and Flood Risk Matters

- 3.10 A comprehensive surface and foul water drainage strategy for the overall Kingsway site has been developed and approved in liaison with the Environment Agency, Lead Local Flood Authority (RMBC) and United Utilities. Indeed, this major infrastructure, including the very significant balancing lagoons, (within the nearby Stanney Brook Corridor) has now been implemented.

This strategy assessed all the relevant drainage and flood risk matters with each stage of the implementation being approved by the relevant regulatory bodies.

Included within the planning submission is a site-specific Flood Risk Assessment and Sustainable Drainage Strategy which expressly deals with Plot R2. These confirm that the site does not flood, and that its development will be consistent with the already implemented and approved site-wide drainage strategy.

Ecological Matters

- 3.11 Plot R2 is already a defined development site (covered by the grant of the outline planning permission) and, as such, the plot itself has limited intrinsic ecological value. However, as a part of the overall Kingsway Business Park, ecological matters have been carefully considered and mitigated throughout the entire lifetime of the development programme. Indeed, it is in the wider context of the comprehensive site that a balanced assessment of ecological matters is to be made.

For the purposes of this proposal, a further ecological walk-over survey has been undertaken and an appropriate report is submitted with the application to confirm the approach. In respect of Biodiversity New Gain, the submitted scheme demonstrates a shortfall and it is proposed that this is addressed via the purchase of BNG credits. This is explained in more detail in the BNG Assessment report.

Visual Impacts

- 3.12 Plot R2 on the Kingsway Business Park site is located to the east of the overall site. The plot is separated from the nearest residential properties by the existing tram line and is smaller in scale than the more dominant B8 buildings both completed and permitted elsewhere at Kingsway.

The outline permission identified a plot level for Plot R to enable future buildings of up to 12m haunch heights to be comfortably accommodated on the site. This level was set at 147.6m AOD. Under the current proposals, the proposed plot level differs marginally in part from the originally specified outline level by 900mm, which is to enable engineering, drainage, and gradient requirements to be achieved across the site. This higher plot level is not considered significant given the siting and design of the building. Similarly, the maximum building height is 1.15m above that defined in the approved outline parameters and is not considered significant.

As such, the extent of the visual effects arising from the proposed development are likely to be similar from the development approved by the terms of the outline permission.

Archaeological Matters

- 3.13 All appropriate archaeological investigations have been carried out as part of the previous planning approvals. Indeed, the required archaeological work associated with the implementation of the Business Park has been fully discharged some time ago.

Accordingly, there is no need for any further archaeological work associated with the development proposals on Plot R.

Transportation Matters

- 3.14 The transportation considerations related to the proposed development on Plot R2 are all covered by the Transport Statement submitted with the application.

This confirms how the proposed development provides accessibility for all forms of transport and fits within the context of the wider site.

Appropriate assessment is provided to confirm that the operation of the site works satisfactorily in terms of the traffic generation across the site, and that the implemented road and junction improvements associated with the delivery of the Kingsway site, are more than capable of accommodating the traffic arising from the proposed development.

The Statement also covers cycle provision and pedestrian accessibility to the site, by making the most of the extensive network of paths and sustainable transport links around the Kingsway site. The direct link to the Kingsway Metrolink Stop and the potential to use various commercial services that operate across the Business Park, and which will be routed along Michael Faraday Avenue once completed. It is also worth mentioning that the bus franchises have recently been taken back into local control as part of the 'Bee Network' (operated by TfGM) which over time should be responsive to specific local needs. Kingsway already benefits from a dedicated Travel Plan Co-ordinator.

Sustainability Matters

- 3.15 Provisions to ensure a sustainable form of development at the Kingsway Business Park site have been incorporated into the principles of the overall site from the outset. Indeed, the site-wide approach to ecology, drainage, minimising waste, material usage, etc, are already incorporated into the published Kingsway 'Sustainable Development Guide' for the overall site.

In respect of the proposed development on Plot R2, an Energy Statement is submitted with the application relating to the buildings on the plot. This references the scope for solar PV and the provision of electric vehicle charging points.

3.16 **Noise**

Acknowledging that the site of the proposed development is located to the south of the tram line, and that there are residential properties further north at Leyfield Road and Turbary Walk, an appropriate noise assessment has been undertaken to support the application. This confirms that there will be no adverse effects arising from the operation of the proposed development in noise terms.

Lighting

- 3.17 Specific lighting details are not proposed at this point in time, but the proposed development will incorporate carefully located and controlled external lighting. This will be directed and specified to ensure that there is no undue light spillage, nor adverse impact on any nearby residential areas. It is envisaged that specific lighting details will be subject to further approval under a suitable planning condition.

Economic Development

- 3.18 The proposed development meets the economic objectives of the Council's Core Strategy, as well as the clear planning principles which support economic development as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework and associated Guidance.

We would expect the total floorspace (GIA: 42,657ft²) to accommodate a range of jobs depending on the specific nature of the occupiers/tenants of the building. However, what is more important in this case is the role of the scheme in fostering start-up businesses, product/process/materials development, research and training and improving job prospects for the local population.

Atom Valley Development Zone

- 3.19 More specifically, this application represents a flagship Council project which is designed to deliver the vision of the Mayors' Atom Valley Development Zone. A clear objective of the mayors Development Zone is the potential to create 20,000 new jobs through public-private partnership. This scheme will focus on advanced manufacturing, materials and machinery, as well as nurturing start-ups and supply chains and will support wider net zero ambitions. As such, this application is entirely in accordance with wider regional economic development priorities and will support the Mayor's ambitions and the funding it has received reflects its importance

4.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1 The proposed development of a R&D unit on Plot R2 at Kingsway represents a high-quality proposal which is consistent with the development plan as well as the principles of development established by the planning history relevant to the Kingsway site.
- 4.2 The principle of development on this specific plot has already been long-established, and the proposed development 'fits' within the wider context of development in the Business Park. Outline permission exists for office use which has similar characteristics to an R&D use. Both uses now fall within Class E.
- 4.3 The application is supported by a comprehensive set of application documents which, as summarised in this Planning Statement, demonstrate that all the required planning considerations have been properly assessed and lead to the conclusion that the development should be approved.
- 4.5 Being consistent with the development plan, and the outline planning permission, and by delivering economic investment and new local jobs, the proposed development also delivers substantial public benefit and supports local and regional economic development objectives including the Atom Valley initiative.

This is a Rochdale Council flagship project, flowing from the securing of a major capital grants from GMCA under the Investment Zone and DLUHC via the Towns Deal.

- 4.6 Accordingly, as a sustainable development, consistent with the provisions of the development plan and economic strategies, it should therefore benefit from the presumption in favour of development, and permission should therefore be granted.

APPENDIX 1

Approved Parameters Plan: Kingsway.
2014 (As Varied 2016 and 2018) – Outline
Permission

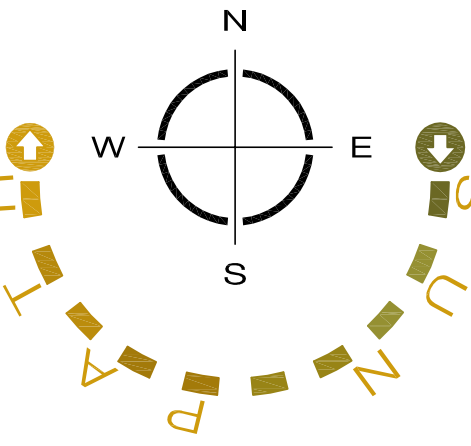
KEY TO LAND USES

BUSINESS USES

- B1(a) Office
- B1/ B2/ B8
- Car Showrooms

ANCILLARY USES

- Residential
- Leisure
- Hotel
- Mixed Development including Retail in Use Classes A1-A5, Leisure, Hotel, Residential & B1 Uses
- Local Services
- Small Scale Uses Appropriate to the Setting of the Listed Building
- New Buffer Landscaping



For Planning



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PROJECT
KINGSWAY BUSINESS PARK
ROCHDALE

TITLE
MASTERPLAN
PARAMETERS PLAN

SCALE
1:2500 @ A0

DATE
13/03/14

DRAWN
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REVIEWED

DRAWING NO
2013-233/102

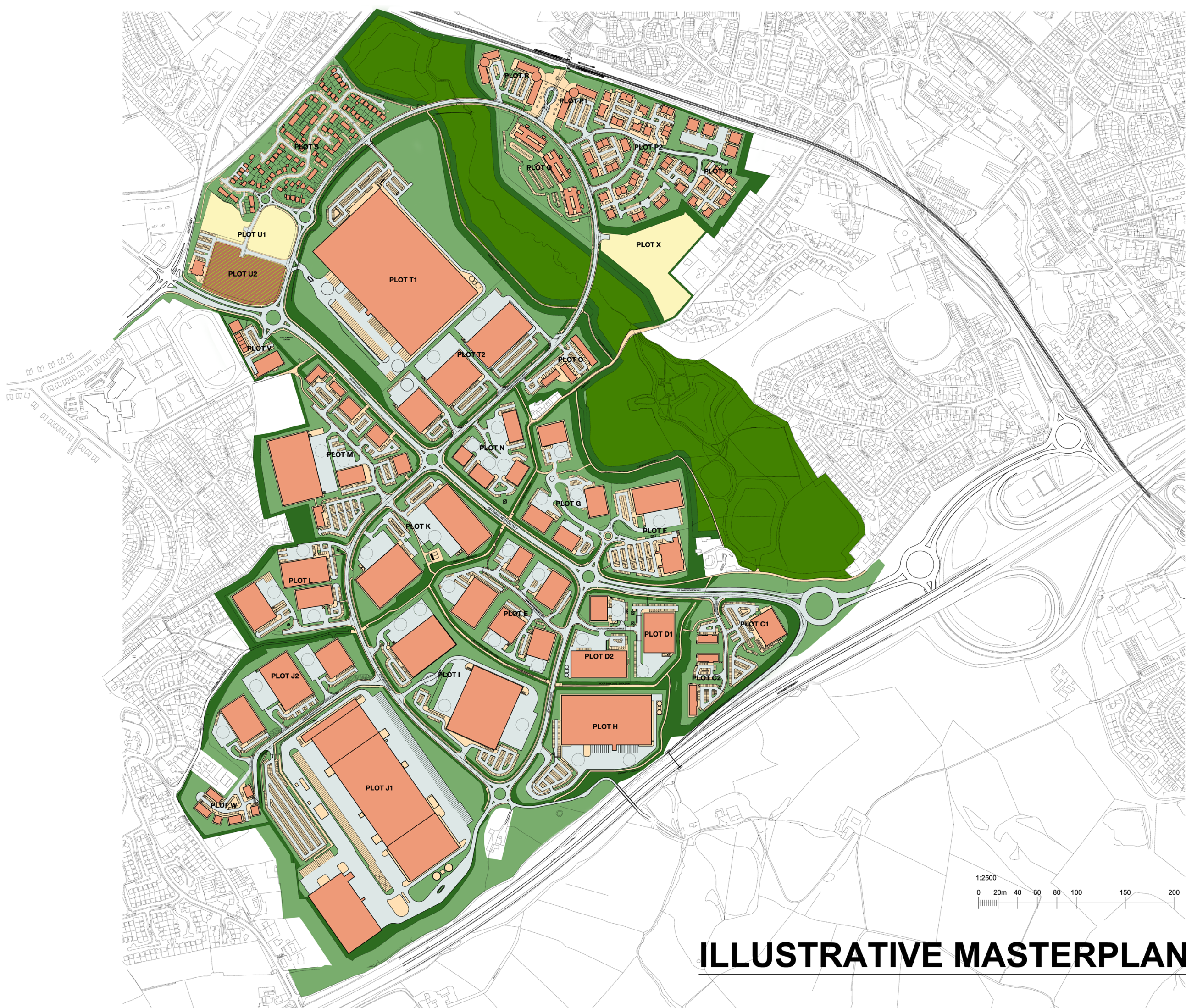
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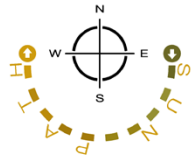
PARAMETERS PLAN

APPENDIX 2

Approved Masterplan: Kingsway
2014 (As Varied 2016 and 2018) – Outline
Permission



ILLUSTRATIVE MASTERPLAN



For Planning



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PROJECT
KINGSWAY BUSINESS PARK
ROCHDALE

TITLE
MASTERPLAN
ILLUSTRATIVE MASTERPLAN

SCALE
1:2500 @ A0

DATE
13/03/14

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