



Quod

Project Swift, Middleton

Planning Statement

JULY 2024

Q240175

Contents

1	Introduction	2
2	Site, Surrounding Area and Planning History	4
3	The Proposed Development	7
4	Planning Policy Context	9
5	Planning Assessment	13
6	Conclusion	15
	Figure 1: Site Location Plan	4
	Figure 2: Existing access and warehouse at the Site	5
	Figure 3: Proposed Site Layout	8
	Figure 4: Extract from the Unitary Development Plan Policy Map	10
	Figure 5: Places for Everyone Policy Map Extract	10
	Table 1: Planning History Summary	6

1 Introduction

Introduction

- 1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared by Quod on behalf of GXO (the “Applicant”) in support of a Full Application (‘the Application’) for the refurbishment and external alterations to the existing warehouse located off **Touchet Hall Road, within the Stakehill Industrial Estate, Middleton, M24 2SJ** (‘the Site’), also known as ‘Project Swift’.

The Proposed Development

- 1.2 The proposed description of development (‘DoD’ or the ‘Proposed Development’) for which planning approval is sought is set out below:

“Refurbishment of existing warehouse and associated works.”

- 1.3 A full description of the proposals is provided within **Section 3** of this Statement.

The Applicant

- 1.4 GXO is a world leader in providing cutting-edge logistics solutions for multinational companies and blue-chip market leaders. GXO’s ultimate vision is to create game-changing opportunities for the world’s best companies. The sole focus of the business is on moving goods through supply chains with critical efficiency and reliability.

Scope of this Application

- 1.5 The scope and context of this Application comprises the following documents:
- **Full set of scheme drawings (including existing and proposed plans);** *prepared by UMC Architects*
 - **Design and Access Statement;** *prepared by UMC Architects*
 - **Ventilation Strategy Statement;** *prepared by MBA*
 - **Completed Application Form;** *prepared by Quod*
 - **Planning Statement;** *prepared by Quod*

Scope of this Planning Statement

- 1.6 The remaining sections of this Planning Statement are structured as follows:
- **Section 2 – Site, Surrounding Area and Planning History** details the relevant context to the Site, including a description of the surrounding area and a summary of the relevant planning history;
 - **Section 3 – Proposed Development** provides a summary of the Proposed Development, including design and access;

- **Section 4 – Planning Policy Background** summarises the relevant planning policy to the determination of this Application;
- **Section 5 – Planning Assessment** considers the Proposed Development against the relevant policies of the Development Plan and relevant material considerations (including supporting guidance where appropriate); and
- **Section 6 – Conclusions** sets out the overall conclusions of the Application proposals.

2 Site, Surrounding Area and Planning History

Introduction

- 2.1 This section of the Planning Statement describes the Site, the surrounding area and provides a summary of the Site's planning history.

Application Site

- 2.2 The Application Site, outlined in red in **Figure 1** below, is located within the administrative area of Rochdale Borough Council ('RBC'), who act as the Local Planning Authority ('LPA').

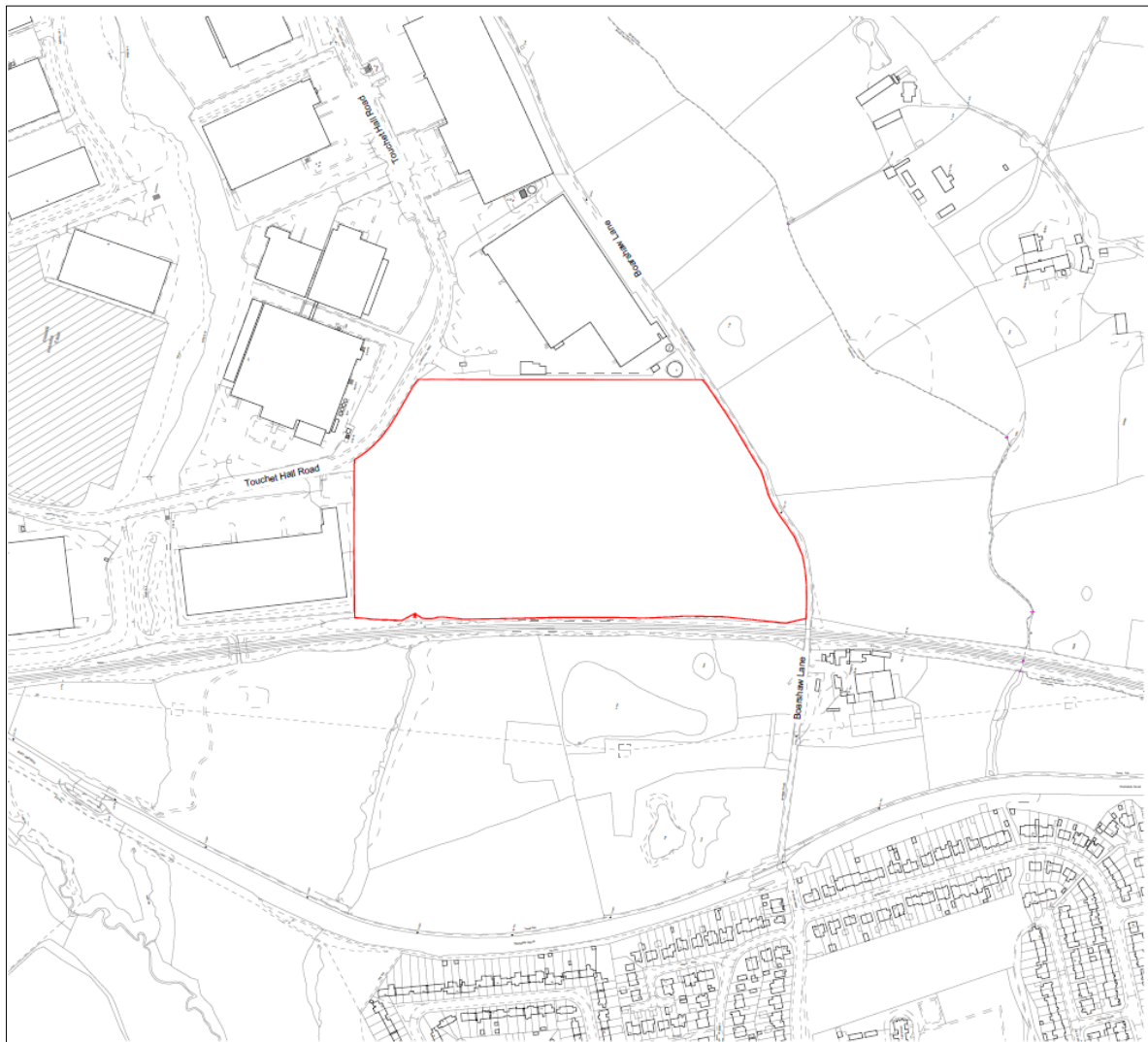


Figure 1: Site Location Plan

- 2.3 The Site is located within the southwest corner of Stakehill Industrial Estate, with Boarshaw Lane forming the Site's southern boundary. The Site is circa 2 km from Middleton Town Centre and is situated approximately halfway between Rochdale and Oldham.

- 2.4 The Site area extends to approximately 21.46 acres / 8.68 hectares (ha) and is comprised of a circa 305,000 sq ft warehouse building in Use Class B8 (Storage or distribution), which was previously operated by a national supermarket as a regional distribution centre. The existing warehouse and access to the Site is shown in **Figure 2** below.



Figure 2: Existing access and warehouse at the Site

- 2.5 The perimeter of the Site, on all sides is characterised by a range of trees and hedgerows, which provide a buffer between the Site and the surrounding area. The remaining area of the Site comprises concrete hardstanding. A railway line is located to the Site's western boundary.
- 2.6 Vehicular access is located to the northeast of the Site. The Site is in close proximity to the A627(M), accessed via the roundabout to the north of the Site at the entrance to the Industrial Estate. This provides good access to Junction 20 of the M62 which is 2.6km to the north of the Site.
- 2.7 The Site benefits from good public transport access along the Rochdale to Middleton bus corridor and is located approximately 3 km away from Castleton Train Station.
- 2.8 The Site is not subject to any statutory environmental or landscape designations. The Site is not located within a Conservation Area and the Site is not, or within the setting of, a heritage asset.
- 2.9 The Site is located within Flood Zone 1 as per the Environmental Agency's Flood Map for Planning and therefore has a low probability of flooding.

Surrounding Context

- 2.10 The surrounding areas to the north and east of the Site are defined by a range of industrial and commercial buildings, in use classes B2 and B8. To the south of the Site is a range of

agricultural fields which are designated as Green Belt. To the west of the site is agricultural land, designated as protected open space, with a range of two-storey residential dwellings beyond this.

Planning History

2.11 A summary of the relevant planning history associated with the Site is detailed in **Table 1** below.

Table 1: Planning History Summary

Reference	Development Proposal	Decision
87/D20663	Industrial/Warehousing Development	Approved (20/08/1987) (the operative permission)
87/D21114	Distribution Depot With Ancillary Gatehouse Vehicle Maintenance Unit And Parking Facilities And Extension Of Estate Road	Approved (03/12/1987)
93/D30190	Extensions And Alterations To Distribution Centre	Approved (17/02/1994)
02/D40699	Extension To Existing Car Park Area And Alterations To Entrance Of Site	Approved (23/12/2002)
17/00533/CPL	Lawful Development Certificate for the painting of existing cladding and windows from red to grey, to all elevations of the industrial building	Approved (25/07/2017)
19/01215/FUL	Installation of a new sprinkler tank to the south of the existing building	Approved (16/04/2020)

3 The Proposed Development

Introduction

3.1 This section of the Planning Statement provides an overview of the development proposals.

Development Description

3.2 As noted in Section 1 of this Statement, the Proposed Development for which planning approval is sought is set out below.

“Refurbishment of existing warehouse and associated works.”

3.3 The full extent of the proposed works for which planning permission is being sought are detailed within the submitted **drawings** and **Design and Access Statement**, prepared by UMC, which should be read alongside this Planning Statement.

The Proposal

3.4 As outlined above, this Application seeks full planning permission for the refurbishment of the existing warehouse, including a number of fit out works and external alterations to meet the requirements of a modern future occupier.

3.5 Specifically, a summary of the proposed external and internal works is provided below:

External Proposals

- Yard entrance reconfiguration
- New gatehouse
- Waste sortation area (recycling area)
- EV charging omitted in lieu of refrigeration hook ups
- New level access ramps to be formed
- New fuel and wash islands
- Pedestrian access route diverted into the building
- Car park barriers / height restrictor
- 1no. additional parking space (adjacent to western pod)
- 2no. EV accessible parking spaces

Internal Proposals

- Provision of a staff breakout area
- FF office extent increased by approximately 340 sqm
- Additional office provided adjacent to the POD offices in lieu of warehouse space

3.6 The Proposed Site Layout is provided at **Figure 3** below:

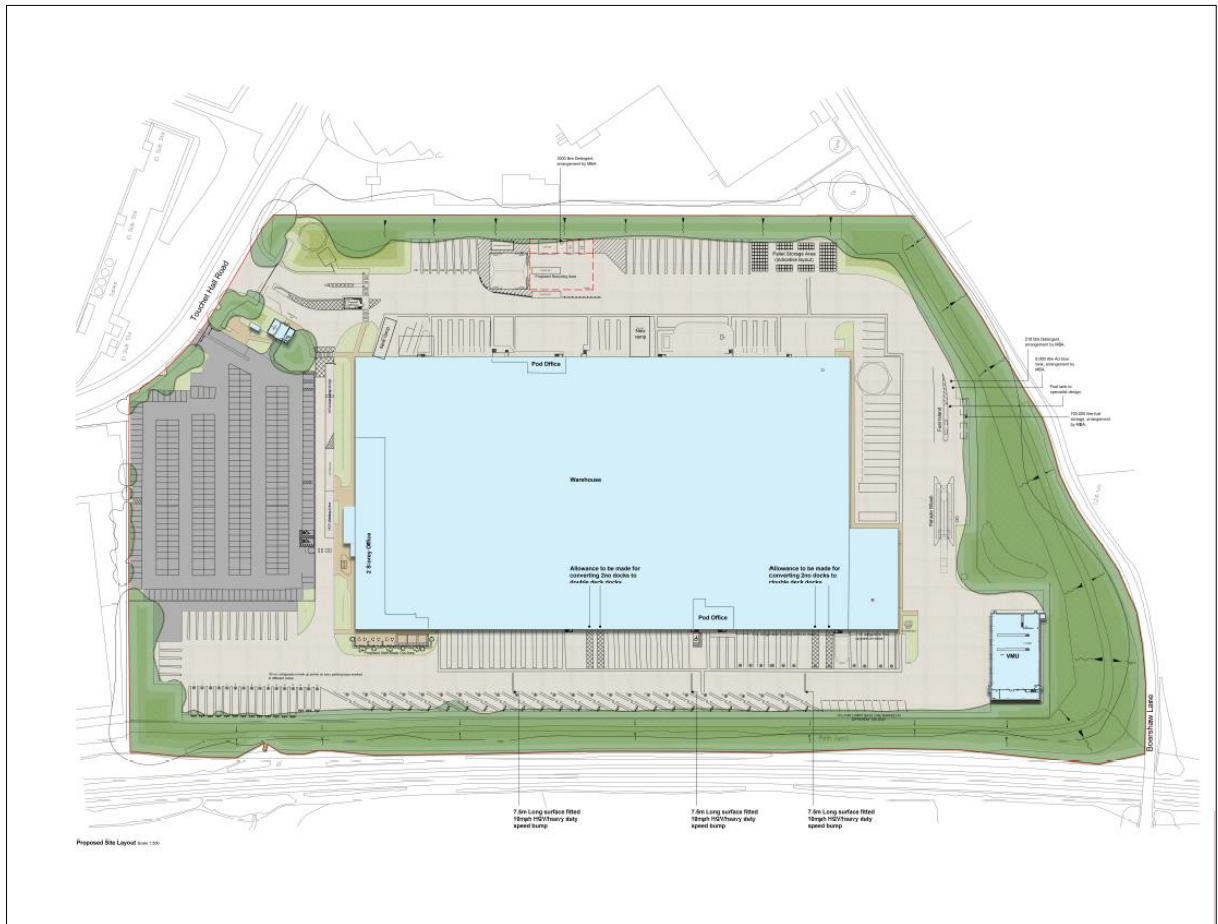


Figure 3: Proposed Site Layout

3.7 The design of the proposals seeks to provide a modern, high specification warehouse which will represent an improvement from an operational perspective when compared to the existing development which has been in situ for over 35 years.

4 Planning Policy Context

Introduction

- 4.1 This section provides commentary on the key Development Plan policies which are applicable to the Proposed Development, together with a summary of the relevant material considerations.

Development Plan Overview

- 4.2 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004) requires development proposals to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The Development Plan in this instance consists of the following:
- **Rochdale Core Strategy (adopted October 2016);**
 - **Unitary Development Plan ('UDP') (adopted June 2006);**
 - **Places for Everyone Joint Development Document (adopted March 2024);**
 - **Greater Manchester Joint Waste Development Plan (adopted April 2012); and**
 - **Greater Manchester Joint Minerals Development Plan (adopted April 2013).**
- 4.3 RBC is currently in the process of preparing a new Local Plan document that will supersede the current Local Plan (Rochdale Adopted Core Strategy) which was adopted in 2016. It will set out a range of planning policies that will seek to sustainably manage development and will designate land for specific uses over the next 15 years. The Local Plan will sit alongside and complement the adopted Greater Manchester Minerals and Waste Plans and the Places for Everyone Plan.
- 4.4 A Regulation 18 consultation is currently open. It commenced on Friday 28th June 2024 and will close on Friday 9 August 2024.
- 4.5 The key designations, Development Plan policies and other material considerations are detailed below.

Key Designations

- 4.6 An extract from the Council's Local Plan proposals maps is provided at **Figure 4** below, with the Site indicated by the blue arrow.

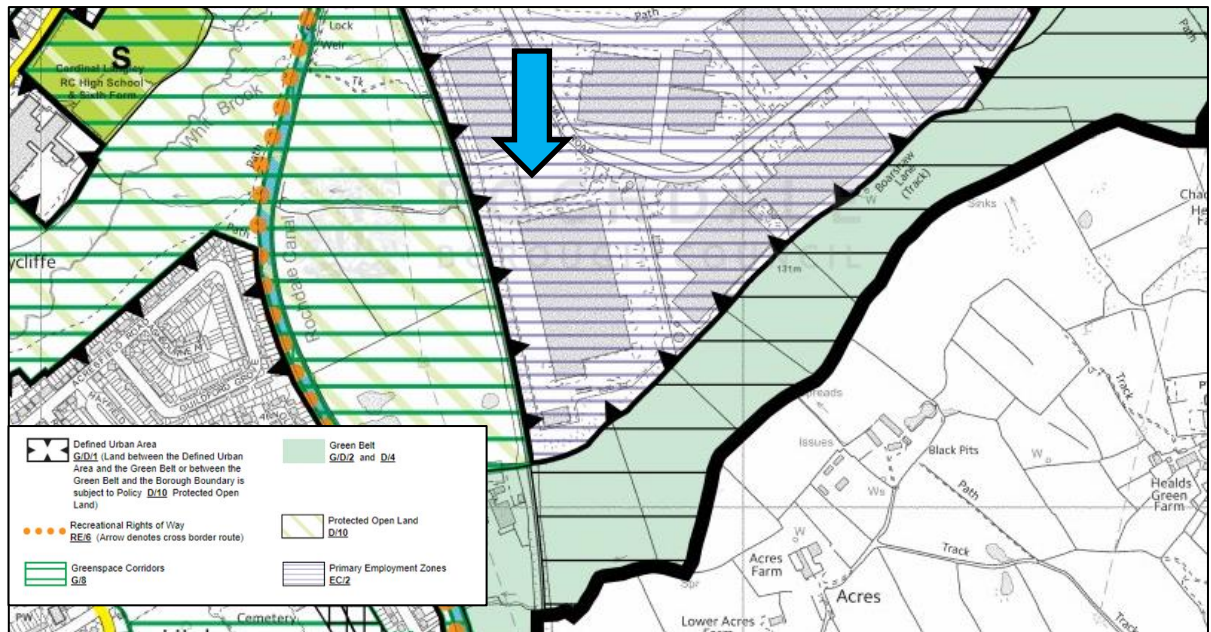


Figure 4: Extract from the Unitary Development Plan Policy Map

4.7 As per the UDP Policy Map the Site has the following designations:

- **Defined Urban Area (Policy G/D/1)**
- **Primary Employment Zone (Policy EC/2)**

An extract from the Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan Document (March 2024) is provided at **Figure 5** below:

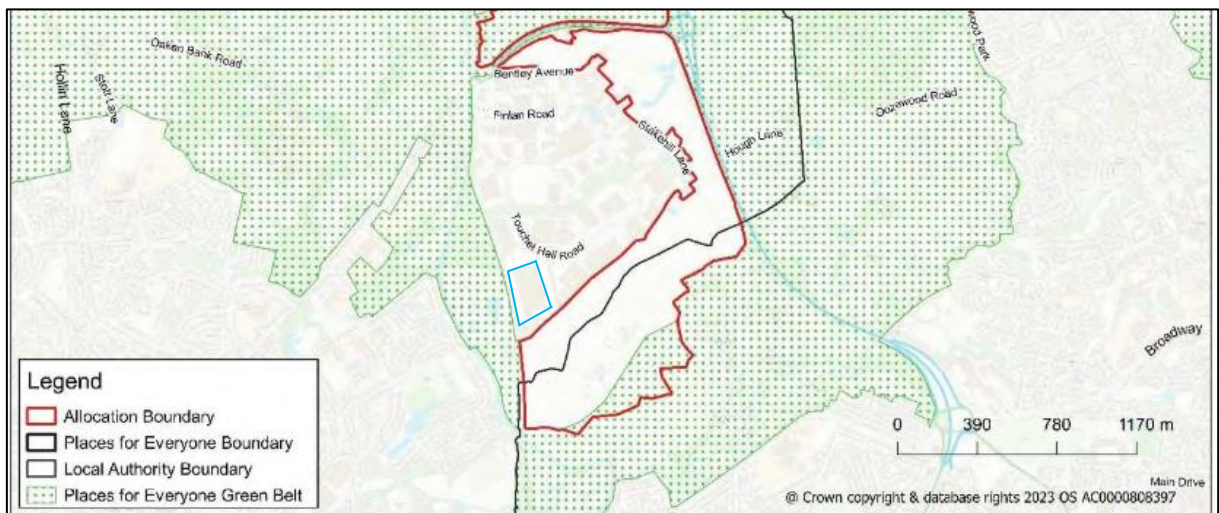


Figure 5: Places for Everyone Policy Map Extract

4.8 Land immediately south of the Site forms part of larger site allocations (indicated by the blue line in Figure 5 above) which is allocated within the Places for Everyone Joint Plan for the delivery of, inter alia:

- Approximately 150,000 sqm of high-quality industrial and warehousing floorspace; and
- Approximately 1,680 high-quality homes.

Adopted Planning Policy Overview

- 4.9 An overview of the adopted planning policies relevant to the determination of the Application is provided below:

[Unitary Development Plan \(June, 2006\)](#)

- **Policy G/D/1** – Defined Urban Area
- **Policy EC/2** – Primary Employment Zones
- **Policy A/10** – New Development – provision of Parking
- **BE/2** - Design Criteria for New Development
- **Policy BE/8** – Landscaping in New Development
- **Policy G/EM/1** – Environmental Protection and Pollution Control
- **EM/13** – Energy Efficiency and New Development

[Rochdale Core Strategy \(October, 2016\)](#)

- **Policy E2** – Increasing Jobs and Prosperity
- **Policy E3** – Focusing on Economic Growth Corridors and Areas
- **Policy P1** – Improving Image
- **Policy P3** – Improving Design of New Development
- **Policy G1** – Tackling and Adapting to Climate Change
- **Policy G2** – Energy and New Development
- **Policy G7** – Increasing the Value of Biodiversity and Geodiversity
- **Policy T1** – Delivering Sustainable Development
- **Policy T2** – Improving Accessibility
- **Policy DM1** – General Development Requirements
- **Policy DM2** – Delivering Planning Contributions and Infrastructure

[Places for Everyone Joint Development Document \(March 2024\)](#)

- **Policy JP-S1** – Sustainable Development
- **Policy JP-S2** – Carbon and Energy
- **Policy JP-J1** – Supporting Long-Term Economic Growth
- **Policy JP-J4** – Industry and Warehousing Development
- **Policy JP-C1** – An integrated Network
- **Policy JP-C6** – Walking and Cycling
- **Policy JP-C8** – Transport Requirements of New Development

Other Material Considerations

[National Planning Policy Framework \(NPPF\) \(2023\)](#)

4.10 The updated National Planning Policy Framework ('NPPF') sets out the Government's most up-to-date vision for future growth. The NPPF must be taken into account in the preparation of local and neighbourhood plans and is a material consideration in planning decisions.

4.11 The golden thread that runs through the heart of the NPPF is the presumptions in favour of sustainable development as set out in **paragraph 11**. This means that local planning authorities should:

"approve development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay and where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out-of-date, grant permission unless the adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits".

4.12 **Paragraph 38** of the NPPF confirms that local planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed developments in a positive and creative way and seek to approve applications for sustainable development.

4.13 **Paragraph 81** of the NPPF places significant weight on the need to *"support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development."*

4.14 Chapter 6 of the NPPF is focused on building a strong and competitive economy. **Paragraph 85** sets out that:

"Planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development."

4.15 **Paragraph 83** of the NPPF states that planning policies and decisions should recognise and address the specific locational requirements of different sectors, including making provision for storage and distribution operations *"at a variety of scales and in suitably accessible locations."*

5 Planning Assessment

Introduction

- 5.1 This section provides an assessment of the Proposed Development against the policies in the Development Plan and relevant material considerations as set out in Section 4 of this Statement.
- 5.2 The Planning Assessment considers the main uses and planning considerations as follows:
- **The Principle of Development**
 - **Design and Layout**
 - **Transport and Highways**
 - **Ventilation and Amenity**

Principle of Development

- 5.3 The Site forms part of the Stakehill Industrial Park, with its lawful use being Use Class B8. The principle of the Proposed Development is therefore already established under the operative consent and is considered acceptable.
- 5.4 The Site is located within the Primary Employment Zone as per the Council's adopted Development Plan where the Council sets out strong support for industrial, business and warehouse use as per saved UDP **Policy EC2**.
- 5.5 The development proposals will benefit from best-in-class design and functionality and is considered necessary to enhance the existing employment unit to a level that is suitable for modern occupants. In accordance with **Policy E3** of the Core Strategy, the development proposal will improve the quality of the employment premises within the business park and support the Council, and the Greater Manchester region more widely, in providing a high-quality employment space that will provide employment opportunities in the local area.
- 5.6 Therefore, it is considered that the development proposals accord with the employment related policies within the Council's adopted Development Plan and will make a positive impact to the employment allocation.

Design and Layout

- 5.7 The design proposals are set out in full within the **drawings** submitted as part of this application and within the **Design and Access Statement**.
- 5.8 The external works associated with the development proposals are minor in nature and relate exclusively to those set out in paragraph 3.5 of this Planning Statement.
- 5.9 In addition to this, the proposed materials and design of the external changes have been informed by an understanding of the existing built development on the Site and the surrounding

area. The proposed changes are therefore sensitive to, and in keeping with, the surrounding architectural vernacular, in accordance with **Policy BE/2** of the UDP and Core Strategy **Policy DM1**.

- 5.10 There are no proposed changes to the landscaping currently provided on the Site and this will remain as it currently is (with no habitat disturbed, and no requirement for biodiversity net gain to be provided).
- 5.11 As such, it is considered that the development proposal accords with the design-related policies included within the Council's adopted Development Plan and will make a positive impact to the Site.

Transport and Highways

- 5.12 The development proposes to provide a reconfiguration of the yard entrance in addition to a new gatehouse. These proposals will assist in providing enhanced access to the Site and ensure that safety is prioritised in respect of access, in accordance with Core Strategy **Policy T2** and **Policy C/A/1** of the UDP.
- 5.13 In addition to this, the pedestrian access route within the Site is proposed to be rediverted into the warehouse. This will assist in providing safe and convenient walking accessibility into the employment unit and around the Site more widely, in accordance with **Policy JP-C8** of the Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan Document. This will ensure that the experience for pedestrians accessing the Site is prioritised and their safety is ensured.

Ventilation and Amenity

- 5.14 A **Ventilation Strategy Statement** has been submitted in support of this Application. It details the proposed ventilation strategy that will be delivered on the Site to ensure there are no adverse impacts on the Site or the surrounding area, in accordance with **Policy EC/2** of the UDP.

6 Conclusion

- 6.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared by Quod, on behalf of GXO in support of a full planning application for the refurbishment and alterations to an existing employment warehouse located off Touchet Hall Road, within the Stakehill Industrial Estate, Middleton, M24 2SJ.
- 6.2 As set out in this Statement, the Proposed Development is required to provide an enhanced employment unit that meets operational requirements of a future tenant and allows for the modernisation of existing on-site activities, bringing with it significant economic benefits.
- 6.3 The Site is identified as being located within the Primary Employment Zone where the Council is supportive of proposals that enhance the suite of employment uses located within the designation.
- 6.4 Stakehill Industrial Park is also identified as an area where the Council will work collaboratively with owners and developers to improve the quality of employment premises, including the refurbishment of existing employment units. Therefore, the development proposals for which planning is being sought are considered acceptable and in line with the Council's strategic ambitions for the Borough's employment allocations.
- 6.5 The external works for which planning is being sought are minor in nature and have been designed to ensure that they are appropriate to the surrounding built environment, with particular consideration given to the types of materials used.
- 6.6 Overall, it is considered that the development proposals will facilitate the delivery of a high-quality employment space that is fit for purpose to meet the needs of future occupiers.
- 6.7 This Planning Statement has demonstrated that the Application accords with the aims and objectives of national, regional and local planning policy, and indeed the development plan (when read as a whole). This means that the presumption in favour of the development plan, which is provided for by Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004), amounts in this matter to a (strong) presumption in favour of approving the proposals. It follows that unless material considerations indicate otherwise, planning permission should be granted. Far from indicating otherwise to the grant of permission, the material considerations lend very substantial further weight to permission being granted and in accordance with NPPF paragraph 11 (c), this should be done without delay. Accordingly, we respectfully request that planning permission is granted.