



Yeargate Limited

LAND NORTH OF BIRCH BUSINESS PARK

Environmental Statement Volume I

Chapter 1 - Introduction

August 2026

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Chapter 1 - Introduction

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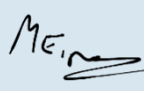
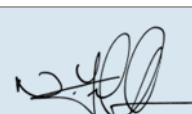
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CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION	1
1.1	BACKGROUND	1
1.2	DEFINITION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT	1
1.3	LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT	2
1.4	THE PROJECT TEAM	5
1.5	OTHER DOCUMENTS	6
1.6	ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT AVAILABILITY	7
1.7	REFERENCES	8

TABLES

Table 1-1 - Location of Required Information within the ES	3
Table 1-2 - The Project Team	5

FIGURES

Figure 1-1 - Site Location Plan	9
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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

- 1.1.1. Yeargate Limited (hereafter referred to as ‘the Applicant’) is seeking to obtain outline planning permission for the erection of two industrial warehouses (B2/B8), ancillary class E office, with supporting loading bays, trailer bays, trailer park spaces, parking spaces and landscaping and associated works and infrastructure (hereafter referred to as the ‘Proposed Development’).
- 1.1.2. The application is located to the north of Birch Business Park located within the administrative area of Rochdale Borough Council (RBC). The Proposed Development is located north of Birch Business Park which is located to the south west of Heywood, to the north of the M62. The site is a major developed employment site, accessed off Whittle Lane. The business park comprises a range of buildings and units in B2/B8 use classes. The location is identified in **Figure 1-1: Site Location Plan** and described further in **Chapter 2: The Existing Site**.
- 1.1.3. The proposed planning application will seek permission for:
- ***“Outline planning application (with all matters reserved other than access) for employment development comprising industrial and warehouse floorspace (Use Classes B2 and B8) together with ancillary class E office, with supporting loading bays, trailer bays, trailer park spaces, parking spaces, landscaping, infrastructure and associated works.”***
- The planning application boundary for the Proposed Development is presented in **Figure 1-1: Site Location Plan**; the area which it encompasses is referred to as ‘the Site’. Further details on the Proposed Development are presented in **Chapter 3: Description of the Proposed Development**.
- 1.1.4. The Environmental Statement (ES) is the written output of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process which has been undertaken in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (**Ref. 1.1**) (referred to as the ‘EIA Regulations 2017’). The ES is one of the accompanying documents submitted to the determining planning authority, in this case RBC, as part of the planning application.
- 1.1.5. This chapter outlines the legal framework and structure of the ES and supporting documents. A breakdown of the information required by the EIA Regulations 2017 is provided in **Table 1-1** alongside guidance on the location of this information within this ES.
- 1.1.6. WSP has been commissioned by the Applicant to manage the EIA. This has incorporated technical input from a number of consultants, as outlined in **Table 1-2**.

1.2 DEFINITION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 1.2.1. The term ‘environmental impact assessment’ describes a procedure that must be followed for certain types of projects before they can be given ‘development consent’. The procedure is a means of drawing together, in a systematic way, an assessment of a project’s likely significant environmental effects. This helps to ensure that the importance of the predicted effects and the scope for reducing them are properly understood by the public and the relevant competent authority before it makes its decision as the determining authority. The aim of an EIA is to:

“protect the environment by ensuring that a local planning authority when deciding whether to grant planning permission for a project, which is likely to have significant effects on the environment, does so in the full knowledge of the likely significant effects, and takes this into account in the decision making process” and “ensure that the public are given early and effective opportunities to participate in the decision making procedures” (Ref. 1.2).

1.3 LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT

- 1.3.1. The EIA Regulations 2017 implement the requirements of EU Directive 2014/52/EU and require that prior to consent being granted, for certain types of development, an EIA must be undertaken. The EIA Regulations 2017 set out the types of development which must always be subject to an EIA (Schedule 1 development) and other developments which may require an assessment if they give rise to likely significant environmental effects (Schedule 2 development).

SCREENING (REGULATIONS 5, 6 AND 7)

- 1.3.2. The Proposed Development falls under Schedule 2 of the EIA Regulations 2017.
- 1.3.3. Under Schedule 2 of the EIA Regulations 2017, it is a matter for the Local Planning Authority to determine the need for an EIA through the evaluation of the sensitivity of the Site and surrounding area and whether the Proposed Development has the potential to result in likely significant environmental effects by virtue of its characteristics, location and nature of the effects (in accordance with Regulation 5 of the EIA Regulations 2017).
- 1.3.4. Schedule 3 of the EIA Regulations 2017 outlines the criteria that should be applied when determining whether a Schedule 2 development requires an EIA. The criteria are as follows:
- The characteristics of the Proposed Development (e.g. its size, cumulation with other developments, use of natural resources, production of waste, pollution and nuisances and the risk of accidents, having regard in particular to substances or technologies used);
 - The environmental sensitivities of the geographical area; and
 - The characteristics of the likely significant effects (the extent, the transboundary nature of the effect; the magnitude and complexity of the effect; the probability and duration and the frequency and reversibility of the effect).
- 1.3.5. A development is considered to fall under Schedule 2 if:
- Any part of the development is to be carried out in a sensitive area; or
 - Any applicable threshold or criteria in column 2 of the table in Schedule 2 is exceeded or met in relation to that development.
- 1.3.6. The Proposed Development falls under Schedule 2, category 10(b) Urban development projects, as the Site exceeds the criteria set out below according to the EIA Regulations 2017:
- “(i) The development includes more than 1 hectare of urban development which is not dwelling house development; or
 - (ii) the development includes more than 150 dwellings; or
 - (iii) the overall area of the development exceeds 5 hectares.”

ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT

1.3.7. The findings of the EIA are presented in this ES which has been prepared in accordance with the EIA Regulations 2017 as well as planning practice guidance (**Ref. 1.3**). The ES is provided in three parts:

- Volume 1: Main Text and Figures;
- Volume 2: Technical Appendices; and
- Volume 3: Non-Technical Summary.

1.3.8. Schedule 4 of the EIA Regulations 2017 provides details of the information required for inclusion in an ES. **Table 1-1** summarises the requirements and where the information can be found within this ES.

Table 1-1 - Location of Required Information within the ES

	Required Information	Location within this ES
1	Description of the development, including in particular:	
	(a) a description of the location of the development	Chapter 2: The Existing Site
	(b) a description of the physical characteristics of the whole development, including, where relevant, requisite demolition works, and the land-use requirements during the construction and operational phases	Chapter 3: Description of the Proposed Development
	(c) a description of the main characteristics of the operational phase of the development (in particular any production process), for instance, energy demand and energy used, nature and quantity of the materials and natural resources (including water, land, soil and biodiversity) used	Chapter 3: Description of the Proposed Development
	(d) an estimate, by type and quantity, of expected residues and emissions (such as water, air, soil and subsoil pollution, noise, vibration, light, heat, radiation and quantities and types of waste produced during the construction and operation phases).	Chapter 3: Description of the Proposed Development and technical chapters 6 to 16
2	A description of the reasonable alternatives (for example in terms of development design, technology, location, size and scale) studied by the developer, which are relevant to the proposed project and its specific characteristics, and an indication of the main reasons for selecting the chosen option, including a comparison of the environmental effects.	Chapter 4: Reasonable Alternatives Considered
3	A description of the relevant aspects of the current state of the environment (baseline scenario) and an outline of the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the development as far as natural changes from the baseline scenario can be assessed with reasonable effort on the basis of the availability of environmental information and scientific knowledge.	Chapter 2: The Existing Site, Chapter 5: Approach to EIA and technical chapters 6 to 16
4	A description of the factors specified in regulation 4(2) likely to be significantly affected by the development: population, human health, biodiversity (for example fauna and flora), land (for	Technical chapters 6 to 16

	Required Information	Location within this ES
	example land take), soil (for example organic matter, erosion, compaction, sealing), water (for example hydromorphological changes, quantity and quality), air, climate (for example greenhouse gas emissions, impacts relevant to adaptation), material assets, cultural heritage, including architectural and archaeological aspects, and landscape.	
5	A description of the likely significant effects of the development on the environment resulting from, inter alia	
	the construction and existence of the development, including, where relevant, demolition works;	Technical chapters 6 to 16
	the use of natural resources, in particular land, soil, water and biodiversity, considering as far as possible the sustainable availability of these resources;	Technical chapters 6 to 16
	the emission of pollutants, noise, vibration, light, heat and radiation, the creation of nuisances, and the disposal and recovery of waste;	Technical chapters 6 to 16
	the risks to human health, cultural heritage or the environment (for example due to accidents or disasters);	Technical chapters 6 to 16
	the cumulation of effects with other existing and/or approved projects, taking into account any existing environmental problems relating to areas of particular environmental importance likely to be affected or the use of natural resources;	Technical chapters 6 to 16 and Chapter 17: Cumulative Effects
	the impact of the project on climate (for example the nature and magnitude of greenhouse gas emissions) and the vulnerability of the project to climate change;	Chapter 3: Description of the Proposed Development
	the technologies and the substances used.	Chapter 3: Description of the Proposed Development and technical chapters 6 to 16
6	A description of the forecasting methods or evidence, used to identify and assess the significant effects on the environment, including details of difficulties (for example technical deficiencies or lack of knowledge) encountered compiling the required information and the main uncertainties involved.	Technical chapters 6 to 16
7	A description of the measures envisaged to avoid, prevent, reduce or, if possible, offset any identified significant adverse effects on the environment and, where appropriate, of any proposed monitoring arrangements (for example the preparation of a post-project analysis). That description should explain the extent, to which significant adverse effects on the environment are avoided, prevented, reduced or offset, and should cover both the construction and operational phases.	Technical chapters 6 to 16
8	A description of the expected significant adverse effects of the development on the environment deriving from the vulnerability of the development to risks of major accidents and/or disasters	Chapter 3: Description of the Proposed Development Technical chapters 6 to 16

	Required Information	Location within this ES
	which are relevant to the project concerned. Relevant information available and obtained through risk assessments pursuant to EU legislation such as Directive 2012/18/EU(3) of the European Parliament and of the Council or Council Directive 2009/71/Euratom(4) or UK environmental assessments may be used for this purpose provided that the requirements of this Directive are met. Where appropriate, this description should include measures envisaged to prevent or mitigate the significant adverse effects of such events on the environment and details of the preparedness for and proposed response to such emergencies.	
9	A non-technical summary of the information provided under paragraphs 1 to 8	Non-Technical Summary (Volume 3)
10	A reference list detailing the sources used for the descriptions and assessments included in the environmental statement.	All chapters

1.4 THE PROJECT TEAM

- 1.4.1. In line with Regulation 18(5)(a) – (b) of the EIA Regulations 2017, the ES and technical assessments which inform it have been undertaken by a suitably qualified project team. **Table 1-2** presents the Project Team for the ES, their associated roles and expertise. The Project Team stated are responsible for the scope, content and assessment of likely significant environmental effects of their respective technical chapters (where relevant).
- 1.4.2. WSP is responsible for the coordination, compilation and procedural review of the ES. WSP is registered under the EIA Quality Mark operated by the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA) which recognises our commitment to excellence in EIA activities. WSP was one of the original eight pilot organisations in the UK that trialled the process in 2011 and developed the EIA Quality Mark scheme from the former Corporate Registered Assessor process. We have continued to maintain our EIA Quality Mark registration, following annual examination by IEMA in relation to our ongoing products, staff, innovation and promotion of EIA within the industry. WSP has and continues to support and lead nationally recognised guidance for EIA in the UK.
- 1.4.3. WSP has developed and applies an in-house set of processes, procedures and guidance for EIA based on sound project management principles.



Table 1-2 - The Project Team

Element	Company	Competent Expert Evidence
EIA Coordination, overarching technical authority for the ES Chapter 1: Introduction Chapter 2: The Existing Site	WSP	EIA Project Director: Nick Fillingham EIA Project Manager: Mateo Espinosa (BA Hons, MSc MRTPI) EIA Coordinator:

Element	Company	Competent Expert Evidence
Chapter 3: Description of the Proposed Development Chapter 4: Reasonable Alternatives Considered Chapter 5: Approach to the EIA Chapter 13: Cumulative Effects Chapter 14: Summary of Effects and Mitigation Measures		Mateo Espinosa (BA Hons, MSc MRTPI)
Chapter 6: Traffic and Transport	Axis	Highways Technical Leads: Catherine Zoeftig
Chapter 7: Noise	E3P	Noise and Vibration Technical Lead: Lee Faulkner
Chapter 8: Air Quality	Redmore	Air Quality Technical Leads: Megan Pond
Chapter 9: Ground Conditions and Contamination	Applied Geology	Ground Contamination Leads: Peter Gabrielle
Chapter 10: Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment	Ascerta	Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Leads: Chris Neilson
Chapter 11: Biodiversity Ecology	E3P	Ecology Leads: Huw Morgan
Chapter 12: Water Resources, Flood Risk and Drainage	Ridge	Water Resources, Flood Risk and Drainage Technical Lead: Simon Downing
Chapter 13: Socio-Economic	WSP	Socio-economic Leads: Maxine Kennedy
Chapter 14: Cultural Heritage	WSP	Cultural Heritage Leads: Stuart Batho
Chapter 15: Archaeology	Orion	Archaeology Leads: Rob Smith
Chapter 16: Climate Change	Redmore	Climate Change Leads: Megan Pond

1.5 OTHER DOCUMENTS

1.5.1. A number of other documents have been submitted to RBC in support of the planning application, which have been used to inform the ES. These include:

- Agricultural Land Classification

- Archaeology
- Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment;
- BREEAM
- Crime Impact Statement
- Design and Access Statement;
- Drainage Strategy
- Ecology reports
- Energy Statement
- Flood Risk Assessment
- Heritage Statement
- Noise Assessment
- Phase 1 Ground Investigation Report
- Transport Assessment;
- Travel Plan; and
- Tree Survey and Arboricultural Impact Assessment.

1.6 ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT AVAILABILITY

- 1.6.1. Printed paper copies of the ES and the technical appendices can be purchased at a cost of £300 and £400 respectively. The NTS can be obtained for £20. Copies of the ES, technical appendices and NTS can be obtained on data stick for £20. All documents are available from:

WSP Planning and Consultancy Team

8 First Street

Manchester

M15 4RP

Tel: 0161 200 5192

- 1.6.2. As noted in the EIA Scoping Opinion (**Appendix 1.2**), the ES should be made available for public viewing. A hard copy of the ES will be issued to RBC and can be reviewed in person via appointment. Comments on the planning application can also be made via the Councils' website (<https://www.rochdale.gov.uk/planning-permission-building-regulations/searchplanning-applications>) or can be forwarded to the Planning Department at the addresses below:

Planning and Development

Number One Riverside

Smith Street

Rochdale

OL161XU

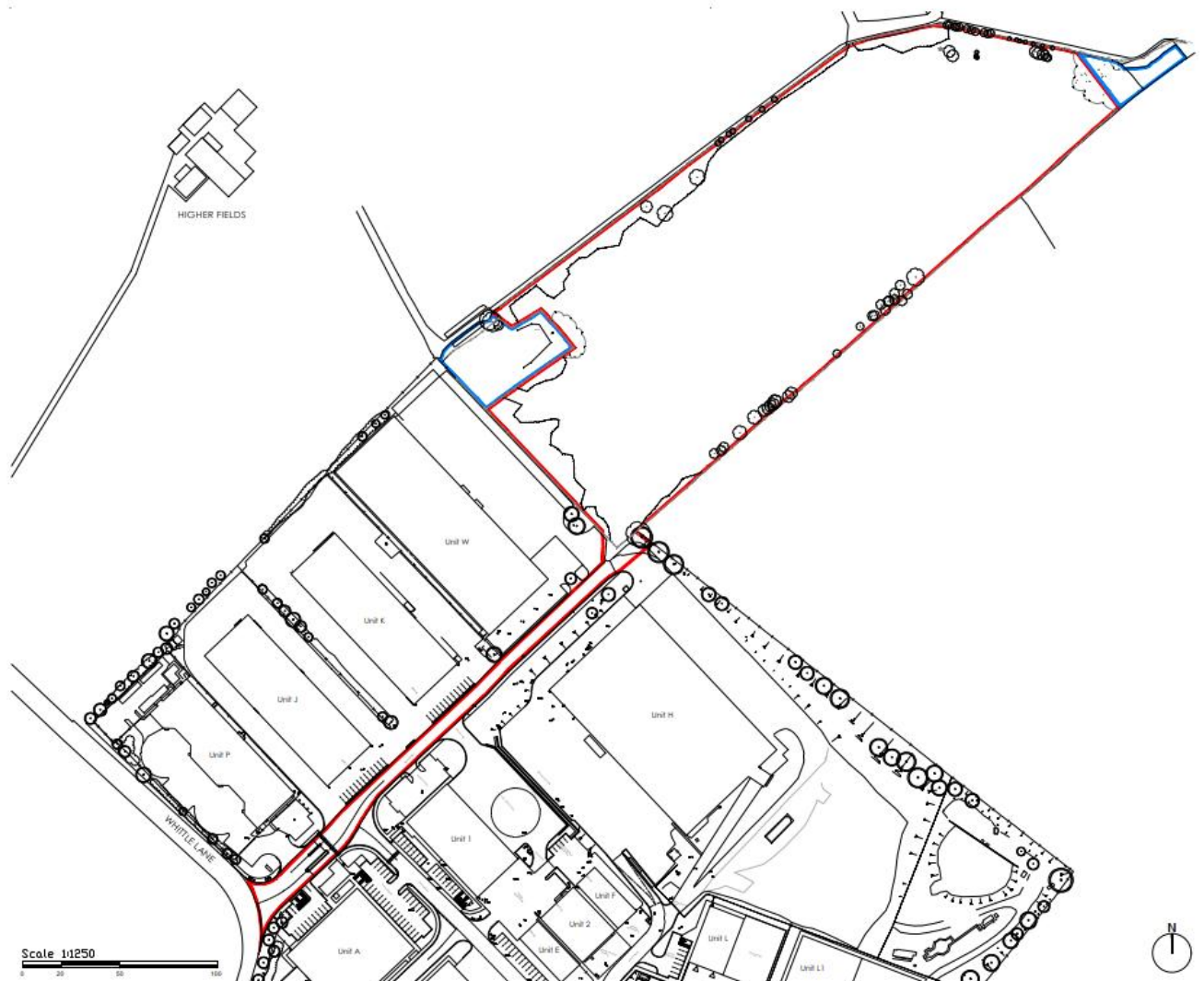
Email: development.management@rochdale.gov.uk

Tel: 03003038873

1.7 REFERENCES

- **Reference 1.1:** Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017. Statutory Instrument 2017 No. 571.
- **Reference 1.2:** Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) Online Tool, Paragraphs 032 and 033. Reference ID: 4-002-20140306. [Online] accessed via <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/environmental-impact-assessment> [Accessed November 2025].
- **Reference 1.3:** Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) Online Tool. [Online] accessed via <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/environmental-impact-assessment> [Accessed November 2025].

Figure 1-1 - Site Location Plan



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