



Yeargate Limited

LAND NORTH OF BIRCH BUSINESS PARK

Environmental Statement Volume I

Environmental Statement Volume I Chapter 4 –
Reasonable Alternatives Considered

August 2026

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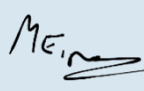
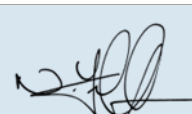
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4 THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

4.1 INTRODUCTION

- 4.1.1. This chapter outlines the main alternatives and design iterations to the Proposed Development that have been considered by the Applicant, together with the principal reasons for proceeding with the Proposed Development.

4.2 REQUIREMENT FOR ALTERNATIVES

- 4.2.1. Schedule 4(2) of the EIA Regulations 2017 (**Ref. 4.1**) states that an ES should include:
- “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”*
- 4.2.2. To accord with Schedule 4(2) of the EIA Regulation 2017, the following alternatives have been considered:
- Do-Nothing Scenario;
 - Alternative Sites; and,
 - Design Alternatives.

4.3 DO-NOTHING SCENARIO

- 4.3.1. The ‘Do-Nothing’ Scenario is highly unlikely given that the Places for Everyone Joint Plan (**Ref. 4.2**) allocates the Site as ‘Northern Gateway Development Framework’ with its own Spatial Planning Document (SPD) under Policy JPA1.1, to support economic growth and increase the level of high value jobs within the local economy.
- 4.3.2. The Joint Plan as a whole has committed to ensuring opportunities for maximising the economic potential of this allocation. The Proposed Development would provide economic potential within the Northern Gateway Development Framework area.
- 4.3.3. Should no development of the Site come forward, this would result in the Site continuing in its current form. A description of the Do-Nothing scenario, which is effectively the existing baseline and future baseline conditions, are set out within technical chapters 6 to 16 of this ES.
- 4.3.4. Further information about the planning context of the Proposed Development is provided in **Chapter 3: The Proposed Development**.

4.4 ALTERNATIVE SITES

- 4.4.1. No reasonable alternative sites have been considered as the existing Site was allocated for potential development within the Places for Everyone Joint Plan.
- 4.4.2. The Proposed Development will be an important development that will help Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council (RMBC) meet the strategic requirement for allocated employment land.

4.5 DESIGN ALTERNATIVES

- 4.5.1. The design evolution of the Proposed Development including its land uses, nature, scale, massing, proposed location of the built form and the areas of open space have been informed by the existing environmental constraints and opportunities within and surrounding the Site.
- 4.5.2. The context of relevant national and local planning policies, best practice guidance and development standards, baseline studies, as well as feedback obtained from key stakeholders during consultations have been considered throughout design development.

MASTERPLAN OPTION STUDY

- 4.5.3. The applicant pursued three initial masterplan options for employment led development to ensure that multiple scenarios had been explored in relation to the potential location of building orientation across the site across the Site along with siting of hardstanding areas to minimise impact. All masterplan options have been carefully designed, testing the road networks and infrastructure in different locations within the masterplan.
- 4.5.4. The five masterplan options are provided within Figure 4-1, Figure 4-2 and Figure 4-3.

Figure 4-1 - Masterplan option 1

Design Development



Existing - Application site locates to the rear of the business park. An existing access point to the site between Units H & W.



Option 1 - Maximise the development with a single unit. Car parking to the front, service yard along the long elevation with trailer spaces to the rear.

Figure 4-2 - Masterplan options 2 and 3



Option 2 - Maximise the development with a single footprint, multi let units. The service yard along the long elevation, with parking space included in the yard



Option 3 - Maximise the development with a single unit. Car parking to the front, with service yard to the rear at the gable end.

Figure 4-3 - Masterplan options 4 and 5



Option 4 - Revised option 2, in response to the existing terrain and reflecting the cut and fill exercise, the site is subdivided into two plateaus.



Option 5 (Preferred) - Two standalone units with their own car park and service yard, served by a main access road.

- 4.5.5. Masterplan option 5 was adopted and has been taken forward. A summary of the reasoning is provided below.
- 4.5.6. Key physical features and technical constraints and opportunities on the site have resulted in well balanced scheme that takes into account existing features such as topography and local landscape.
- 4.5.7. The evolution of the illustrative masterplan used to test the feasibility of the site technically was also informed by pre-application meetings as discussed in the following section.
- 4.5.8. This has helped define what can reasonably be accommodated in terms of developable area when coupled with the effective mitigation of the site constraints.
- 4.5.9. Standard densities for employment led developments have been used along with providing sufficient parking spaces for industrial units and sufficient open spaces across the site allowing a realistic scheme to come forward.

PRE-APPLICATION MEETINGS

- 4.5.10. A pre-application meeting was held by the project team in 2025 with officers from RMBC.
- 4.5.11. It was accepted by RMBC at the pre-application meeting that the parameter plans would aim to show the extent of the development quantum, and that the illustrative masterplan would include a series of parameter plans.
- 4.5.12. It was additionally accepted that the masterplan layout would look to ensure flexibility for future occupiers.

4.6 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

- 4.6.1. This chapter has set out a review of the reasonable alternatives considered through the iterative design process, set out as follows:
 - The Do-Nothing Scenario;
 - Alternative Sites; and
 - Design Alternatives
- 4.6.2. The aforementioned decisions have shaped the existing design of the Proposed Development, which is presented in **Chapter 3: Description of the Proposed Development**.
- 4.6.3. All other beneficial effects associated with the Proposed Development are set out within technical chapters 6 to 16.

4.7 REFERENCES

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