Deloitte.



Manchester Digital Campus

Planning and Tall Building Statement

November 2024

Contents

Executive Summary: Manchester Digital Campus		1
1.	Introduction	2
2.	Strategic Context	6
3.	Site Context	14
4.	The Proposed Development	18
5.	Planning Assessment	26
6.	Tall Building Statement	54
7.	Public Benefits	58
8.	Conclusion	63

Executive Summary: Manchester Digital Campus

*Manchester Digital Campus is a new, **flagship Civil Service office campus for the GPA**, with a focus on digital skills. It aims to complement Manchester's existing strengths within the digital technology sector, supports levelling up and draws upon the abundant talent pool in the City.*

*The Site forms part of the former Central Retail Park, **a key strategic regeneration priority** as identified by Manchester City Council and the missing piece of the jigsaw in the wider regeneration of Ancoats and New Islington. Manchester Digital Campus **will transform a vacant brownfield city centre site into a high-quality, sustainable office district**, with strong connections to the local neighbourhoods and the wider city centre. It is highly accessible by sustainable modes of transport, which will be actively promoted.*

*The scheme will deliver **new, high-quality public realm on-site**, celebrate the local history, and reactivate the canal and Great Ancoats Street through providing new active frontages.*

*Once operational, the campus will support **circa 7,000 civil service full time equivalent jobs** – with circa 50% of these new to the city – plus a further 70 jobs within the new retail offering. The four-year construction phase will also support approximately **4,900 jobs**.*

*The scheme has undergone significant design development to ensure that it is of exceptional quality, including incorporating feedback from **extensive engagement with the public and key stakeholders**, including the adjacent Coop Academy and Historic England. The GPA is committed to delivering real social value from the scheme and to mitigating any potential negative impacts, so the campus will have a strong positive socio-economic impact.*

*The substantial investment in Manchester Digital Campus will be **the catalyst for wider regeneration, not only the remainder of the former Central Retail Park**, but a wider area across New Islington and Ancoats, and beyond.*

*The scheme will also facilitate **the development of the adjoining new park** (submitted concurrently under a separate full planning application by MCC) through physically delivering the final site levels to integrate and improve connectivity and accessibility, and through a contribution to the cost of designing and the future maintenance of the park.*

1. Introduction

This section introduces the GPA's Manchester Digital Campus Proposals and sets out the structure of this Planning and Tall Building Statement.

1.1. This Planning and Tall Building Statement (the 'Statement') accompanies an application for full planning permission for the creation of a new civil service office campus (the 'Application') submitted on behalf of the Government Property Agency (GPA) (the 'Applicant') to Manchester City Council (MCC).

1.2. The Application relates to land within the Former Central Retail Park Strategic Regeneration Framework (the 'SRF') Area (the 'SRF Area'), located in the New Islington area of Manchester City Centre, as shown in Figure 1.1: Site Location Plan (the 'Site').

1.3. The description of the Proposed Development as set out within the Application Forms is set out below:

> *"Full planning permission for the creation of a new office campus comprising two office buildings (Use Class E), including:*
> *North Building comprising ground plus seven storeys (Use Class E) plus up to a total of two storeys of enclosed and exposed rooftop plant*; and
> *South Building comprising ground plus six* storeys (Use Class E), plus up to a total of two storeys of enclosed and exposed rooftop plant, and also including flexible commercial uses (Use Class E and / or Use Class Sui Generis (p) and (q)) at ground floor and cycle parking;
> *together with* basement car parking, landscaping and public realm, servicing and access arrangements, highways alterations and other associated works (including the establishment of new site levels for the proposed new park)."

1.4. The term Proposed Development used within this Statement refers to all stages of construction and operation of the development.

1.5. This Statement considers the Proposed Development in its strategic and local context and assesses its acceptability in the context of the Local Development Plan and other material considerations such as the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and relevant guidance.

The Applicant

1.6. The GPA is an Executive Agency of the Cabinet Office and a national organisation, working with government departments across the UK. The GPA provides property and workplace solutions across government, delivering benefits through efficient and effective use of the civil estate and establishing great places to work for a modern Civil Service.

1.7. The GPA is committed to investing in regional growth whilst delivering office solutions meeting the government's needs and objectives. Under the government's Places for Growth Programme[1], the GPA aims to help the Civil Service to be more representative of the entire UK, across departments, functions and professions. Under the programme, circa. 22,000 government roles will be relocated from London into a number of government hubs across the UK, with the aim to accommodate half of all UK-based Senior Civil Service roles outside of London. This programme will have the following benefits:

- rebalance an historic bias towards London;
- provide an economic boost to towns and cities across the UK;

[1] HM Government. 2024. Places for Growth. Available via: https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/places-for-growth. Accessed 10th June 2024.

- create new career opportunities for people across the UK; and,
- make the Civil Service even more diverse, effective, and representative.

1.8. Manchester Digital Campus will be a flagship development for the GPA – with a focus on the digital sector. The GPA's vision is to create a new, dynamic and diverse commercial district which will deliver a range of exemplary and innovative workplaces, promoting inclusivity, health, and well-being. It will provide buildings that are high-quality, sustainable, resilient, adaptable, reliable, and simple to operate, creating environments for diverse communities to collaborate and perform to their highest potential.

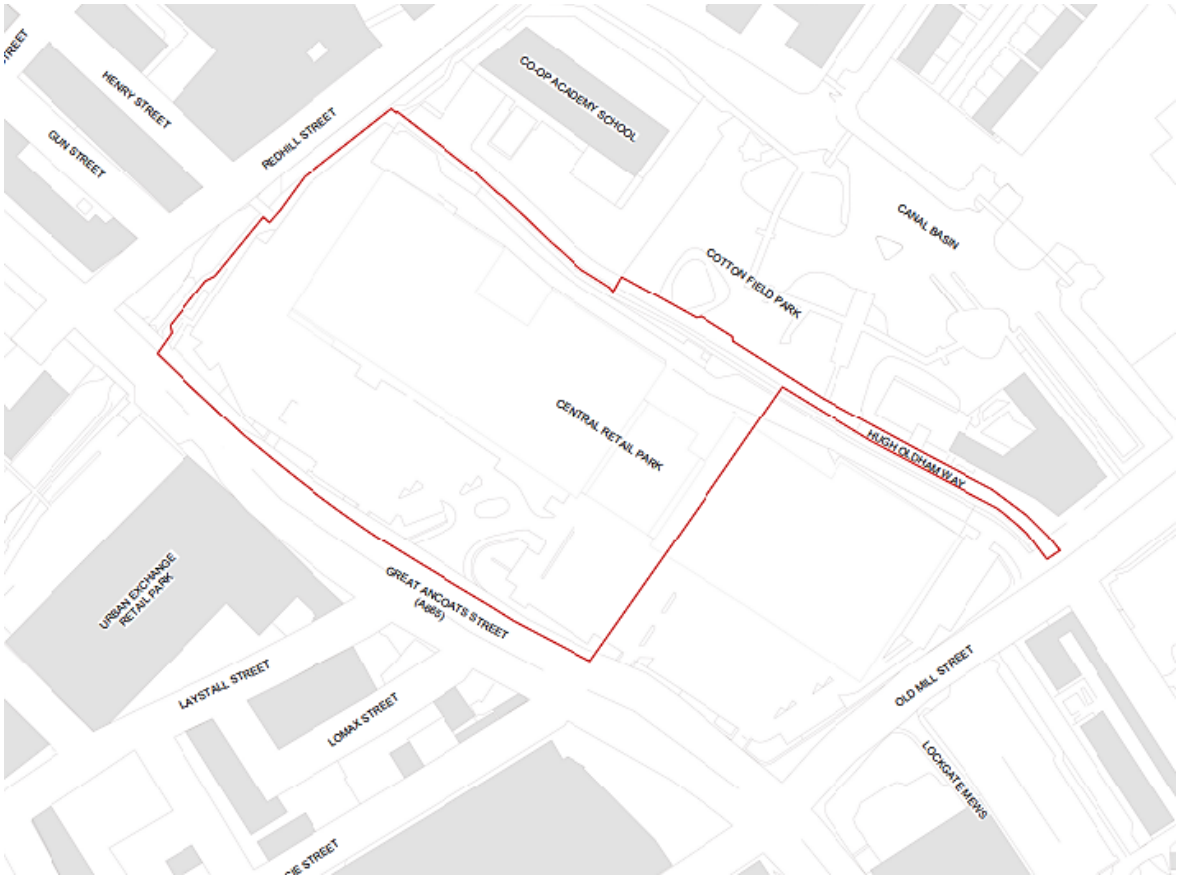
1.9. Greater Manchester was specifically selected for its longstanding legacy of technological advancement, deep-rooted in the Industrial Revolution and the significant pipeline of exceptional talent in Greater Manchester from the City's universities to support the Proposed Development and the focus on digital skills. Manchester Digital Campus also reflects the Government's commitment to grow the Civil Service presence in Greater Manchester.

1.10. It is of paramount importance that local communities are placed at the heart of government policy and that policymakers are representative to the diversity of the communities they serve. As a public sector organisation, the GPA is aligned with the UK government's Social Value approach, and as a result consider the cost and benefits of their services beyond their financial impact to also look at social, economic, and wellbeing consequences of their decisions.

The Site

1.11. The Site, comprises 2.98ha (see Figure 1.1), is located within New Islington and is bound by the Co-op Academy primary school and associated playground and Cotton Field Park to the north, and the Rochdale Canal and associated towpath to the west. Great Ancoats Street, the inner-city ring road, runs along the southern boundary of the Site and the remainder of the former Central Retail Park lies to the immediate east of the Site, separating it from Old Mill Street.

Figure 1:1 Site Location Plan (Source: AtkinsRéalis, 2024)



The Former Central Retail Park Strategic Regeneration Framework (the 'the SRF')

1.12. Regeneration of this site is a long-standing strategic priority for MCC, having acquired the land in 2017. An updated SRF was prepared and endorsed by MCC's Executive Committee in March 2023 to articulate the Council's vision and strategic objectives for the area, together with development principles to guide its future development.

1.13. The vision set out within the SRF is to create a high-quality, sustainable office district with an attractive public realm at its centre, including a new green space, building upon the strategic location and its strong connections to the local neighbourhoods, city centre, and transport networks.

1.14. The SRF is discussed in detail in Section 2 of this Statement.

The Vision

1.15. The Applicant's vision for the Proposed Development relates to the creation of a new, dynamic and diverse City Quarter:

"The Manchester Digital Campus will deliver a range of exemplary and innovative workplaces, promoting inclusivity, health and well-being. It will provide buildings that are high-quality, sustainable, resilient, adaptable, reliable and simple to operate. They will create environments for the diverse communities to collaborate and perform to their highest potential."

The Proposed Development

1.16. The Proposed Development comprises the development of a new city centre commercial office campus, delivered as a single phase comprising of elements to be discussed in detail in Section 4 of this Statement.

The Park Application

1.17. The SRF also proposes a new green space at the heart of the wider SRF Area. MCC, as the landowner, has, alongside this Application, concurrently submitted an application to the Local Planning Authority seeking full planning permission for the development of a new park within the centre of the SRF Area ('the Park Application').

1.18. The two planning applications are separate; however, the redline boundaries for the two planning applications overlap in part. This is because the GPA proposes to deliver enabling earthworks over a wider area to create the new site levels for both the MDC and Park developments under this Application.

1.19. Significant engagement has taken place between the Applicant and MCC (as the Park Applicant and separately as the Local Planning Authority) in advance of the submission of both applications to coordinate the proposals and deliver comprehensive and integrated regeneration proposals for a large portion of the SRF Area.

Pre-Application Consultation

1.20. A significant period of pre-application stakeholder engagement has been undertaken with a range of stakeholders in advance of the submission of this application.

1.21. Two principal stages of consultation have taken place prior to the submission of this application:

Stage 1 – The SRF (January 2023)

1.22. Public consultation on The SRF for Former Central Retail Park site was undertaken in January 2023. Information presented as part of this previous consultation outlined a refreshed vision and a comprehensive approach to the future redevelopment of this key site in Manchester City Centre. It introduced the GPA's involvement in the site and plans to deliver government offices on the site as part of a first phase of development, as well as the key areas of public realm proposed: namely the Canal Plaza and The Boulevard.

Stage 2 – The Proposed Development (2024)

1.23. The Applicant has undertaken an extensive process of stakeholder engagement in advance of the submission of this application.

1.24. In this regard, throughout the period of design development, significant engagement has taken place with Manchester City Council as the Local Planning Authority. Meetings often took place on a fortnightly basis and provided an opportunity for the project team to gather feedback on a range of design and technical matters to inform these proposals. In addition, meetings have been held with other key stakeholders to gather their views in order to help to shape the proposals. Further information on engagement with the Local Planning Authority and others can be found in the Design and Access Statement submitted in support of this application.

1.25. A four-week period of public consultation took place from 27 August to 23 September 2024 to gather feedback from the public on the proposals. The public consultation ran in parallel with a consultation led by MCC, as landowner, for the Park Application. The consultation included a consultation website which provided information on the proposals and an opportunity to leave comments. Two public drop-in events were held at Hallé St Peter's on 10 September 2024 to provide an opportunity for people to speak directly with the project team. The consultation was advertised through press releases and media coverage, and through the distribution of consultation postcards to the local area.

1.26. Engagement has also taken place with Local Ward Councillors (Ancoats and Beswick Ward); Historic England; Greater Manchester Police (GMP) Secure by Design team; Greater Manchester Archaeological Advisory Service (GMAAS); MCC Highways; Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM); MCC Environmental Health; Canal and River Trust; New Islington Medical Practice; and the Co-op Academy New Islington School.

1.27. Further information on the consultation process, the methods for advertising the consultation, and details of how the Applicant has considered the feedback received can be found within the Statement of Consultation prepared by Counter Context and submitted in support of this planning application.

EIA Screening

1.28. A formal Request for an EIA Screening and Scoping Response was submitted to Manchester City Council on 4 October 2024 following ongoing liaison with the Local Planning Authority regarding the Scope of the ES which forms part of the technical consultation process.

Structure of the Planning and Tall Building Statement

1.29. The remainder of this Statement is structured as follows:

- Section 2 – Strategic Context
- Section 3 – Site Context
- Section 4 – The Proposed Development
- Section 5 – Planning Assessment
- Section 6 – Tall Building Statement
- Section 7 – Public Benefits
- Section 8 – Conclusion

1.30. The documents submitted in support of the Application are set out in Appendix A of this Statement.

2. Strategic Context

This section provides an overview of the strategic context within which the Proposed Development is brought forward.

2.1. The Proposed Development will be a flagship development for the Applicant with a focus on the digital sector. It has been conceived and designed to contribute directly to both the needs of the Civil Service and Manchester's strategic priorities, with direct reference to the strategic documents set out within this section.

2.2. The GPA is committed to investing in regional growth and has chosen to locate the Proposed Development in Manchester as a result of the combination of the City's legacy of technological advancement, existing talent pool in digital skills, and talent pipeline from the City's universities.

2.3. The Former Central Retail Park site has been a long-standing regeneration priority for the City and Manchester City Council have set a clear direction for the site to create a new high-quality, sustainable office district. The scale and location of the Site provides an opportunity to build on Manchester's existing digital and technology ecosystem and to support the City's ambitions to be at the forefront of the UK's growth journey.

Strategic Context

UK Innovation Strategy (2021)

2.4. The UK Innovation Strategy (2021) sets out the government's vision to make the UK a global hub for innovation by 2035, with key actions include:

- Fuelling businesses that want to innovate.
- Making the UK the most exciting place for innovation talent.
- Ensuring research, development, and innovation institutions serve the needs of businesses and places across the UK.
- Stimulating innovation to tackle challenges faced by the UK and the world whilst driving capability in key technologies.

2.5. Through the key actions aforementioned, the UK Innovation Strategy aims to both establish the right underlying policy environment and clearly signal those areas where government will take the lead in boosting progress in innovation.

Invest 2035: the UK's Modern Industrial Strategy (2024)

2.6. The Invest 2035: the UK's Modern Industrial Strategy (the 'UK Industrial Strategy') is the UK government's 10-year plan to deliver the certainty and stability businesses need to invest in the high growth sectors that will drive growth mission.

2.7. The UK Industrial Strategy will focus on tackling barriers to growth in the highest potential growth-driving sectors and places, creating the right conditions for increased investment, high-quality jobs and ensuring tangible impact in communities right across the UK.

2.8. The UK Industrial Strategy will focus on the sectors which offer the highest growth opportunity for the economy and business. Eight growth-driving sectors have been identified, which includes 'Digital and Technologies'.

2.9. The UK Industrial Strategy was consulted on publicly and closed on 24 November 2024, with the final Strategy expected to be published in Spring 2025.

Greater Manchester Strategy 2021-2031 (2022) (GM Strategy)

2.10. The GM Strategy provides a clear plan for all communities, neighbourhoods, towns and cities which make up the City Region. It sets out outcomes and commitments, based on the following:

- The wellbeing of Greater Manchester people;
- Vibrant and successful enterprise; and
- Greater Manchester as a leading City Region in the UK and globally.

2.11. The GM Strategy aims to adopt new approaches to innovation in order to diversify the business base, transform the City Region's ways of working, build vibrant places, create future resilience, support pathways to work, and tackle social issues.

2.12. The emphasis on "digital innovation" runs at the core of the GM Strategy and underpin its delivery. It emphasises the ability of digital innovation to react to technological and societal change and discover new opportunities.

2.13. The GM Strategy recognises the capacity and capability of the workforce as a critical enabler of economic success, and the need for digital innovations to meet the demand of businesses and trades.

Our Manchester Strategy – Forward to 2025 (2022)

2.14. The Our Manchester Strategy sets out the long-term vision for Manchester's future to be in the top-flight of world cities by 2025. Although the period finishes in 2025, the success of the Strategy is based on the following criteria:

- Have a competitive, dynamic, sustainable and fair economy that draws on the distinctive strengths in science, advanced manufacturing, and culture, creative and digital businesses – cultivating and encouraging new ideas;
- Possess highly skilled, enterprising and industrious people;
- Be connected, internationally and within the UK;
- Play its full part in limiting the impacts of climate change;
- Be a place where residents from all backgrounds feel safe, can aspire, succeed and live well; and;
- Be clean, attractive, culturally rich, outward-looking and welcoming.

Investing in Success – an Economic Strategy for Manchester (2023)

2.15. Investing in Success – an Economic Strategy for Manchester is a ten-year plan to grow Manchester's economy and make it more inclusive. The Economic Strategy has five priority areas, as follows:

- Use investment and development to drive inclusive growth;
- Nurture thriving, productive and innovative sectors;
- Develop world-class infrastructure, places and talent;
- Transition to a zero carbon and resilient economy; and,
- Include more people in economic opportunity.

2.16. As part of the priority areas, there is strong aspiration for Manchester to become a digitally inclusive city, with better digital infrastructure, access to digital technology, and strong digital skills.

2.17. It emphasises the importance of a well-educated and skilled workforce on the prosperity of any economy and highlights the role higher education plays in continuously upskilling the workforce.

2.18. It recognises the imbalance in investment between Manchester and London and the south east and highlights Manchester's strengths through strong partnerships, clarity of vision and consistency of leadership required to set and achieve a vision over the medium to long-term. It seeks to make the most of the opportunity to be at the

forefront of the UK's growth journey, and that the City is able to do more with the continued support of the government and its departments.

Manchester Digital Strategy 2021 – 2026

2.19. The Manchester Digital Strategy is the vision for Manchester's digital future and seeks to ensure that the City continues to support, sustain and grow the City's digital ecosystem. It sets the priorities that the whole city – public, private, voluntary and community organisations and residents – will be able to work on together to make Manchester one of the world's leading smart cities and digital economies by 2026.

2.20. It recognises that Manchester is already one of Europe's fastest growing technology cities and, is "*the UK's second technology city"*, consistently outperforming *"all cities outside of London*"[2]. This is significant not only in terms of the scale of the sector but also in terms of its scope in covering both established and emerging technologies and providing a talent pool of digital and creative skills supporting consistent growth across all parts of the sector.

2.21. In addition to the thriving businesses, Manchester has a very strong community of people and organisations working in digital environments who interact closely with each other, often referred to as Manchester's digital ecosystem. This ecosystem is complemented by the strength of Manchester's innovation and creative networks and activities focusing on ethics, diversity and equalities.

2.22. It is built on the wider ambition of the City to create a more sustainable, inclusive and diverse economy that benefits all our residents. It sets actions to make sure people have the right digital skills and training opportunities, that Manchester has the right network access and infrastructure to attract investment and create the conditions for growth and is able to use digital to support its journey towards being a zero-carbon city by 2038.

Former Central Retail Park Strategic Regeneration Framework (the SRF) (2023)

2.23. In 2015 and 2016 consideration had been given to the possible redevelopment of the Former Central Retail Park site and a Development Framework for the area was endorsed by MCC's Executive Committee in February 2016. A subsequent update to the Development Framework was then endorsed by the Committee on 14 October 2020 to outline the vision to create an exemplary net zero-carbon commercial district with the ability to attract new businesses and talent to Manchester and to create a vibrant mixed-use neighbourhood.

2.24. In March 2023, a new Strategic Regeneration Framework was endorsed by the Committee and superseded the 2020 Framework. The 2023 Framework builds on many of the key design principles set out within it and positively responds to the latest market requirements to provide purpose-built offices and high-quality facilities for staff.

2.25. The established vision defined in the latest endorsed SRF is to create a high-quality, sustainable office district with an attractive public realm at its centre, including a new green space. The vision builds upon the strategic location of the site and its strong connections to the local neighbourhoods, city centre, and transport networks.

2.26. The SRF acknowledges the GPA's requirement for an office campus in Manchester to meet the needs to various civil service departments. This represents a significant boost to the future economic growth of the local area and the City Region.

2.27. The Framework also sets out design drivers informed by the site parameters, the potential requirements of the Government Property Agency and provides a detailed understanding of the local context.

2.28. The key principles of the Former Central Retail Park SRF are as follows:

- Place making – Creating a vibrant destination for employees and visitors is central to the SRF. By creating an integrated environment, future growth and job creation are fostered;

[2] The Data City, 2019

- High quality development – Championing high quality and contextually sensitive architecture and urban design, a new green space rests at the heart of the SRF creating an inclusive public realm for the community, employees, and visitors;
- Connectivity – Prioritising enhanced pedestrian and cycle routes, travel into the City and other transport hubs are made easier, safer, and more appealing. Accessibility and connectivity are fostered;
- Sustainability – Committed to achieving high sustainability standards embedded in buildings and public realm landscaping design;
- Scale and massing – Building scale and massing are sensitive to neighbouring communities, seamlessly integrating with various contexts around the SRF Area;
- Form and layout – a new green space separates the SRF Area into two areas, which organically extend the urban fabric of Ancoats and New Islington; and,
- Use – Primarily commercial-led development meeting the Government Property Agency's needs, whilst incorporating complementary retail and leisure offerings to ensure a vibrant atmosphere.

Socioeconomic Context

Background

2.29. Manchester's economic growth has been aided by its expanding international connections, centres of excellence in research and higher education, and investment in transport infrastructure. These factors have increased the diversity and scale of the City's labour market.

2.30. The prospects for economic growth in Manchester are closely linked to the ability to attract and retain the most talented individuals. It is crucial to focus on improving Greater Manchester's attractiveness as a place to live, study, work, invest and do business. Delivering high-quality commercial office accommodation and improving access to jobs is a key priority in this regard.

2.31. 'Investing in Success - an Economic Strategy for Manchester' has outlined a clear vision for Manchester's future, where all residents can access and benefit from the opportunities created by economic growth.

Manchester's Economic Role

2.32. The City of Manchester is the acknowledged capital of the north of England and the centre point of a trans-Pennine and pan-northern economy. The City and conurbation are an economic centre, a role which is on the rise as investment in transport, innovation and economic infrastructure makes the City more accessible to towns and cities, business and high skilled workers in the Midlands and the North.

2.33. There are a number of factors which are changing the role of the City of Manchester and have particular implications for Manchester City Centre:

- The move to a service based and high growth economy, at a time when national economic growth is increasingly driven by professional and financial services, creative and digital industries, science and technology, with key sub-sectors influenced by disruptive innovation;
- Sectors which are influenced by agglomeration, where entrepreneurs, companies, new start-ups and talented workers, from disparate economic growth sectors, are keen to cluster in locations which can provide business and networking opportunities and deep labour markets offering an exceptional range of highly qualified and skilled staff;
- Cultural activity is key to the growth agenda of Manchester. There is a significant cultural draw supported by football, music and art. This is expanding with the recent opening of the Co-op Live Arena; Aviva Studios (home of Factory International); the re-opening of Manchester Museum; and,

- A return to urban living, with many highly skilled younger people and high earners keen to benefit from both the range of education and employment opportunities and the lifestyle offer of city living, with evening and weekend economies offering cultural, entertainment and leisure choices which cannot be matched in smaller towns or cities.

Inclusive Growth

2.34. Manchester has made substantial economic progress in the past two decades, so much so the City is now synonymous with urban regeneration and renewal. This journey of economic transformation and revitalisation is a testament to the strength and ambitious of its residents and partnerships, and its collective vision to a prosperous and inclusive economy.

2.35. In its pursuit for economic advancement, there remains a gap between what Manchester residents earn compared to what all workers in the City earn, on top of this a large amount of Manchester residents are in insecure employment. There are fewer Manchester residents earning at least the Real Living Wage compared to all workers in the City, moreover substantial number of residents with no or low qualifications are unemployed.

2.36. This presents a need to ensure Manchester residents are equipped with the right skillsets, have access to good employment opportunities, and contribute to a more inclusive economy.

2.37. As part of this, the City is dedicated to ensuring good quality education is available to its residents and continues to support all residents to learn, progress, upskill and retain so Manchester residents are well positioned to access the City's current and future employment opportunities.

A Service-Based, High Growth Economy

2.38. The City's transformation to a service based high growth economy is a key part of the economic transformation of the north, as industrial employment continues to decline, and new economy sectors begin to dominate the modern competitive economy. This has led to significant changes in the economic geography across the conurbation and to a changing and unique role for Manchester.

2.39. The service sector now provides a large proportion of the high skilled and high productivity jobs in the national economy. Increasing the number and range of higher skilled service sector employment is now central to improving the performance of the regional economy and increasing the north's contribution to UK.

2.40. The level of professional services in Manchester is considerable and reflects the City's role as both a major location for global and national companies and the headquarter location for large regional companies.

2.41. The City's Professional, Financial and Business Services sector is very diverse including leading global accountancy and consulting companies, legal partnerships, specialist technical, engineering, infrastructure and digital media companies. While many smaller companies serving a local market are distributed across the conurbation, the larger, leading companies are located almost exclusively in the City Centre.

Manchester: the Digital City

2.42. Manchester is at the forefront of the UK's digital revolution and is already one of Europe's fastest growing technology cities. The technology and digital sectors are therefore increasingly recognised as critical to ensuring the continued sustainable growth of Manchester and meeting the ambitions to be one of the world's leading smart cities and digital economies.

2.43. The City is home to a thriving technology sector and is a recognised leader in digital innovation. This commitment to digital transformation is evident in its robust digital infrastructure, proactive approach to smart city initiatives, and the growth of its digital industries. This focus on digital technology not only attracts technology companies but also empowers businesses across all sectors to innovate and thrive in the digital age.

2.44. The digital ecosystem of Manchester is composed of a robust community of individuals and organisations who work closely together. This network includes support systems for start-ups and scale-ups, a trade association called Manchester Digital (https://www.manchesterdigital.com), providers of skills, user groups, and various tech events and meet-ups.

2.45. This ecosystem is vital to the City's economic prosperity and its recovery from COVID-19, ensuring an inclusive approach to growth. It is underpinned by a strong pool of skilled talent grown out of the presence of world class higher education institutions, and is complemented by the strength of Manchester's innovation and creative networks and activities focusing on ethics, diversity, and equalities.

A Strong Pool of Skilled Talent

2.46. Home to prominent institutions e.g. the University of Manchester, Manchester Metropolitan University, and the University of Salford, etc… the City boasts an acclaimed higher education landscape.

2.47. In the 2021 Research Excellence Framework (REF) 93% of the University of Manchester's research activity was rated 'world-leading' or 'internationally excellent', confirming the University as one of the UK's top research institutions[3].

2.48. With specific reference digital skills and technology, the University of Manchester is internationally renowned for research-led teaching in computer science and has a range of digital and technology focussed courses. It is because of this that the European Laboratory for Learning and Intelligent Systems (ELLIS) recently added The University of Manchester as a partner of its global members who strive towards a meaningful contribution to securing Europe's sovereignty and leadership in the research field of modern artificial intelligence (AI).

2.49. Supporting the tech infrastructure of Manchester has also been a strong focus of Manchester Metropolitan University. As well as partnering with a range of Manchester-based organisations, the University recently opened their new School of Digital Arts (SODA) and boasts Tech Industry Gold Accredited courses.

2.50. These institutions are at the forefront of research and innovation, including in digital and technological advancement and skill growth, fostering a culture of knowledge creation and attracting significant investment. This academic prowess translates directly into a highly skilled workforce and a pipeline of cutting-edge research, and complemented by experienced professionals, strengthens Manchester's economic competitiveness by creating a diverse and adaptable talent pool that is highly attractive to businesses and in meeting the government's ambitions to increase presence outside of London.

2.51. In conclusion, Manchester's unique position in having a large pool of talent equipped with digital skills has been a determining factor for the Applicant in selecting Manchester to house the Digital Campus.

Population Growth

2.52. These higher education institutions and the regular pool of graduates have played a significant role in Manchester's population growth and subsequent economic growth. The number of working age residents, defined as those aged 16 to 64, is forecast to show a modest rise, before falling back after 2028. Therefore, the working age population of Greater Manchester is forecast to be just under 1.8 million in 2037[4]. This sector of the population creates demand for new lifestyle choices that offer access to city centre employment and amenities, and sustainable transport networks.

2.53. This regular pool of new talent and associated population growth provides a strong and skilled labour pool, making the City an attractive place for businesses and government departments to invest in.

Manchester's Environmental Credentials

2.54. In 2021, Manchester became the first major city in England to sign the Edinburgh Declaration, an International commitment that registers concerns about global biodiversity loss, and the need for a new Global Biodiversity Framework.

2.55. Manchester has always positioned itself as a leader in environmental sustainability, with ambitious goals to achieve net-zero carbon status by 2038. The City's commitment to a greener future is evident in its multifaceted approach, comprising energy efficiency, renewable energy adoption, sustainable transport, and waste reduction.

[3] University of Manchester (2024) Rankings and Reputation of The University of Manchester

[4] Greater Manchester Combined Authority (2020), Economic Forecasts for Greater Manchester February 2020.

2.56. Manchester has made significant progress in reducing its carbon footprint. The City has implemented energy efficiency measures in its buildings and infrastructure, resulting in a substantial decrease in energy consumption. Furthermore, Manchester is actively promoting the use of renewable energy sources. Investments in solar panels on public buildings and support for community energy projects demonstrate this dedication. The City's public transport system is undergoing electrification, further reducing reliance on fossil fuels.

2.57. While challenges remain, Manchester's commitment to environmental sustainability is evident in its proactive approach. The City's ongoing efforts, coupled with its ambitious targets, position it as a leading example for other cities striving to create a greener and more sustainable future.

Accessibility

2.58. Manchester has made substantial investments in its transport infrastructure, resulting in significant improvements in regional accessibility. These enhancements have effectively expanded the travel-to-work area and increased the pool of available labour, while also improving connectivity between businesses.

2.59. Additionally, the investments have made the City Centre more easily navigable and have contributed to creating a more desirable living environment. Investment through the Metrolink, coupled with significant improvements in walking and cycling connections across the city centre and pedestrianisation of some areas of the City, has created a more sustainable and integrated transport network.

2.60. In additional to local and regional connectivity, consideration should also be given to international connections. Manchester Airport is the third largest in the UK and is the primary gateway for the north of England, serving over 200 destinations worldwide, and is accessible by Metrolink and the railway network.

Other Manchester City Council Key Priorities

Great Outdoors: A Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy for Manchester 2015-25 (2015, subsequently updated in 2022)

2.61. The Strategy consisted of three documents – an overarching strategic narrative, a detailed technical report providing a baseline assessment and strong body of evidence, and a ten-year Implementation Plan identifying specific headline actions that could and would realise the Strategy's objectives.

2.62. The Strategy responded to commitments made in the City's Local Plan and Climate Change Action Plan, and was seen as a barometer to measure progress against key objectives of the City's Our Manchester Strategy.

2.63. The Implementation Plan was co-developed by a range of stakeholders, including representatives from statutory bodies, academic institutions, environmental charities, registered housing providers, developers, and Manchester City Council departments.

2.64. The Strategy continues to underpin major citywide environmental improvements. Over the next five years it is estimated that over £150million will be invested in GI-related projects in the City.

2.65. In total, it is estimated that over £250million will have been invested in GI-related environmental improvements over the lifetime of the strategy and Implementation Plan, reinforcing the value placed on delivering Nature Based Solutions to help make Manchester a world-class, climate-resilient city.

Manchester Climate Change Framework 2020-25 (2020)

2.66. The Manchester Climate Change Framework 2020-2025 is the City's high-level strategy for tackling climate change, formally endorsed by Manchester City Council in March 2020. It sets out how Manchester will 'play its full part in limiting the impacts of climate change', a commitment in the Our Manchester Strategy 2016-25.

2.67. The Framework aims to pave the way for Manchester to play its full part in limiting the impacts of climate change and create a healthy, green, socially just city where everyone can thrive, with the following 8 principles:

- Setting objectives and targets in line with the latest science and the Paris Agreement;
- Contributing to Manchester's social, environmental and economic goals;
- Ensuring that social justice is at the heart of our approach;

- The need for urgent action by everyone who lives, works and studies in Manchester, from our young people to our older people;
- Everyone who lives, works and studies in Manchester enabled to act through support, incentives, standards and infrastructure provided by Manchester City Council, Manchester's strategic partners, Greater Manchester Combined Authority, UK Government and their agencies;
- Advice, guidance and progress monitoring from independent experts;
- Contributing to Greater Manchester, UK and international commitments; and,
- The need for Manchester's growth and development to be zero carbon and resilient to the changing climate.

Manchester City Centre Transport Strategy to 2040 (2021)

2.68. Manchester City Centre Transport Strategy to 2040 sets out the need to support the city's ambitions to grow, become carbon neutral by 2038 or sooner, while ensuring that it is well-connected to the wider area that it serves.

2.69. The Strategy provides a 20-year framework for future investment in and management of the city's streets and transport systems. This will be critical to recovering from the Covid-19 pandemic, setting the necessary conditions for city centre residents, visitors and businesses to thrive. The strategy has the ambition to achieve the followings:

- Walking is the main way of getting around the City Centre;
- The City Centre is cleaner, greener and less congested;
- More people choose to cycle to destinations within the City Centre;
- The City Centre benefits from better public transport connections;
- Parking in the City Centre is smarter and integrated with other modes;
- Goods are moved and delivered sustainably and efficiently into and within the City Centre; and,
- Innovation is embraced where it benefits the City Centre and its users.

Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan 2022-30 – the City of Manchester's Nature Recovery

2.70. The Strategy and Action Plan outline the City's strategy for biodiversity and nature recovery over the period from 2022 to 2030. The Strategy and Action Plan is rooted in the recognition of the twin challenges of biodiversity loss and climate crisis. It aims to improve places for nature in Manchester through increasing practical action to protect habitats, making smarter, evidence-based decisions, and increasing understanding of the City's ecology and species diversity.

2.71. Key objectives of The Strategy and Action Plan include:

- Managing and understanding biodiversity;
- Involving people; and,
- Planning, policy and partnership.

3. Site Context

This Section describes the Site, its context in relation to the surrounding area and its suitability for the Proposed Development.

Site Description

3.1. The SRF Area spans across approximately 4 hectares in total. The Site is approximately 2.98 ha. (Site Location boundary) and comprises vacant brownfield land, comprised mostly of hardstanding. The Site forms the western portion of the SRF Area.

3.2. The Site is bound by the Co-op Academy primary school and associated playground and Cotton Field Park to the north, and the Rochdale Canal and associated towpath to the west. Great Ancoats Street, the inner-city ring road, runs along the southern boundary of the Site. The remainder of the Former Central Retail Park lies to the immediate east of the Site, separating it from Old Mill Street.

3.3. There are existing trees / shrubs on the Site, mostly congregated on the southern, western, and northern boundaries of the Site and a significant level change across the whole SRF Area, descending from the north to the southern extent at Great Ancoats Street.

3.4. The Site has a main vehicular access point off Great Ancoats Street to the south. A secondary access to the Site is available at Hugh Oldham Way, leading from Old Mill Street, which also provides access to the Coop Academy New Islington.

Surrounding Area

3.5. The Site is located within New Islington. The wider surrounding area of New Islington, Ancoats and Piccadilly has witnessed significant investment and regeneration over the last circa 20 years and now is characterised as a mixed-use neighbourhood with a wide range of residential and commercial uses and supporting amenity offerings.

3.6. Beyond the Rochdale Canal to the west, lie commercial and residential buildings (including listed mill buildings) along Redhill Street. Although the Site is not located within the Ancoats Conservation Area, the boundary of the Conservation Area runs adjacent to the Site along the banks of the Rochdale Canal.

3.7. The New Islington Medical Practice occupies a plot outside of the northeastern extent of the wider SRF Area adjacent to New Islington Marina and Cotton Field Park. The Coop Academy New Islington Primary School also lies to the north of the Site.

3.8. Beyond Great Ancoats Street lies the Urban Exchange Retail Park, residential apartments in the Grade II* Listed Brownsfield Mill, and the serviced apartments on Laystall Street to the south. The area is characteristic of its City Centre location, providing a range of uses including retail and leisure, residential, commercial and hotel in addition to areas of surface car parking and industrial uses.

3.9. To the east, beyond the eastern extent of the SRF Area, are residential apartments lining Old Mill Street and rising up to 16 storeys in height, and beyond this to the east lie further high-density residential uses, the Ashton Canal and the New Islington Metrolink stop.

Planning History

3.10. The key planning history pertinent to the Site and the wider SRF Area, is outlined in **Table 3.1** below:

Table 3.1 Relevant Planning History

Planning Permission Ref	Description of Development	Note
124181/VO/2019	CITY COUNCIL DEVELOPMENT Creation of a 440-space public car park for a temporary period of 2 years.	Temporarily approved on 23rd October 2019 (approval subsequently overturned during Judicial Review process).
120319/DEM/2018	Prior Notification for the proposed demolition of the retail units and associated structures.	Prior Approval to undertake demolition was not required (allowed) based on no significant impact on the environment. Decision granted on 10th July 2018.
101259/FO/2012/N1	Refurbishment of 4 units at the Redhill Street/Great Ancoats Street junction of the site, demolition of remaining units and erection of a 4,645 square metre retail foodstore (Use Class A1), with attached cinema (use class D2) and erection of seven new retail units comprising shops (Use Class A1) and/or restaurants and cafes / bars (Use Classes A3 and A4) together with the re-cladding and insertion of mezzanines to the retained units, reconfiguration of existing vehicular access points, creation of new servicing area and associated landscaping and public realm works.	Approved 18th June 2013
058726/FO/NORTH2/00	Construction of new link canopy, new entrance features and re-layout of side car parking area.	Approved on 25th April 2000
030070	Erection of non-food retail warehouse units with associated car parking and servicing, and fast food operation.	Approved on 12th November 1987
028285	CITY COUNCIL DEVELOPMENT Erection of non-food retail warehouse units and fast food operation with associated car parking and servicing facilities.	Approved 12th March 1987

Site Specific Environmental Designations

Air Quality

3.11. The Site is located within the Greater Manchester Air Quality Management Area (AQMA).

Archaeology

3.12. The Site is understood to formerly have contained a mixture of workers' housing, small-scale industry and a canal basin until slum clearance in the 1960s. Buildings present within the Site included a foundry, cotton mill and oil cloth manufacturer, as well as terraced, back-to-back and court housing.

3.13. Whilst construction of the former retail park in the 1980s resulted in ground reduction within the Site, a watching brief prepared in April 2023 on ground investigation works undertaken for the Proposed Development identified the presence of archaeological remains within the Site. These included the remains of probable wall foundations, associated demolition deposits, a brick/stone surface, as well as organic waterlogged deposits containing waste material, all generally later post-medieval in date and related to the industrial occupation of the area.

Coal Mining

3.14. The Site falls under a Coal Mining Reporting Area, however, is not a Development High Risk Area and neither is it a Mine Entry Potential Zone of Influence.

Ecology

3.15. The Site is located approximately 3km from Clayton Vale Nature Reserve (Classified as Local Nature Reserve) – the closest local nature reserve from the Site.

3.16. The Rochdale Canal, which borders the Site to the west, is also classified as a Site of Biological Importance. The Site is also lies 175m east of the Ashton Canal (which is also a Site of Biological Importance).

Flood Risk and Drainage

3.17. The Site is located in Flood Zone 1 and therefore has a low probability of flooding. As with the majority of the Regional Centre, the Site is located within the Conurbation Core Critical Drainage Area, as defined in the Manchester, Salford, Trafford Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA).

3.18. The nearest watercourse to the Site is the Rochdale Canal, which borders the Site to the west.

Heritage

3.19. The Site does not contain any listed buildings, nor is it within a Conservation Area.

3.20. The boundary of the Ancoats Conservation Area runs adjacent to the Site along the banks of the Rochdale Canal. This Conservation Area comprises the surviving historic townscape associated with Ancoats' development as an industrial and manufacturing centre from the late-18th Century onwards.

3.21. There are 28no. designated heritage assets within a 250-metre buffer zone (as referenced in Chapter 13 of Volume 1 of the Environment Statement submitted as part of this Application). The designated assets / listed mills along the Rochdale Canal are considered to be of particular relevance to this Application, which include:

- Royal Mill (Grade II*);
- Brownsfield Mill (Grade II*);
- Decker Mill Old Mill (Grade II*);
- Doubling Mill Fireproof Mill (Grade II*);
- Sedgwick Mill (to west of junction with Murray Street) (Grade II);
- The Grade II listed structures associated with the Rochdale Canal, including:
    - Rochdale Canal Lock No.82, to east of Great Ancoats Street (Grade II);
    - Rochdale Canal Retaining Wall on South Side of Redhill Street, West of Union Street Bridge (Grade II); and,
    - Rochdale Canal Towpath Footbridge and Associated Ramps Opposite Brownsfield Mill (Grade II).

Connectivity and Accessibility

3.22. The Site is in a sustainable and highly accessible location within the north-east of Manchester City Centre.

3.23. Manchester has a compact and walkable City Centre, and the Site therefore has excellent access to the services and facilities it has to offer.

3.24. It is located close to public transport hubs including the New Islington Metrolink stop, Manchester Piccadilly Station, Shudehill Interchange, and Manchester Victoria Station. There are also bus services that run along Great Ancoats Street with many services linking Manchester City Centre and further afield.

3.25. It is also within easy access of the City's Inner-City Ring Road which connects with key arterial routes leading to the strategic motorway network.

3.26. A summary of the connectivity to the existing site by each mode of transport is set out below.

Active Transport

Walking Network

3.27. The Manchester City Centre Transport Strategy to 2040 suggests that the City Centre should be "*safe and easy to walk around with clear, well-signed routes. Pavements and public spaces will be high quality, well-maintained, green and accessible – catering for everyone, no matter what their age or mobility*."

3.28. The Site is well connected to key destinations by a comprehensive network of pedestrian routes, given its location within Manchester City Centre. The key leisure, cultural, business and retail facilities that Manchester City Centre has to offer are all within walking distance to the Site.

Cycling Network

3.29. The Site is located in proximity to several cycleways, including traffic free cycle routes on Great Ancoats Street, and is highly accessible to the National and Regional Cycle Network, specifically Route 66 (along Old Mill Street and Rochdale Canal) and 86 (along Ashton Canal).

3.30. Further planned improvements, such as the upgrading of the Rochdale Canal towpath towards Newton Heath as an improved walking and cycling corridor, will provide a strong network of safe routes in and around this part of the City.

3.31. The Site is therefore highly accessible by cycle, which provides a realistic alternative to travel by car.

Public Transport

3.32. The Site is well-connected by means of public transportation.

Rail

3.33. The nearest railway station is Manchester Piccadilly Railway Station, approximately 600 metres to the south of the Site. Manchester Piccadilly Railway Station is one of the busiest railway stations in the country, offering regional and national services with international connections.

3.34. The Site is also of close proximity to Manchester Victoria Railway Station, approximately 1 kilometre to the west of the Site, the second busiest railway station in Manchester which offers local and regional services to a range of destinations in Northern England.

Metrolink

3.35. The New Islington Metrolink Stop is the closest Metrolink stop to the Site (approximately 500 metres from the Site), providing frequent links across Greater Manchester. The Site is also easily accessible by foot from various Metrolink stops in the City Centre, for instance, Shudehill, Market Street, Manchester Piccadilly to name a few.

Bus

3.36. There are several bus stops located in close proximity to the Site. The nearest are located along the southern boundary of the Site, along Great Ancoats Street, providing regular routes from the City Centre across Manchester through to destinations including the Etihad Campus, Droylsden, Ashton and Stalybridge.

Vehicle Accessibility

3.37. The Site is well placed for access to the City's Inner-City Ring Road – Great Ancoats Street, which is a two-way dual carriageway that provides access to other major arterial routes and to the wider motorway network.

4. The Proposed Development

This section summarises the key elements of the Proposed Development and should be read in conjunction with the submitted application drawings and Design and Access Statement.

4.1. The Proposed Development comprises the development of a new city centre commercial office campus, delivered as a single phase comprised of the following elements:

- package of enabling works including the establishment of new site levels (including for the future Park development being brought forward by MCC under a concurrent separate application) and permanent and temporary site boundaries, removal of services, highways alterations and other associated works; and,
- the development of a new civil service office campus including:
  - North Building comprising basement, ground plus seven floors of offices, plus enclosed and exposed rooftop plant up to 92.950 AOD;
  - South Building comprising basement, ground floor commercial uses, cycle parking, and occupiable office floorspace, plus six floors of offices plus enclosed and exposed rooftop plant up to Level 90.100 AOD;
  - Basement level accessible car parking of 50 spaces with access via Great Ancoats Street (plus five spaces associated with facilities management and operations);
  - The creation of new areas of public realm, including improved frontage to Great Ancoats Street, a Canal Plaza adjacent to the Rochdale Canal, and a new boulevard between the two buildings.
  - An area of private landscaping adjacent to the North Building enclosed by a boundary wall and a private garden adjacent to the east elevation of the South Building; and
  - Associated servicing and access arrangements.

4.2. The key elements of the Proposed Development are set out below and should be read in conjunction with the submitted application drawings and Design and Access Statement prepared by AtkinsRéalis.

Enabling Works Package

4.3. Development will commence on site through the implementation of a package of enabling works including:

- A reduced level excavation for the basement of the Proposed Development (including archaeological investigations) and establishment of new site levels (including for the future Park development being brought forward by MCC under a concurrent separate application);
- Erection of a permanent boundary to the north of the Site and adjacent to the school;
- Erection of site hoardings to other boundaries;
- Removal of existing services; and
- Highways alterations and other associated works.

4.4. The enabling works package is anticipated to take circa six months for construction and commence in advance of the main build.

Site Levels

4.5. There is a significant level change of approximately 4.5m across the Site that has been sensitively incorporated into the public realm design. The Site's redevelopment involves raising the ground level and creating a largely flat deck level which is helpful for accessibility and a step-free environment. The proposals also seek to establish new site levels for the future Park development being brought forward by MCC under a concurrent separate application, using the excavated material from the Site.

4.6. In the temporary state, the earth will be covered to prevent soil erosion and part of the future park area will be used as the contractor's compound area.

Manchester Digital Campus

Development Brief

4.7. The GPA's Government Workplace Design Guide establishes a benchmark in aspirations, space standards, look and feel, corporate identity and, importantly, a consistent design approach to all government office workspace. It informs designers in how the GPA intends to create *"modern, digitally enabled, shared workspaces for the UK Civil Service".*

4.8. Whilst additionally taking into account the local Manchester context, a series of key design principles have informed the design of the Proposed Development:

Civic Scale and Appearance	Bold, Simple Forms	Reactivation of Great Ancoats Street	Responding to the Detailed Needs of the Government

Design Evolution

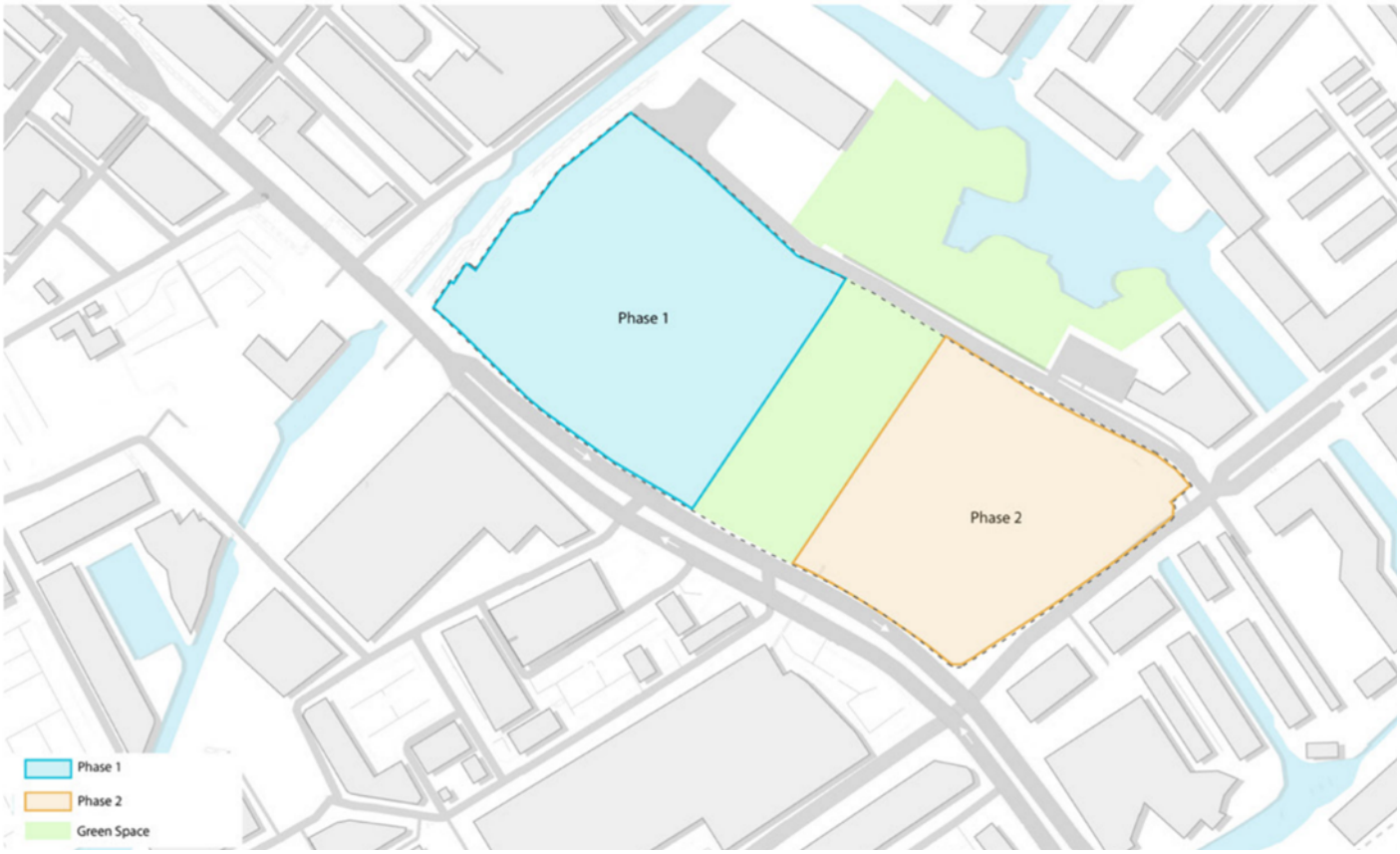
The Former Central Retail Park SRF (2023)

4.9. As set out in Section 2, the endorsed SRF sets out a number of key principles for the redevelopment of the whole SRF Area.

4.10. It outlined an indicative parameter plan of how the individual design drivers and development principles could be realised for the Site, and outlined indicative heights for the plots across the full SRF area, with the suggestion for stepping the building's heights as a transition from west to east and integrating the development into the existing skyline. This was done whilst recognising that these initial parameters would be subject to further exploration and detailed design as part of future detailed planning processes.

4.11. Figure 4.1 sets out the proposed development parcels identified within the SRF.

Figure 4.1: The Former Central Retail Park SRF Development Parcels



4.12. The Proposed Development falls within Phase 1 of the endorsed SRF. For this phase, the SRF envisaged development to achieve the following key principles:

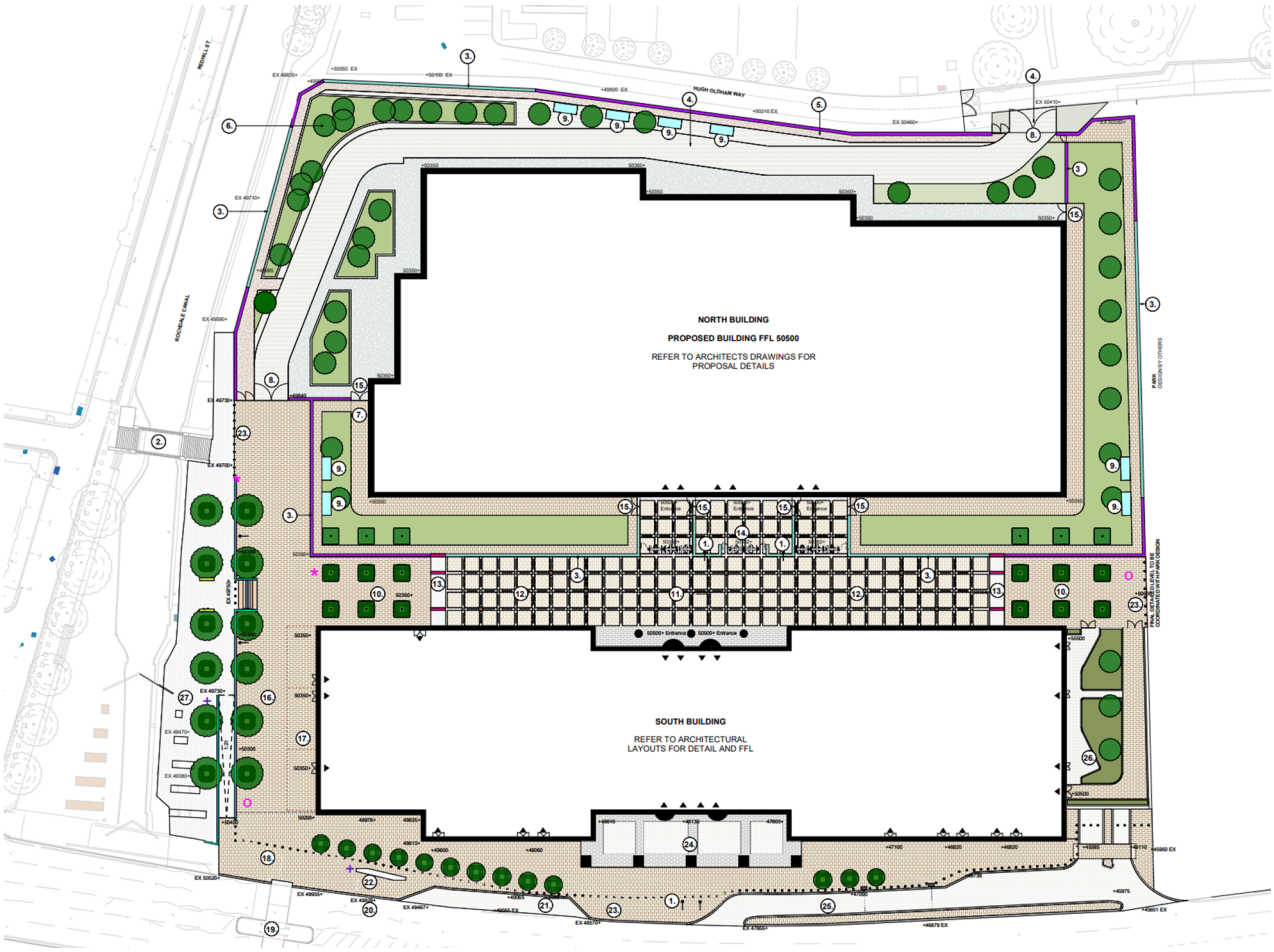
- to respond positively to the neighbouring area to help stitch the Site into its local context.
- to create a strong boundary edge which reactivates a key stretch of Great Ancoats Street.
- To provide public realm connections through the site from the new green space to the east and towards an indicative piazza / square adjacent to the Rochdale Canal, enhancing the setting of the Conservation Area and the adjacent listed buildings.

4.13. The Applicant has a fixed requirement to deliver an office campus that meets the spatial and functional requirements of the end-user, including the need to deliver large and efficient office floorplates, suitable for modern office requirements and effective collaboration and co-location of functions. This has ultimately dictated the need for two buildings aligned with the footprints of the 'development parcels' outlined in the SRF.

4.14. The resultant proposed massing comprises of two distinct volumes (North Building and South Building), surrounded by public realm which responds to the SRF ambitions, including to improve east to west connections (the Boulevard) and to provide a plaza space adjacent to the Rochdale Canal (Canal Plaza). This is illustrated within Figure 4.2 and described in the sections further below.

4.15. Stepped building frontages break down the visual mass of the Proposed Development and reflect the varying building plots in the proximity. The proposed massing helps to reestablish the street frontage to Great Ancoats Street and maintain respectful distances from the mill buildings and school.

Figure 4.2: Landscape / Public Realm Masterplan drawing ref: MDCX-ATR-ZZ-ZZ-DR-L-231000-P01.3



Use and Amount

4.16. The quantum and uses of the Proposed Development are set out in **Table 4.1** below.

Table 4.1 Quantum and Use of the Proposed Development

Description	Area/Number
Site Area	2.98 hectares
Office Floorspace (Use Class E)	83,000 sq. m. (GIA)
Retail Unit Floorspace (flexible commercial use (Use Class E))	1,000 sq. m. (GIA)
Cycle Parking	320 spaces
Car Parking	50 accessible spaces, including 15 EV charging spaces (plus 5 spaces associated with facilities management and operations)

Scale and Massing

4.17. The proposed scale of the two buildings is as follows:

- North Building: Ground plus seven floors plus enclosed and exposed rooftop plant up to 92.950 AOD; and

- South Building: Ground plus six floors plus enclosed and exposed rooftop plant up to 90.100 AOD.

4.18. The proposed scale and massing responds to the local context and has been informed by detailed technical analysis including in respect of daylight, sunlight and overshadowing, and townscape and heritage. Specific regard has been had to seeking to minimise any potential impact on adjacent uses, including the school. As such, plant levels are proposed to step-back from the edge of the building to further reduce the massing.

Layout

Basement

4.19. An undercroft basement is proposed to provide a total of 50 all accessible spaces / for blue badge staff holders (plus 5no. spaces associated with facilities management and operations).

Ground Floor

4.20. As the main frontage to the development, the South Building will convey the civic purpose and presence of the campus and be the front door from the city. The main ground floor entrance foyer can be accessed from both the Boulevard (an area of public realm between the South Building and North Building) and from Great Ancoats Street.

4.21. The open plan nature of the ground floor entrance foyer allows for a strong visual connection between the two entrances and acts as an office community centric space that develops a strong social sense of belonging. At the eastern edge of the building there is a private external terrace.

4.22. A number of commercial retail units are integrated along the western and southern façades of the building, activating the street frontages along Great Ancoats Street and the Canal Plaza, a new piece of public realm adjacent to the Rochdale Canal towpath.

4.23. For the North Building, the ground floor entrance foyer is accessed from the Boulevard. The Ground floor includes a range of workspaces creating a mix of private and social zones tailored to the requirements of a diverse and inclusive workforce.

Upper Floors (Typical Office Floors)

4.24. The Proposed Development will deliver a range of exemplary, innovative workplaces.

4.25. On the upper floors of both buildings, the office accommodation wraps around central cores, which have been carefully designed to allow for access and service requirements. The floorplates are purposefully rational and compact to enable collaboration and co-location of functions.

Plant and Roof Level

4.26. Both buildings will include enclosed and exposed levels of rooftop plant, as well as providing a platform for tracked building maintenance units for cleaning and maintenance of the building envelopes. Provision is also allowed for the installation of photovoltaic panels providing a key source of renewable energy for the Proposed Development.

Appearance and Materiality

4.27. The massing of both buildings is split horizontally into three classical elements of building form: base, middle and upper sections. Each element includes a vertically orientated double floor bay and subtly reflects the internal uses.

4.28. The ground floor facade differs between the two buildings due to the nature of the functions they perform. The North Building is solid in nature, whilst the South Building is much more open and welcoming, to reflect its public use / retail function. The middle floors allow a level of directed transparency, and the upper elements are seen as a consistent crown that envelops various setback roof elements across both buildings.

4.29. Dividing the massing in a simple way allows the form to be read easily, reflecting the civic nature of the buildings.

4.30. The appearance of both the North and South Buildings is based on the same foundational principles; however, the North Building features a sculptural fin design, which aims to direct views toward the park, avoiding the overlooking of the nearby school and residential buildings.

4.31. The materials have been chosen to befit the Proposed Development's intended civic nature and reflect similar buildings across the city. A palette of high-quality materials has been developed to support the ambitious place making aspirations for the Proposed Development. Materials have been selected to meet design, access, loading, technical and aesthetic requirements and are deemed appropriate for the Site and its setting.

Landscaping and Public Realm

4.32. The Proposed Development will deliver an extensive area of public realm built around the North and South Buildings. Please refer to Figure 4.2.

4.33. Various design drivers have informed the overall design strategy of the public realm, and the goal is to create a high-quality environment, meeting the defined office needs and providing improved connections and new public realm. Critical to the design is also the need to ensure that the public realm is coordinated with the adjacent proposals by Manchester City Council for a new park to deliver a seamless transition between the sites and a comprehensive public realm design across the SRF Area.

4.34. The planting proposals will create an attractive public realm, introduce vertical scale, provide seasonal interest, improve biodiversity as well as provide numerous wider environmental benefits such as shade, shelter and support with rainwater management.

4.35. Altogether there are five key public realm spaces associated with the Proposed Development, as discussed in further detail below.

The Canal Plaza

4.36. The Canal Plaza forms a key interface between the Ancoats Conservation Area and the Site. This will be a key movement space as well as a "destination".

4.37. The design of the Canal Plaza takes reference from the area of public realm on Redhill Street (on the opposite side of the Rochdale Canal) and integrates with the canal footpath.

4.38. An extensive area of pavement is proposed to accommodate the expected pedestrian movement through this space, as well as spill out space for the proposed commercial units with the western façade of the South Building to further activate the Canal Plaza.

4.39. A high-quality public realm will be created comprising mature trees set within natural stone paving with generous provision of seating. The Canal Plaza will unify the two sides of the Rochdale Canal, providing a strong connection between the Ancoats Conservation Area and the Proposed Development.

4.40. The elevation change of between 0.5m – 1.0m is envisaged in a series of steps with appropriate non-stepped access routes as alternatives.

Great Ancoats Street Frontage

4.41. The Proposed Development will assist in repairing the frontage along Great Ancoats Street, providing an extended active frontage lined with commercial retail units and street trees. This will be served by high quality natural stone pavement providing access for all, to promote movement along the frontage whilst creating a safe and civic space away from vehicular traffic on Great Ancoats Street.

4.42. The key entrance to the South Building will be paved in a different material to help highlight the building's arrival space.

4.43. Large scale bespoke benches will provide seating along Great Ancoats Street with age-appropriate detailing with comfort backs and arm rests. A line of bollards is proposed to be set back from the edge of the road to provide further protection to pedestrians along this Great Ancoats Street frontage and will be softened by a linear line of street trees.

The Boulevard

4.44. The Boulevard will form a key access space for building users and is expected to cater for large scale pedestrian movement leading up to building entrances. The proposals aim to deliver a high-quality pedestrian movement space with flexible lighting and artwork, a nod to the Applicants ambitions to deliver a new digital office campus.

4.45. It will be characterised by formal hard paving with trees at each end softening the thresholds into the space; comprised of three 5m high vertical sculptural gateway features and a change in hard landscaping materiality.

4.46. Beyond the sculptural gateways, the area will be paved to provide a generous arrival arena to each of the two main building entrances. The boulevard will include architectural lighting and the 3m high wall enclosing the North Building will be adorned with artwork and embossed patterns of a digital theme.

Landscaping around the North Building

4.47. The North Building has its own enclosed landscape setting, providing attractive planting for building users. It is bounded by 3m high boundary wall to the Boulevard, raising to 3.6 metres on the other sides and with fencing on top to the school to match the height of the existing fence line. The treatment of the wall varies on each elevation responding to the context beyond.

4.48. The canal side boundary will have artwork reflecting the history of the Ancoats Conservation Area, the historic mills and Rochdale Canal. The design of the northern boundary will be agreed through consultation with the school and will include artwork appealing to children. The eastern boundary is discussed below in the context of how it interfaces with the Park.

The Terrace

4.49. The Terrace occupies the eastern end of the South Building and will overlook into the Park. It is proposed to be a gated space with restricted access to building users. It will also provide an access point for the cycle parking located in the South Building. The space will be generously planted and will mirror the landscaping language of the Park in terms of soft and hard landscaping details.

4.50. The Terrace will form visual relief and contribute to biodiversity enhancement with abundant planting in raised planters.

Interface with the Park

4.51. Careful consideration has been given to the interface with the new park (under the separate Park Application) to ensure that the two separate proposals blended seamlessly, and the pedestrian environment is safe and attractive.

4.52. To the north, a boundary will be formed by a 3.6m high concrete wall which will be faced by planting on the Park side including plant motifs over this section to reflect its setting. As the park steps down into a series of planted terraces towards Great Ancoats Street, a concrete retaining wall will separate the two sites and will follow the design of the northern section.

4.53. Where the Boulevard joins the park, the materials are proposed to provide complimentary colours and tones along this boundary to ensure a comprehensive landscaping design across the two sites.

Accessibility

Pedestrian and Vehicular Access

4.54. The Proposed Development has been designed to ensure effective movement and permeability through and around the Site by pedestrians and cyclists and from a number of routes/directions. The need to ensure effective and secure vehicular access for pick-up and drop-off, servicing, accessible parking, and emergency access has also been critical to the proposals.

4.55. The primary building entrances for both buildings are located centrally within the Site on the Boulevard. The South Building also enjoys a secondary entrance fronting Great Ancoats Street to activate the frontage alongside the commercial retail units facing Great Ancoats Street and the Canal Plaza.

4.56. Two vehicular lay-bys are proposed along Great Ancoats Street. The western layby is proposed for pick-ups and drop-offs and small servicing vehicles and is suitable for up to four cars. The eastern layby will provide access into the undercroft accessible parking, as well as allowing servicing. The eastern layby will replace the existing access formally used for the retail park.

4.57. The proposed landscaping will take pedestrians off the edge of Great Ancoats Street and into the Site adjacent to the south elevation of the South Building, avoiding conflicts with vehicles using the layby.

4.58. The existing bus stop on Great Ancoats Street will be relocated c100m east to improve highways safety, align with the new park and avoid the vehicle lay-bys.

4.59. A dedicated fire access route, paved in grasscrete, is proposed from Hugh Oldham Way and will loop around the building from the north to the west of the Site, with emergency vehicles exiting through the Canal Plaza and onto Great Ancoats Street via drop bollards.

Car Parking

4.60. Limited on-site car parking spaces are proposed and comprise of 50 accessible spaces within the undercroft, including 15 EV charging spaces (plus 5no. spaces associated with facilities management and operations).

Cycle Parking

4.61. A large cycle parking facility will be provided in the South Building, for users of both buildings to use. It comprises an indoor cycle store with 320 cycle spaces, together with locker and shower facilities for the users of both buildings.

Waste and Servicing

4.62. The servicing and logistics of the Proposed Development will be managed and controlled via Great Ancoats Street.

4.63. All servicing and deliveries for the office and commercial uses will be undertaken from the eastern vehicular layby off Great Ancoats Street. Deliveries will be carefully planned and managed and wherever possible occur during ‘out-of-hours’ periods to avoid peak traffic.

4.64. The refuse stores within each buildings’ basement are equipped with ramped access routes out onto Great Ancoats Street. It is anticipated that the management team will transport refuse bins up to the vehicular lay-by, by means of an electric tow.

5. Planning Assessment

The following section sets out the Development Plan and Material Considerations and assesses the Proposed Development against these.

5.1. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (PCPA) states:

"If regard is to be had to the development plan for the purpose of any determination to be made under the planning Acts the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise".

Planning Framework

5.2. The Development Plan and Material Considerations for the Site and Proposed Development is comprised of the following:

DEVELOPMENT PLAN			
REGIONAL	GMCA Places for Everyone (2024)	GM Joint Waste Development Plan (2012)	GM Joint Minerals Plan (2013)
LOCAL	Manchester Core Strategy (2012)	Manchester Proposals Map (2012)	Saved Unitary Development Plan Policies (1995)
RELEVANT MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS			
NATIONAL	National Planning Policy Framework (2023)[5]	Historic England's Guidance Note 4 Tall Buildings (2022)	
LOCAL	**Supplementary Planning Guidance**	Guide to Development in Manchester (2007)	Design for Access 2 (2003)
	Strategic Regeneration Framework	The Former Central Retail Park Strategic Regeneration Framework (2023)	
	Other	Manchester Climate Change Framework 2020- 2025 (2020)	GD04 Waste Storage and Collection Guidance for New Developments

5.3. The Proposed Development is assessed with reference to these documents in respect to the following relevant planning considerations:

- Principle of Development:

[5] Consultation on reforms to the NPPF took place between 30 July and 24 September 2024 seeking views on a series of wider policy proposals in relation to increasing planning fees, local plan intervention criteria and appropriate thresholds for certain Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects. This has also been taken into account, albeit with weight applied in accordance with its status.

- Overall case for development
- Density and height

- Design and Appearance:
  - Architectural Quality and Inclusive Design
  - Landscaping and Public Realm
  - Climate Change and Energy
  - Designing out Crime
  - Waste Management
- Townscape and Heritage:
  - Archaeology
  - Heritage
  - Townscape and Visual Impact
- Environmental Considerations:
  - Acoustics, ventilation and overheating
  - Air Quality
  - Ecology and biodiversity
  - Flood Risk and Drainage
  - Ground Conditions
  - Noise and Vibration
  - Traffic and Transport
- Microclimate Considerations:
  - Daylight and Sunlight
  - Solar Glare
  - Wind
- Socio-Economic Considerations
- Other Considerations:
  - Construction Management
  - Operational Management
  - TV Reception and Broadband
  - Aviation

Principle of Development

Relevant policies and guidance:

Development Plan

- Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan (2024)
    - JP-Strat1: Core Growth Area
    - JP-Strat2: City Centre
    - JP-S1 Sustainable Development
    - JP-J1: Supporting Long-Term Economic Growth
    - JP-J2: Employment Sites and Premises
    - JP-J3: Office Development
    - JP-G6: Urban Green Space
    - JP-G8: A Net Enhancement of Biodiversity and Geodiversity
    - JP-P1: Sustainable Places
- Core Strategy Policy SP1 – Spatial Principles
- Core Strategy Policy EC1 – Employment and Economic Growth in Manchester
- Core Strategy Policy EC3 – The Regional Centre
- Core Strategy Policy CC1 – Primary Economic Development Focus : City Centre and Fringe
- Core Strategy Policy CC6 – City Centre High Density Development
- Core Strategy Policy CC8 – Change and Renewal
- Core Strategy Policy CC9 – Design and Heritage
- Core Strategy Policy CC10 – A Place for Everyone
- Core Strategy Policy EC5 – East Manchester
- Core Strategy Policy T1 – Sustainable Transport
- Core Strategy Policy EN1 – Design Principles and Strategic Character Areas
- Core Strategy Policy EN2 – Tall Buildings
- Core Strategy Policy EN3 – Heritage
- Core Strategy Policy EN8 – Adaptation to Climate Change
- Core Strategy Policy EN9 – Green Infrastructure
- Core Strategy Policy DM1 – Development Management

Material Considerations

- NPPF (2023 Update)
- The Former Central Retail Park Strategic Regeneration Framework (2023)
- Historic England Guidance Note 4 – Tall Buildings (2022)

Overall Case for Development

5.4. The redevelopment of the Site is a long-standing key strategic priority for MCC and the principle of the comprehensive redevelopment of a vacant, brownfield site within the city centre to create a high-quality, sustainable office district is clearly established through national, regional and local planning policy as well as within the Former Central Retail Park SRF (2023).

5.5. At the heart of the NPPF lies the 'presumption' in favour of sustainable development (Para. 11); the core principle running through plan-making and decision taking.

5.6. At regional level, the Places for Everyone Plan reinforces the ambition to bring forward urban / brownfield land for development. Places for Everyone Policy JP-Strat2 emphasises the City Centre's significant economic role, having a primary focus for business among other uses and supporting Greater Manchester's economic growth. Policy JP-J3 earmarks over 2 million sq. m. of accessible new office floorspace for the region, with more than half of this to be accommodated within the City Centre.

5.7. At local level, the Site falls within the City Centre, (as amended under the City Centre Strategic Plan 2015-2018 (2016), which extended the boundary of the City Centre to include Ancoats and New Islington). The Site is also located in the Regional Centre and East Manchester boundaries and therefore the Core Strategy City Centre and Regional Centre policies apply with specific reference to the principle of development. Those most relevant include:

- Policy CC1 notes the City Centre and City Centre Fringe is a strategic economic location and focus on employment growth. High density developments are encouraged in certain areas, among which the Site is located.
- Policy CC6 focuses high density development in the City Centre, whereby scale, massing and height will significantly exceed what is appropriate elsewhere in the City and will have regard to the Council's policy on tall buildings (EN2).
- Policy EC3 promotes employment generating uses including offices within the Regional Centre, particularly locations that are well connected and of appropriate scale and type.
- Policy EC5 notes East Manchester is expected to provide approximately 80-85ha of employment land. The Policy also notes City Centre Fringe along Great Ancoats Street, where the Site is, to provide an extension to City Centre employment opportunity.

5.8. In accordance with the above Development Plan policies and SRF, the principle of high-density office development is wholly appropriate and compliant with the SRF. It will contribute to sustainable patterns of development through bringing a key vacant, brownfield city centre site back into productive use to create a high-quality, sustainable office district which has strong connections to the local neighbourhoods and wider city centre, and is highly accessible by sustainable modes of transport.

Density and Height

5.9. The Proposed Development fully complies with Development Plan Policies that relate to density and tall buildings, namely Core Strategy Policies CC6, EN2, and EC3 all of which seek to encourage high density developments within the City Centre, where scale and massing will exceed what is appropriate elsewhere.

5.10. It is located in an area that has experienced significant transformation over the last decade, resulting in a range of surrounding building heights. Buildings along Great Ancoats Street are more variable, with the majority of more recent developments being considerably taller than the average height set by the highest mill buildings (27m), including Oxygen Tower at 109m. As defined in Policy EN4 of the Core Strategy, tall buildings are defined as buildings which are substantially taller than their neighbourhoods and/or which significantly change the skyline. As such, despite the varying context and in light that the Proposed Development rises to 42m and above the prevailing average, Section 6 of this Statement provides a full tall building analysis of the Proposed Development against Historic England's Guidance Note 4 (Tall Buildings) and Core Strategy Policy EN2.

5.11. The proposed building heights have been carefully considered in relation to the immediate site context and also views from heritage and townscape settings in numerous locations throughout the City.

5.12. The SRF does not seek to strictly limit the extent / scale of future developments, rather it provides a range of design principles that guides developments to come forward. Within the principles, it includes consideration on indicative scale and mass for the SRF Area, which will vary and correspond with varying heights of buildings from Ancoats Conservation Area to Old Mill Street along Great Ancoats Street. This allows future developments in the SRF Area to integrate well into the existing urban context.

5.13. The Proposed Development therefore complies with Development Plan policies and the development principles established in the SRF, when taken as a whole.

5.14. The Proposed Development falls within Phase 1 of the endorsed SRF and the scale and massing is within the indicative parameters of the SRF.

5.15. It has been designed to both meet the spatial and functional requirements of the end-user and deliver a scheme which responds to its local context in terms of scale which has been informed by detailed technical analysis including in respect of daylight, sunlight and overshadowing, townscape, and heritage. Specific regard has been had to seeking to minimise any potential impact on adjacent uses, including the school and its associated playground. As such, plant levels are proposed to step-back from the edge of the building to further reduce the massing.

Design and Appearance

Relevant policies and guidance:
Development Plan • Core Strategy Policy CC6 – City Centre High Density Development • Core Strategy Policy CC8 – Change and Renewal • Core Strategy Policy CC10 – A Place for Everyone • Core Strategy Policy EN1 – Design Principles and Strategic Character Areas • Core Strategy Policy EN2 – Tall Buildings • Core Strategy Policy EN9 – Green Infrastructure • Core Strategy Policy DM1 – Development Management Material Considerations • The Former Central Retail Park Strategic Regeneration Framework (2023) • Historic England Guidance Note 4 – Tall Buildings (2022) • Design for Access 2 (2003)

5.16. Core Strategy Policy EN1 states that all development in Manchester will be expected to follow the seven principles of urban design (character, continuity and enclosure, public realm, ease of movement, legibility, adaptability and diversity) and have regard to the strategic character area in which the development is located.

5.17. Core Strategy Policy DM1 states that development should have regard to appropriate siting, layout, scale, form, massing, materials and detailing as well as the impact on the surrounding areas in terms of the design, scale and appearance.

5.18. The NPPF states that "*good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities*", Para. 135 advises that developments should:

- function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;
- be visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;

- be sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change;
- establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;
- optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and,
- create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.

5.19. The Design for Access 2 manual provides a practical and clear set of best practice standards supporting equal access to facilities in building and measures that should be incorporated into schemes to increase their accessibility.

5.20. As discussed under the following sub-headings, the Proposed Development has been developed by an experienced design team, led by AtkinsRéalis, to respond to the local context and ambitions for the City Centre in respect of design and appearance. AtkinsRéalis has a vast portfolio of work demonstrates that they have the experience to work with the wider design team to deliver attractive and well used spaces and successful places. The design has developed through a significant iterative process of pre-application engagement over a period of c18 months with the Local Planning Authority and other relevant statutory consultees, including Historic England.

Architectural Quality

5.21. The Proposed Development is well integrated into and responds positively to the immediate urban context, which is characteristically varied. It includes large footprint listed mill buildings with a prevailing height of 27m alongside mid-rise (16m) and newer higher rise developments (up to 109m).

5.22. The Applicant has a fixed requirement to deliver an office campus that meets the spatial and functional requirements of the end-user, including the need to deliver large and efficient office floorplates, suitable for modern office requirements and effective collaboration and co-location of functions. This has ultimately dictated the need for two large scale buildings aligned with the footprints of the 'development parcels' outlined in the SRF.

5.23. Nonetheless, the design of both the North and South Buildings is based on the same foundational principles to break down the visual mass, and to complement the existing urban grain in the surrounding areas. Stepped building frontages break down the visual mass of the Proposed Development and reflect the varying building plots in the proximity. The proposed massing helps to reestablish the street frontage to Great Ancoats Street and maintain respectful distances from the mill buildings and school.

5.24. The elevation treatments have been carefully considered throughout the design development process to ensure the Proposed Development is of a high-quality and the buildings have longevity. This has been informed by the extensive pre-application engagement with the Local Planning Authority and other key stakeholders including Historic England, as detailed within the Design and Access Statement submitted in support of this application.

5.25. The materials strategy is crafted to suit the intended civic nature and reflect similar civic buildings across the City and to respect and complement the adjacent historic buildings. The materials are of a high quality, responding to the design intent.

5.26. Attention to detailing will be maintained through the subsequent detailed design stages to ensure an exemplar of good design. This will be controlled through a condition requiring agreement to external materials and the production of a full-scale mock-up panel to be agreed with the LPA in advance of works commencing above ground for the main build stage.

5.27. The supporting Design and Access Statement produced by AtkinsRéalis sets out further details.

Inclusive Design

5.28. The SRF vision is to create a new, dynamic and diverse commercial district which will deliver a range of exemplary and innovative workplaces, promoting inclusivity, health and well-being. It will provide buildings that are high-quality, sustainable, resilient, adaptable, reliable and simple to operate, creating environments for people to collaborate and perform to their highest potential.

5.29. The GPA has set out their intent to deliver inclusive environments within their vision for great places to work. The Proposed Development is designed to be welcoming and accommodating to all, regardless of background, abilities or circumstances. The interior is tailored around comfort and wellbeing, with human-centred design and aims to create a welcoming atmosphere, fostering collaboration, productivity and a healthy work environment.

5.30. A range of inclusive amenities are incorporated which serve the wellbeing of a diverse staff community. The Proposed Development fully adheres to the Government Workplace Inclusive Design Standards March 2020 (V1.0), which exceeds the requirement of Design for Access 2 (2003) guidance document and takes reference from the following materials:

- BS8300-1:2018. Design of an accessible and inclusive built environment. Part 1: External environment – Code of practice.
- BS8300-2:2018. Design of an accessible and inclusive built environment. Part 2: Buildings – Code of Practice.
- Building Regulations 2010. Access to and use of the buildings. Approved Document M Volume 2 – buildings other than dwellings. 2015 edition incorporating 2020 amendments.
- Other than the GPA's Inclusive Design Standards, BS8300-1:2018 and BS8300-2:2018 are considered by GPA as their baseline, rather than the minimum requirements of Approved Documents when it pertains to accessibility and Inclusive design.

5.31. The supporting Design and Access Statement prepared by AtkinsRéalis sets out further details. A compliance condition will be included on the consent to ensure that the Proposed Development includes for full disabled access to be provided to all areas of public realm and via the main entrances and to the floors above.

Landscaping and Public Realm

5.32. A key guiding design principle within the SRF is to deliver public realm which is "*high-quality inclusive open space for the local community, staff and visitors*."

5.33. The Proposed Development includes an extensive area of high quality, landscaped public realm, complementing the design principles and ambition of the Applicant to create an exciting, welcoming and secure office campus that supports the Applicant to attract and retain a world-class workforce.

5.34. Various character areas are identified within the public realm which possess different functions and designs as explained further in Section 4, namely:

- Canal Plaza – a key public realm destination space which acts as an interface between the Ancoats Conservation Area and supports movement along the canal towpath.
- The Boulevard – a high-quality publicly accessible pedestrian movement space and access point for the two buildings with flexible lighting and artwork;
- Great Ancoats Street Frontage - an extended active frontage lined with commercial retail units and street trees to promote movement along the frontage whilst creating a safe and civic space away from vehicular traffic on Great Ancoats Street;
- North Building Landscape – an enclosed landscape setting, providing attractive planting for building users only;
- Park Interface - careful consideration has been given to the interface with the new park (under the separate Park Application) to ensure that the two separate proposals blended seamlessly, and the pedestrian environment is safe and attractive; and,

- The Terrace – an area exclusively accessible to building users and providing a range of planting.

5.35. In terms of hard landscaping, a comprehensive palette of high-quality materials has been developed to support the ambitious placemaking aspirations for the Proposed Development. Materials are selected to meet design, access and loading requirements, ensuring they will be appropriate visually for the place and the wider setting.

5.36. For soft landscaping, the planting proposals have been carefully considered and the planting scheme will create an attractive public realm, introduce vertical scale, provide seasonal interest, and improve biodiversity, as well as provide numerous wider environmental benefits, such as shade, shelter and support with rainwater management.

5.37. In addition, the Proposed Development will facilitate a new park at the heart of SRF Area (being brought forward concurrently by MCC under a separate planning application). Excavation of the Site is required to establish the levels for the foundations of the proposed buildings and associated basement parking. This means there is a large amount of excavated materials which are proposed to be moved to form the new Park: ultimately delivering the desired levels to support the separate Park proposals. This ensures that waste and construction traffic are minimised through effectively re-using existing site materials. As well as creating the site levels, the Applicant is contributing to the cost of designing the new park and will contribute towards the future maintenance of the park.

5.38. A detailed summary of the design and appearance of the Proposed Development is provided within Section 4 of this Statement as well as the Design and Access Statement produced by AtkinsRéalis in support of this Application.

5.39. A condition will be applied to the consent which requires the final landscaping details to be agreed with the LPA, including the provision of samples, in advance of occupation to ensure design quality is maintained. Based upon this it is considered that the design and appearance of the Proposed Development is compliant with the relevant policies set out within the Local Development Plan, when taken as a whole.

Designing out Crime

5.40. The NPPF (Para. 96) states the importance of creating places and buildings that are:

"Safe and accessible, so that crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion – for example through the use of beautiful, well-designed, clear and legible pedestrian and cycle routes, and high quality public space, which encourage the active and continual use of public areas."

5.41. Core Strategy Policy DM1 Development Management outlines that all development should have regard to the specific issues including community safety and crime prevention.

5.42. As well as the inherent benefits that the Proposed Development will provide in delivering additional activity, oversight and natural surveillance of the area and the proposed public realm at all times of the day and night, the Proposed Development will incorporate significant measures to minimise the risk of crime.

5.43. A Crime Impact Statement has been prepared by Arup, who have identified a number of features/measures that would make a positive contribution to the prevention of crime and fear of crime. These features/measures can be found in full within the CIS submitted in support of this Application, but in summary include integrated physical and electronic security features in the design of the buildings avoiding the need for retrofitted security measures, the delivery of well-designed and lit public realm, creation of a new active frontage onto Great Ancoats Street, and 24/7 security presence.

5.44. A planning condition should be applied to the consent requiring the development to be carried out in accordance with the recommendations of the Crime Impact Statement and within three months of the first occupation of the development requiring the LPA acknowledgement that it has received written confirmation of a Secured by Design accreditation.

5.45. Therefore, the Proposed Development is considered to comply with the relevant statutory considerations and local and national planning policy in respect of design and appearance when taken as a whole.

Townscape and Heritage

Relevant policies and guidance:
Development Plan • Core Strategy Policy CC6 – City Centre High Density Development • Core Strategy Policy CC8 – Change and Renewal • Core Strategy Policy CC9 – Design and Heritage • Core Strategy Policy EN2 – Tall Buildings • Core Strategy Policy EN3 – Heritage • Saved UDP Policy DC18.1 – Conservation Areas • Saved UDP Policy DC19.1 – Listed Buildings **Material Considerations** • NPPF (2023 Update)

Heritage and Archaeology

5.46. The Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 sets out the general duty on decision makers in exercising their planning functions with respect to heritage assets. Section 66 requires:

"In considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the LPA or, as the case may be, the Secretary of State, shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses..."

5.47. Section 72 sets out the corresponding duty in relation to conservation areas, it requires:

"In the exercise, with respect to any building or other land in a conservation area, of any of the provisions mentioned in subsection (2), special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area..."

5.48. Paragraph 8 of the NPPF notes that one of the key dimensions to sustainable development is protecting and enhancing our historic environment.

5.49. Paragraph 208 of the NPPF states that:

"Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use."

5.50. The NPPF and the associated PPG emphasise the need for a thorough understanding of the significance of heritage assets, to form the basis for the assessment of any development impact. In addition, Core Strategy Policy EN3 evidently requires development proposals to be sensitive to the inherent values of the designated heritage asset, with any impact justified by clear, documentary evidence.

5.51. The Development Plan heritage policies detailed in Core Strategy Policies CC9, EN3 and saved UDP Policies DC18.1 and DC19.1 hold the same emphasis as the NPPF, with a focus on the fundamental importance of 'preserving or, where possible, enhancing the historic environment'.

5.52. Within a 250m study area around the Site, a total of 28no. designated heritage assets and 139no. non-designated heritage assets are present. These relate principally to the industrial development in Ancoats from the late 18th / early 19th century onwards.

5.53. Measures to mitigate potential effects on the historic environment have been embedded into the design of the Proposed Development, including:

- Location of the Proposed Development setback from the canal and listed mills;
- Design of the Proposed Development to respond to their townscape context and break up their massing;
- Careful consideration of the materiality of the Proposed Development in relation to the surrounding townscape;
- The creation of a new area of public realm along the canal and the use of hard landscaping within this to reflect the area's historic industrial character; and
- Integration of bespoke sculptures / landscape arts referencing the industrial history and significance of Ancoats into the public realm.

5.54. Full impact of the Proposed Development to the historic environment is included within Chapter 13 of Volume 2 of the Environmental Statement and its associated technical appendices. The key findings are summarised below.

Royal Mill, Sedgwick Mill, Old Mill and Decker Mill, and Waulk Mill

5.55. The Proposed Development will impact on the setting of Royal Mill, Sedgwick Mill, Old Mill and Decker Mill, and Waulk Mill as the introduction of new large buildings will reduce the perception of their impressive size, leading to a moderate negative effect. However, the current setting (with the cleared wider SRF site increasing their dominance within views) is not reflective of the mills historic setting within a dense urban grain, and does not contribute to the value of the mills, forming a disjointed and imbalanced setting, and a sense of the mills as being on the periphery of Ancoats, rather than at its heart.

5.56. The construction of the Proposed Development would re-establish an urban grain across the Site, creating a more coherent townscape setting for the historic mills and restoring their place at the centre of an urban grid, enhancing understanding of their historic significance as the heart of a bustling townscape. In addition, the setting of the mills would be further enhanced and enlivened by creating the new Canal Plaza public realm from which the group of historic mills can be viewed and appreciated.

5.57. Therefore, the Proposed Development would have both beneficial and adverse impacts on Royal Mill, Sedgwick Mill, Old Mill and Decker Mill, and Waulk Mill. On balance this has been assessed to result in a low adverse impact on these listed buildings, resulting in less than substantial harm.

Brownsfield Mill

5.58. In its current vacant condition, the Proposed Development does not positively contribute to the setting of Brownsfield Mill, forming a gap site within the formerly densely developed townscape.

5.59. The Proposed Development would form a substantial new element within the setting of Brownsfield Mill; however, this setting is already a mix of modern large-scale developments and historic buildings. Its group value with the surrounding mills and canal assets is largely uninterrupted by the massing of new urban developments.

5.60. The position of the Proposed Development to the east of Great Ancoats Street, set back from the Rochdale Canal would not impact the relationship of the mill to the canal, a key aspect of its setting, nor would it interrupt the visual connection between Brownsfield Mill and the historic mills on Redhill Street. The presence of the Proposed Development would channel views along the canal corridor, more keenly highlighting the historic relationship between Brownsfield Mill and the surrounding mill and canal assets. The Proposed Development would re-establish an urban grain across the Site, reinstating a more coherent townscape setting to the east of the mill. This would result in a negligible impact and a minor adverse effect on Brownsfield Mill.

Ancoats Conservation Area

5.61. In its current vacant condition, the Proposed Development detracts from the setting of the conservation area, interrupting the tight urban grain established by the conservation area and surrounding townscape with a large, inaccessible and unarticulated space.

5.62. The Proposed Development would form a major new element in the setting of Ancoats Conservation Area, introducing two nine-storey buildings and associated public realm into its setting. This impact would be focussed along the Rochdale Canal and Redhill Street, with limited visibility to the north of this due to the dense grid plan development within the conservation area. The Proposed Development would be legible as a modern intervention within the setting of the conservation area, however, would be sympathetic to its character and appearance due to the use of a simple block form and repetitive fenestration, which are characteristic of historic mills.

5.63. The Proposed Development would re-establish a coherent urban form across the Site and enable movement through this area, creating a more coherent and integrated townscape, and resolving the disparate and imbalanced setting of the conservation area along the Rochdale Canal. The presence of the Proposed Development would create channelled views along the canal corridor, better highlighting the relationship between the mills and canal, and better reflecting the historic setting of the conservation area, and would create a new public realm space to the south of the canal which would have a beneficial impact on the conservation area, providing an area from which the relationship between the historic mills and canal could be better appreciated.

5.64. Overall, the Proposed Development is assessed to have a low beneficial impact upon Ancoats Conservation Area due to enhancement of its setting, improvement of views along the Rochdale Canal corridor and the creation of new public space along the canal from which the Conservation Area can be appreciated.

Archaeological Remains

5.65. There is also a moderate to high potential for archaeological remains from the industrial and modern periods to be present on the site.

5.66. Construction of the Proposed Development would also result in the removal or truncation of unknown archaeological remains present within the Site. This would result in a permanent moderate adverse effect on any such remains. The value of potential unknown archaeological remains within the Proposed Development Site is likely to be low to medium. Based on currently available information, the impact of construction upon any such remains is unlikely to be significant. The phased programme of archaeological mitigation would provide a permanent record of archaeological remains that would be lost as a result of the construction of the Proposed Development. However this would not diminish this effect. The residual significance of effects for all historic environment assets resulting from construction and operation would remain the same.

5.67. Consultation with Greater Manchester Archaeological Advisory Service (GMAAS) has been ongoing, including the archaeological monitoring of geotechnical ground investigation works and archaeological mitigation in advance of construction. A phased programme of archaeological mitigation is proposed, and the scope of these works would be defined in an Archaeological Mitigation Strategy which would be agreed with GMAAS and delivered prior to commencement of the main construction phase.

Conclusions

5.68. The Proposed Development will have both negative and positive impacts on the settings of the listed buildings, including Royal Mill, Sedgwick Mill, Old Mill and Decker Mill, and Waulk Mill. The introduction of new large buildings will somewhat reduce the perception of the mills' impressive size, leading to a moderate negative effect. This impact is considered significant but will cause less than substantial harm to the value of the listed buildings. Additionally, the development will bring slight permanent benefits to five other listed buildings and the Ancoats Conservation Area.

5.69. Paragraph 208 of the NPPF requires that for proposals that lead to less than substantial harm, the public benefits of the proposals should be weighed against the public benefits. The Proposed Development would deliver significant public benefits as set out within Section 7 of this statement. It is considered, having special regard to the desirability of preserving the setting of the listed mills or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses, that these benefits, including the direct heritage benefits of enhancing the setting of

nationally significant heritage assets including the Conservation Area, significantly outweighs the less than substantial harm to the listed mills.

5.70. Therefore, the Proposed Development is considered to comply with the relevant statutory considerations and local and national planning policy in respect of heritage and archaeology when taken as a whole.

Townscape and Visual Impact

5.71. Volume 3 of the Environmental Statement comprises a Townscape and Visual Impact Assessment (TVIA), undertaken by Stephen Levrant Heritage Architecture.

5.72. The TVIA considers how views will change as a result of the Proposed Development and how this will affect people and visual amenity at different publicly accessible places. A total of 8no. Townscape Character Areas (TCAs) and 13no. viewpoints have been assessed as part of this exercise.

Effects on Townscape

5.73. The townscape effects from the Construction Phase relate to the environmental impact of the works including noise, dust, vibrations, visual impacts from hoardings, construction equipment/machinery and scaffolding, and increased levels of construction traffic on the Site and moving through the local area.

5.74. The impacts on TCAs during the construction phase range from negligible adverse to minor-moderate adverse. All of the impacts on TCAs during the Construction Phase are temporary, and all are indirect with exception of the impact identified upon TCA 1 (Great Ancoats Street) within which the Site is located.

5.75. Adherence to the Construction Environmental Management Plan ('CEMP') required via planning condition will help to mitigate the short-medium term impacts identified.

5.76. For the operational phase, TCA 1 (Great Ancoats Street) will experience the greatest level of change. The Proposed Development will have a transformative effect on the character, appearance and function of the Site, bringing an unutilised and low-quality plot on a key thoroughfare back into active use and aiding the repair of a significant gap in the local townscape. The effects on TCA 1 (Great Ancoats Street) are moderate-major beneficial, reflecting that the Proposed Development represents the first stage in mending the considerable townscape gap created by the demolition of the Central Retail Park in 2019. The scheme will activate this part of Great Ancoats Street, connect with and contribute to the cohesiveness of the streetscape, provide active uses and high-quality public realm (and aid interaction with the canal and Cotton Field Park to the north), and also facilitate the regeneration of the remainder of the SRF site.

5.77. The effects on the other TCAs are all indirect and range from neutral to minor-moderate beneficial.

Visual Effects

5.78. During the construction phase, the VIA concludes that the Proposed Development will lead to:

- Temporary moderate adverse impacts from Views 3 (Redhill Street (Canal Footbridge)) and 12 (Great Ancoats Street / Redhill Street).
- Temporary minor-moderate adverse impacts from Views 2 (Redhill Street (Bengal Street Junction)), 4 (Rochdale Canal Towpath (north of Tariff Street), 5 (Cotton Field Park), 6 (New Islington Marina) and 13 (Great Ancoats Street (Old Mill Street)).
- Temporary minor adverse impacts from Views 7 (Great Ancoats Street (Ashton Canal Bridge)) and 8 (Junction of Tariff Street and Brewer Street)
- Temporary neutral or negligible adverse impacts from Views 1 (Murray Street), 9 (Great Ancoats Street (Oldham Road)), 10 (Butler Street) and 11 (Ridgeway Street).

5.79. Views 3 (Redhill Street (Canal Footbridge)) and 12 (Great Ancoats Street / Redhill Street) which have the most considerable effects are the closest two viewpoints to the Site, and where the construction works will wholly diminish the amenity value of the view. However, these impacts are temporary in nature and the construction programme is estimated to be a short-medium term duration. Mitigation for the adverse impacts derived in the construction phase of the Proposed Development will be provided in the form of a CEMP which will seek to

lessen the impact of construction works on the ability for local and wider townscape views to be enjoyed by receptors. This will be controlled through a planning condition.

5.80. During the operational phase once construction is complete, the VIA concludes that the Proposed Development will lead to:

- Minor-moderate beneficial impacts from Views 3 (Redhill Street (Canal Footbridge)) and 12 (Great Ancoats Street / Redhill Street).
- Minor beneficial impacts from View 2 (Redhill Street (Bengal Street Junction)).
- Neutral impacts from Views 1 (Murray Street), 4 (Rochdale Canal Towpath (north of Tariff Street), 6 (New Islington Marina), 9 (Great Ancoats Street (Oldham Road)), 10 (Butler Street) and 11 (Ridgeway Street).
- Minor adverse impacts from Views 5 (Cotton Field Park), 7 (Great Ancoats Street (Ashton Canal Bridge)), 8 (Junction of Tariff Street and Brewer Street) and 13(Great Ancoats Street (Old Mill Street)).

5.81. The most significant beneficial impacts to Views 2 (Redhill Street (Bengal Street Junction)), 3 (Redhill Street (Canal Footbridge)) and 12 (Great Ancoats Street / Redhill Street). are derived in the activation of the Site through the injection of new uses and permeable frontages which have potential to be legible in these views or the Site's demonstrable enhancement to public realm and landscaping.

5.82. Minor Adverse impacts are attributed to the scheme in Views 5 (Cotton Field Park), 7 (Great Ancoats Street (Ashton Canal Bridge)), 8 (Junction of Tariff Street and Brewer Street) and 13(Great Ancoats Street (Old Mill Street)).. For the latter three of these, this impact is derived in the fact the Proposed Development obscures historic buildings including the industrial streetscape of Redhill Street and the Grade II* listed Brownsfield Mill on Great Ancoats Street, diminishing the amenity value of each respective view. However, as noted in the heritage considerations, the current setting (with the cleared wider SRF site increasing their dominance within views) is not reflective of the mills historic setting.

5.83. The adverse impact on View 5 (Cotton Field Park) is derived out of the overbearing appearance of the scheme in relation to the open greenery and riparian landscape to the north of the Site.

Summary

5.84. The Site's existing contribution to townscape and visual receptors is very poor. The scale of the Proposed Development is considerable, and the verified views have illustrated how well the scheme will sit within its local townscape context. It will have a transformative effect on the character, appearance and function of the Site.

5.85. It is considered that any adverse effects judged to result from the height, scale and massing of the Proposed Development on surrounding townscape receptors is balanced by the scheme's embedded design mitigation, particularly elements such as new public realm, landscaping and the activation of the Great Ancoats Street frontage and the overarching focus on design quality. All of these will be controlled by planning condition.

5.86. Any residual adverse effects identified should be weighed in the planning balance against the wider public benefits of the scheme, as set out within Section 7 of this Statement.

5.87. A Tall Building Statement considering the proposals against Historic England guidance and the criteria of Policy EN2 is included in the next section of this report. Therefore, the Proposed Development is considered to comply with the relevant statutory considerations and local and national planning policy in respect of townscape and visual impact when taken as a whole.

Environmental Considerations

Relevant policies and guidance:
Development Plan

Relevant policies and guidance:

• Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan (2024)
  o JP-G6: Urban Green Space
  o JP-G8: A Net Enhancement of Biodiversity and Geodiversity
  o JP-S1: Sustainable Development
• Core Strategy Policy EN4 – Reducing CO2 Emissions by Enabling Low and Zero Carbon Development
• Core Strategy Policy EN8 – Adaption to Climate Change
• Core Strategy Policy EN9 – Green Infrastructure
• Core Strategy Policy EN14 – Flood Risk
• Core Strategy Policy EN15 – Biodiversity and Geological Conservation
• Core Strategy Policy EN16 – Air Quality
• Core Strategy Policy EN17 – Water Quality
• Core Strategy Policy EN18 – Contaminated Land and Ground Stability
• Core Strategy Policy T1 – Sustainable Transport
• Core Strategy Policy T2 – Accessible Areas of Opportunity and Needs
• Core Strategy Policy CC5 – Transport
• Core Strategy Policy DM1 – Development Management
• Saved UDP Policy DC26.1 and DC26.5 – Development and Noise
Material Considerations
• Manchester's Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy (2018 updated in 2022)
• Manchester's Guide to Development SPD
• Manchester Climate Change Framework 2020 - 2025.
• NPPF (2023)

Ventilation

5.88. A 'Planning – Ventilation Systems for Extract and Odour Control' Technical Note prepared by AtkinsRéalis has been submitted in support of this Application which clearly outlines ventilation principles of the proposed ventilation systems for extract and odour control in various building areas at the Proposed Development.

5.89. Ventilation strategies for the Proposed Development encompass multiple systems, including:

- Office general ventilation;
- Car park ventilation;
- Basement ventilation;
- Toilet ventilation;
- Smoke ventilation;
- Specialist local extract ventilation; and,
- Retail area ventilation.

5.90. Each system is designed to ensure optimum air quality, occupant comfort, and compliance with Building Regulations Part F 2021. Inlets and discharges will all be at plant level, other than for the car park ventilation which will be within the landscaping at ground level. For details of each system outlined above, please refer to the submitted Planning – Ventilation Systems for extract and odour control Technical Note.

5.91. As a result, the Proposed Development is therefore considered to be in accordance with relevant planning policy and guidance in respect of ventilation, when taken as a whole.

Air Quality

5.92. In line with Core Strategy Policy EN16 'Air Quality', an assessment of the impact of the Proposed Development on air quality is included within Chapter 7 of Volume 2 of the Environmental Statement and its associated technical appendices, undertaken in line with relevant industry best practice guidance.

5.93. Human health and ecological receptors that may be affected by the Proposed Development have been identified in accordance with industry best practice definitions and include the Co-op Academy New Islington School, approximately 10 m to the north and nearby residential properties.

Construction Phase

5.94. The Proposed Development is located within a designated Air Quality Management Area, indicating air quality is already poor locally.

5.95. During construction, the main local sources of air pollution include dust from demolition and construction activities. Air quality during construction could also be affected by changes in traffic flows as a result of vehicles travelling to and from the Site transporting materials, plant and labour.

5.96. However, through adopting appropriate mitigation measures including erecting solid screens or barriers around activities likely to create dust, using water sprays to dampen down any dust, and covering stockpiles to prevent wind whipping, any impacts would not be significant. All appropriate mitigation will be secured through a Construction Environmental Management Plan, and it is expected a condition will be attached to any planning permission granted pursuant to this application to secure this.

5.97. In terms of impacts on the adjacent school during the construction phase, a new permanent boundary will be provided to the school as part of the enabling works package to help minimise dust, noise and overlooking, as well as providing a secure boundary.

Operational Phase

5.98. Once operational, there is potential for adverse effects on air quality at sensitive human health receptors within the study area due to changes in traffic flows associated with the Proposed Development. Likely changes in air pollutant concentrations because of traffic changes during operation of the Proposed Development were modelled and the changes in road traffic emissions during operation were assessed as not significant, reflecting the Applicant's aim to reduce car use through encouraging and promoting travel by sustainable travel modes (walking, cycling and public transport) through the implementation of a Travel Plan, which will be secured by a planning condition.

Summary

5.99. Based upon the above, it is considered that the Proposed Development is in accordance with relevant planning policy and guidance in respect of air quality, when taken as a whole.

Ecology and biodiversity

5.100. In line with Core Strategy Policy EN9, EN15 and the Places for Everyone policies listed above, the full impact of the Proposed Development on ecology and biodiversity is included within Chapter 8 of Volume 2 of the Environmental Statement and its associated technical appendices.

5.101. The baseline ecological value of the Site is relatively low, with the area predominantly consisting of hardstanding and scattered, self-seeded vegetation of limited ecological significance following the demolition of the former retail park. This low value vegetation will need to be removed as part of the development; however, the

Proposed Development has sought to maximise biodiversity delivery by incorporating an extensive area of soft landscaping within the new, accessible public realm.

5.102. Overall, the Proposed Development will deliver 1.29 area-based biodiversity units. Whilst this results in a net loss of -52.95% accounting for the clearance of the existing vegetation, the assessment accounts for on-site changes only as a result of this Application. Therefore, it takes accounts for the Applicant undertaking all the initial vegetation clearance across the whole application boundary (including the area where the enabling works to establish the levels for the Park will be carried out) but does not include any new units created by the planting of the Park itself (given that falls under the separate application being brought forward by MCC). Hence, in line with the relevant BNG legislation to achieve a 10% net gain, opportunities for off-site compensation will need to be identified within the boundary of the same local planning authority (i.e. Manchester City Council) or National Character Area (i.e. Manchester Conurbation) to satisfy the trading rules. The Applicant has been engaging proactively with Manchester City Council in respect of this and in advance of the submission of this application.

5.103. This will be secured through the use of a planning condition which requires a Biodiversity Gain Plan to be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority before the commencement of development. In satisfying this condition, the Applicant commits to seek to achieve the BNG requirements offsite within Manchester in the first instance, with the fall back to purchase Biodiversity Credits from a Greater Manchester Habitat Bank only where it has been evidenced that it cannot be met offsite within Manchester within the timescales for commencement of development.

5.104. As a result, the Proposed Development is therefore considered to be in accordance with relevant planning policy and guidance in respect of ecology and biodiversity, when taken as a whole.

Flood Risk and Drainage

5.105. Core Strategy Policy EN14 notes that all new development should minimise surface water run-off, including through Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) and the appropriate use of green infrastructure. Developers should have regard to the surface water run-off rates in the SFRA User Guide.

5.106. Full impact of the Proposed Development on water resources is included within Chapter 19 of Volume 2 of the Environmental Statement and its associated technical appendices, including the Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) and Drainage Strategy, prepared by AtkinsRéalis and submitted in support of this Application.

5.107. Following scrutiny of the Environment Agency Flood Map it has been identified that the Site lies within 'Very low' risk Flood Zone 1 which has less than a 0.1% chance of fluvial flooding each year. According to the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, the Site also lies within a Critical Drainage Area. Therefore, the Proposed Development is not at risk of flooding from the Rochdale Canal, Ashton Canal and New Islington Marina despite its proximity.

5.108. According to the NPPF, the Proposed Development is categorised as 'Less Vulnerable' ("Buildings used for shops, financial, professional and other services"). As such, and on the basis the Proposed Development falls within Flood Zone 1, an Exception Test is not required in accordance with the Flood Risk Vulnerability and Flood Zone Compatibility table, nor is the Sequential Test.

5.109. Potential impacts from construction can be mitigated through best practice measures embedded within the Construction Management Plan agreed via a condition attached the any subsequent planning permission.

5.110. For the operational phase, Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) will also be installed to control surface water runoff, and it is expected that final SuDS details will be agreed via a condition attached the any subsequent planning consent.

5.111. As a result, the Proposed Development is therefore considered to be in accordance with relevant planning policy and guidance in respect of flood risk and drainage, when taken as a whole.

Ground Conditions

5.112. Paragraph 189 of the NPPF and Core Strategy Policy EN18 requires that planning policies and decisions should ensure that sites are suitable for any proposed use by taking account of ground conditions and risks arising from land instability and contamination.

5.113. Full impact of the Proposed Development on ground conditions is included within Chapter 12 of Volume 2 of the Environmental Statement and its associated technical appendices, including the Phase 1 and 2 Geo-Environmental Assessment prepared by e3p (with Cover Note prepared by AtkinsRéalis) and submitted in support of this Application.

5.114. It is concluded that laboratory testing has not identified any significant site wide contamination. Loose chrysotile fibres and elevated concentration of lead have been identified within a single location. Given the nature of the site, other impacted areas may also be present. To mitigate the risk to construction workers associated with asbestos and lead, it is recommended that all works are completed in line with industry best practice so that control measures to manage dust and personal exposure are carefully implemented in accordance with an agreed Enabling Works Strategy.

5.115. The risk to future end users is mitigate to a large extent by the likely hardcover development. Consideration will need to be given to areas of landscaping and if impacted soils are present in these areas, then a clean cover system is likely to be required.

5.116. In terms of controlled waters, soil and groundwater analysis identifies that there is no significant risk to controlled waters.

5.117. The Phase 1 and 2 Geo-Environmental Assessment recommends that the following additional works are to be completed:

- Geotechnical Earthworks Strategy (Infrastructure); and,
- Remediation & Enabling Works Strategy.

5.118. It is anticipated that these works would be required as a pre-commencement condition of any approved development as a matter of course.

5.119. As a result, the Proposed Development is therefore considered to be in accordance with relevant planning policy and guidance in respect of ground conditions, when taken as a whole.

Noise and Vibration

5.120. Saved UDP Policy DC26 Development and Noise outlines that the Council intends to use the Development Control process to reduce the impact of noise on people living and working in, or visiting, the City. In giving effect to this intention, the Council will consider both:

- the effect of new development proposals which are likely to be generators of noise; and,
- the implications of new development being exposed to existing noise sources which are effectively outside planning control.

5.121. An assessment of the Proposed Development on noise and vibration is included within Chapter 16 of Volume 2 of the Environmental Statement and its associated technical appendices, including the Noise Assessment, prepared by AtkinsRéalis and submitted in support of this Application.

5.122. A baseline noise survey was conducted by AtkinsRéalis to determine the baseline ambient noise levels at the proposed location of the Proposed Development. The results of the noise survey indicated that the noise climate at each position was mainly influenced by road traffic noise from Great Ancoats Street as well as construction noise from nearby worksites.

Construction Phase

5.123. Calculations of the potential noise impacts during construction have been undertaken. These indicate that there is the potential for exceedances of noise level threshold at nearby noise sensitive receptors. Due to the transient and temporary nature of the works it is considered unlikely to exceed the temporal threshold to be a significant effect. Further consideration would be given by the contractor during the production of the Construction Environmental Management Plan, which would adhere with Manchester City Council's standard construction hours (see paragraph 5.190 below).

5.124. Contractors shall include within their CEMP commitments to ongoing engagement with the Co-op Academy primary school. This will include giving advanced notice on a regular basis of the planned construction activities and in particular noisy and disruptive works. This will allow the school to plan accordingly. A Community Liaison Officer (CLO) shall be appointed to manage this.

5.125. Construction Phase vibration impacts are not significant for all the locations assessed.

Operational Phase

5.126. Once operational, noise from rooftop plant equipment and surrounding traffic are expected to be the primary sources of noise and the effects on sensitive neighbours are varied. Operation of roof top plant is assumed to be 24hrs a day and has been assessed on a worst-case scenario with all the M&E constantly running, which is very unlikely in practice. Suitable acoustic screening will be provided to rooftop plant equipment to minimise noise, especially for nighttime operations. During the detailed design process, consideration will be given to plant selection ensuring that, where possible, low noise options are installed. It is anticipated that this will be controlled via condition.

5.127. With these mitigations in place, the operational assessment shows that the noise impact from the operation of the Proposed Development during daytime will be 'negligible' or less at all Noise Sensitive Receptors except for Residents Inn on Laystall Street which will be moderate. Night-time operations have the potential for sleep disturbance at nearby residential properties, with minor impacts identified at 1 Lockgate Mews and major impacts at Residents Inn.

5.128. It should be noted that whilst the Residents Inn is a hotel and not a residential dwelling, it is considered appropriate to assess this in the same way as other residential receptors due to the nature of its usage, i.e. for sleep/resting however it is noted that occupants of this building are temporary and transient, and hence any impacts are short term.

5.129. In terms of the school, the orientation of the Proposed Development will provide an element of additional shielding from the existing road noise along Great Ancoats Street. The daytime noise impact on the school is negligible and due to its operational hours, it is not anticipated that there will be any night time impacts on this receptor.

5.130. There will be no processes within the buildings which would generate significant levels of vibration during the operational phase.

Summary

5.131. In conclusion, while the Proposed Development will have some short-term negative effects due to noise and vibration, the long-term benefits (as set out in section 7 of this statement) outweigh these impacts. The proposed mitigation measures will help minimise the adverse effects on sensitive receptors.

5.132. Based upon the above the Proposed Development is considered to be in compliance with the Development Plan and NPPF with regards to Noise and Vibration, when taken as a whole.

5.133. It is expected that a standard condition will be applied to any subsequent condition in relation to the plant noise.

Traffic and Transport

5.134. Core Strategy Policy T2 sets out that in developments regard should also be given to the need for the provision of parking for disabled people and cycles, whilst Core Strategy Policy CC5 outlines that developers should work with public transport providers to ensure that all users are able to access development by sustainable means, especially taking account of times when developments are likely to be the busiest.

5.135. Full impact of the Proposed Development on traffic and transport is included within Chapter 18 of Volume 2 of the Environmental Statement and its associated technical appendices, including the Transport Assessment and Framework Travel Plan, prepared by AtkinsRéalis and submitted in support of this Application.

5.136. Due to its City Centre location, the Site is highly accessible by a range of sustainable transport, including by Metrolink, train and bus, whilst its City Centre location means that it is in walking and cycling distance for the residential community living in Manchester City Centre and the surrounding neighbourhoods. A full overview of accessibility is provided within Section 3 of this Statement.

5.137. Reflecting the high level of public transport available in the proximity of the Site and the advanced public transport system enjoyed by the City, the Proposed Development has been specifically designed in acknowledgement that the majority of staff would use the wide-ranging sustainable transport options available to access the Site in place of private vehicles, and the focus has been placed on a set of targets to encourage building users to travel by modes other than single-occupancy cars.

5.138. The Proposed Development therefore provides 320 secure cycle parking spaces and high-quality end of journey facilities are provided to encourage users to access the Proposed Development by active modes. A Framework Travel Plan has been produced to maximise the use of travel modes away from single-occupancy car-use and the Applicant is committed to the implementation and delivery of everything detailed in this document. The Government Property Agency will be responsible for ensuring it is implemented and monitored post-occupation of the building and they have confirmed that a budget will be established to ensure a successful delivery of the Framework Travel Plan for travel planning, including for on-going monitoring, review and Travel Plan updates. It is expected that the provision of a final Travel Plan would be enforced by condition attached to any subsequent Planning Permission.

5.139. On-site parking provision will be limited to accessible spaces for disabled drivers and for visitors located in the basement and accessed from Great Ancoats Street. It is proposed to provide 50 accessible parking bays, plus 5 spaces associated with facilities management and operations. 15 spaces will have electric vehicle (EV) charging points.

5.140. It is proposed that any car commuters other than people with accessibility needs would make use of publicly available parking around the city centre, of which there are at least 7,000 parking spaces within a 1km walk of the Site. However, with the active travel planning measures to be implemented (and reflecting that the scheme partly consolidates existing facilities across the city centre and so redistributes existing trips rather than generating additional for c50% of staff), it was agreed with the Highway Forecasting and Analytical Services team within Transport for Greater Manchester that there would be no requirement for junction assessments.

5.141. It is therefore concluded that the overall impact on traffic and transport caused by the Proposed Development is negligible, owing to how the traffic is expected to distribute itself across the network to access different carparks, and given the very high level of public transport accessibility provided by the bus, train and tram networks.

5.142. As a result, the Proposed Development is therefore considered to be in accordance with relevant planning policy and guidance in respect of traffic and transport, when taken as a whole.

Climate Change and Energy

5.143. A Climate Emergency was declared by Manchester City Council on 10 July 2019, with the target to make Manchester carbon neutral by 2038. In March 2020, the Executive adopted the Manchester Climate Change Framework 2020- 2025. The five-year framework sets out measures that MCC will take in order to reduce carbon emissions from its buildings, energy use and transport. The measures include retrofitting buildings to improve energy efficiency, increasing the use of Electric Vehicle Vehicles, and seeking 100% renewable energy. Whilst this has not been formally adopted into the Local Development Plan, it is a material consideration for development proposals.

5.144. At national level, on 15 December 2021 the government announced changes to The Building Regulations to help the UK deliver net zero. The changes include a requirement for new homes to produce around 30% less CO2 than current standards, and a 27% reduction in emissions from other new buildings.

5.145. The Places for Everyone Policy JP-S1 states that all developments should aim to maximise its economic, social and environmental benefits simultaneously in order to tackle climate change.

5.146. The Proposed Development is within a highly sustainable location within Manchester City Centre and has been designed to encourage access to the Site by sustainable and active transport modes.

5.147. It has been designed to be as energy efficient as possible by following the principles set out in the energy hierarchy to ultimately reduce CO2 emissions associated with the operational energy of the Proposed Development.

5.148. Passive design measures have been considered to reduce overall energy demand, including the use of high performing building fabric, optimising glazing design and the inclusion of thermal mass and external shading. High efficiency building services shall also be specified to deliver heating, cooling, lighting etc where required to further reduce energy consumption where there is a demand once the passive measures have been taken into account. Available LZC technologies have also be appraised, with the most suitable and feasible technologies identified to provide further operational CO2 emission reductions.

5.149. The Proposed Development is subject to various other energy performance metrics. This includes the obligation to comply with Part L2 2021 of the Building Regulations, achieving the minimum number of credits required by BREEAM ENE01 to achieve BREEAM 'Excellent', and the aspiration of achieving a NABERS DfP rating of 5*.

5.150. Where applicable and feasible, low-carbon design options have been included in the design to reduce GHG emissions during the construction stage.

5.151. A full assessment of the Proposed Development in respect of the effects on climate change and climate vulnerability is included within Chapters 9 and 10 of Volume 2 of the Environmental Statement and its associated technical appendices, submitted in support of this Application.

5.152. In respect of the effects on the climate, both the construction and operational phases of the Proposed Development are considered to have a minor, non-significant effect on the climate. In respect of climate vulnerability, the Environmental Statement concludes that after consideration of mitigation (which is primarily embedded into the design), climate change will neither worsen the effects of the Proposed Development to result in significant adverse effects or create new significant effects.

5.153. The Proposed Development will incorporate various design modifications to mitigate potential impacts from climate change and extreme weather during operation. Although no potential significant effects are predicted on climate as a result of the Proposed Development, recommendations have been made to reduce GHG emissions as much as possible, by:

- Minimising energy demand
- Maximising energy efficiency
- Using renewable or low carbon energy

5.154. As a result, the Proposed Development is therefore considered to be in accordance with relevant planning policy and guidance in respect of climate change and energy, when taken as a whole.

Microclimate Considerations

Relevant policies and guidance:
Development Plan • Core Strategy Policy DM1 – Development Management • Core Strategy Policy EN2 – Tall Buildings

Relevant policies and guidance:
Material Considerations • NPPF (2023)

Daylight, sunlight and overshadowing and solar glare

5.155. The Applicant acknowledges daylight, sunlight, overshadowing and solar glare are all environmental conditions that impact the liveability and comfort of spaces for occupiers of existing developments. The introduction of additional massing and materials from new developments change these conditions, sometimes changing the quality of living for existing occupiers.

5.156. A daylight, sunlight, overshadowing and solar glare assessment of the Proposed Development is provided at Chapter 11 of Volume 2 of the Environmental Statement. Effects during the construction phase were not assessed as they are not expected to exceed effects identified during the operational phase and would be for the short to medium term only.

5.157. The assessment of daylight, sunlight and overshadowing effects is based principally on the amount of visible sky before and after the construction of a new development. Using a 3D model of the Site and surrounding properties and specialist software, the amount of natural light and direct sunlight within the surrounding residential properties and sensitive receptors (including the school) has been assessed both before the construction of the Proposed Development and after it. The before and after assessment results are then compared and reviewed against the guidance given in the Building Research Establishment's (BRE) document entitled Site layout planning for daylight and sunlight: A guide to good practice (the BRE Guidelines).

5.158. As the Site is currently vacant, with no buildings or other obstructions to the passage of light, the surrounding buildings and open spaces presently enjoy unusually high levels of daylight and sunlight.

5.159. In cognisance of this, the design of the Proposed Development took into consideration likely daylight and sunlight effects at an early stage and considered potential primary mitigation measures (relating to the scale and massing of the buildings) to ameliorate the potential effects.

5.160. The following key receptors were assessed in detail in relation to daylight, sunlight and overshadowing impacts:

Co-op Academy New Islington Primary School

5.161. Schools are generally not considered as having a special requirement for sunlight and arguably do not require assessment, however given the sensitivity of this receptor to the Proposed Development, it has been scoped in. Significant testing of the potential impacts on the school formed part of the early massing development, and consultation has taken place with the school during the design development.

5.162. In the existing baseline, the school building enjoys unusually high levels of daylight over the existing cleared site, except to windows whose view of sky / levels of daylight is restricted by ground-floor rain canopies and first-floor recessed balcony. The Proposed Development would result in large magnitude daylight impacts to windows restricted by canopies/balconies and medium magnitude impacts to unfettered windows.

5.163. Mitigation is proposed in the form of funding from the Applicant for new glazed canopies for the two Reception classrooms to admit more light, to be secured through a Section 106 Agreement. With this confirmed enhancement, the residual effects on daylight for the school would be reduced to a significance level of minor to moderate adverse.

5.164. After the Proposed Development, the playgrounds and other amenity areas at the Co-op Academy New Islington school would experience new transient overshadowing from between around 11:00 hrs and 17:00 hrs GMT to varying degrees, but would be able to receive at least two hours of sunlight on 21 March to between 86% and 100% of their area, which is well in excess of the BRE 50% numerical guideline.

5.165. The significance of the sun-on-ground effects to the school playgrounds and amenity spaces would be negligible.

Cotton Field Park and New Islington Marina

5.166. Cotton Field Park and New Islington Marina would experience new transient overshadowing moving across them in the afternoon from 13:00 hrs to at least 17:00 hrs GMT to varying degrees. Notwithstanding the new transient overshadowing, all these surrounding amenity spaces would continue to enjoy least two hours of sunlight on 21 March, as per BRE guidelines.

Residential Receptors

5.167. During operation, the majority of daylight and sunlight amenity effects on nearby properties would be negligible or minor adverse in nature. Whilst some surrounding properties that will be beyond the levels discussed within the BRE Guidelines, the levels of change and retained levels of amenity are considered to be reasonable in this city centre context.

Solar Glare

5.168. Solar glare assessments are considered necessary when a Proposed Development has sections of glazed façade that may reflect sunlight and obstruct the vision of road users to ensure that the development is safe and well designed in line with Paragraph 131 of the NPPF and Core Strategy Policy DM1.

5.169. The assessment considers the impact of reflections created by the new buildings that may create a degree of either reflection or refraction of light that could impact receptors such a car, lorry or train drivers. It identified a minor to moderate adverse solar glare effect for one location on Great Ancoats Street heading northwest approaching the traffic lights at the junction with Store Street. However, it should be noted that this is a worst-case scenario in which window glazing has been treated as mirrors, whereas the actual glazing would not be as reflective.

5.170. We suggest that a planning condition is utilised to require non-reflective glazing as embedded mitigation.

Summary

5.171. Overall, once operational the Proposed Development is not expected to have an unacceptable impact on the amenity of surrounding occupants in terms of daylight, sunlight, overshadowing and solar glare. While some minor to moderate adverse effect is unavoidable, early consideration for these environmental conditions has enabled primary mitigation measures to be incorporated into the development design, to maintain good levels of amenity for neighbouring occupiers and public space, as far as is practicable for this Proposed Development.

5.172. As a result, the Proposed Development is therefore considered to be in accordance with relevant planning policy and guidance in respect of daylight, sunlight and overshadowing, and solar glare when taken as a whole.

Wind

5.173. Due consideration has been given to the potential effect of the Proposed Development on wind microclimate by way of a Wind Assessment, as included as Chapter 20 of Volume 2 of the Environmental Statement. The Assessment evaluates the impact of the Proposed Development on the surrounding area's wind and microclimate. A Pedestrian Wind Comfort (PWC) analysis was conducted to determine the comfort and safety levels for users due to the Proposed Development. This analysis used advanced computer simulations to create a 3D model of the area, considering both the existing Site and the Proposed Development with planned landscaping and wind mitigation measures.

5.174. In total, two scenarios were modelled:

- The existing site within the current surroundings.
- The Proposed Development within the existing surroundings, including committed developments and mitigation measures.

5.175. Wind conditions were assessed using the Lawson Comfort Criteria and the NEN 8100 safety criteria, which are industry standards for evaluating pedestrian comfort and safety in urban environments. The results showed that both scenarios meet these criteria. While there are slight increases in wind speed due to the Proposed

Development, all areas remain suitable for their intended uses, including building entrances, seating areas, and recreational spaces.

5.176. Mitigation measures include the use of soft landscaping across the site to reduce wind impacts. With these measures in place, no significant adverse effects on wind and microclimate are expected.

5.177. Overall, it is concluded that the Proposed Development meets industry standards for pedestrian comfort and safety. The slight increases in wind speed are effectively mitigated by landscaping, ensuring that all areas remain comfortable and safe for use. The Proposed Development supports a sustainable and resilient community by maintaining the quality of the urban environment.

5.178. As a result, the Proposed Development is therefore considered to be in accordance with relevant planning policy and guidance in respect of wind, when taken as a whole.

Socio-economic Considerations

Relevant policies and guidance:

Development Plan
• Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan (2024)
  o SO3: Playing our part in ensuring a thriving and productive economy in all parts of Greater Manchester.
  o SO5: Reduce inequalities and improve prosperity.
• Core Strategy Policy EC1 Employment and Economic Growth
• Core Strategy Policy EC3 The Regional Centre
• Core Strategy Policy CC1 The City Centre and Fringe Core
Material Considerations
• NPPF (2023)
• The Former Central Retail Park Strategic Regeneration Framework (2023)

Socioeconomic effects

5.179. Due consideration has been given to the potential socio-economic effects throughout both the construction and operational phases of the Proposed Development in Chapter 17 of Volume 2 of the Environmental Statement, prepared by AtkinsRéalis and submitted in support of this planning application.

5.180. Inward investment (including public sector relocation) contributes to local economies through the direct impact of moving jobs and the 'multiplier effect' that these jobs can have, increasing demand for local goods and services and attracting jobs in related industries, therefore creating significant positive benefits for Manchester residents. The keys metrics in respect of job creation and expected GVA generated as a result of the proposals are summarised below:

- An estimated 4,900 gross direct construction person year equivalent jobs will be supported across a four-year construction phase.
- During operation, 7,000 gross direct FTEs jobs will be provided, with circa 50% new jobs and 50% safeguarded jobs created.
- An additional 70 gross direct FTEs will be created from the retail offering.
- The total gross value added (GVA) generated across the four-year construction period of the Proposed Development is approximately £310 million.

5.181. Therefore, the Proposed Development will have a significant beneficial effect on the local labour market during construction and a major significant beneficial effect on completion.

Social Value

5.182. The GPA is committed to delivering social value to the local community as part of the Proposed Development and social value is embedded in the project – which is borne out of the Government's commitment to locate more civil servants outside of London and support levelling up.

5.183. A Social Value Statement, prepared by Deloitte, is also submitted in support of the planning application to communicate the key social value objectives of the Proposed Development. These include:

- Embedding Social Value Targets within the building contract so that additional social benefits will be achieved in the construction phase of the Proposed Development. This includes offering apprenticeship and training opportunities.
- A commitment to working with Manchester City Council's Work and Skills team as an initiative to recruit local labour for the Proposed Development for both the construction and operational phases of development. This will be controlled via the use of a planning condition.
- Providing access to skills, training and employment opportunities - the skilled nature of the civil service jobs will support the retention and attraction of talent to the city, and the GPA are committed to ensuring as many jobs as possible go to local people and will look to implement strategies which support the hiring of people who live locally (where appropriate for the role).
- Commitment to an educational engagement programme for local schools, colleges and universities, offering site visits, career talks, STEM activities and work experience placements.
- A range of corporate social responsibility measures committed to by the GPA to reach out and develop partnerships with local voluntary organisations, community groups and social enterprises, which work in the local community.

Summary

5.184. The Proposed Development will play an important part in placemaking and physical regeneration and inward investment (including public sector relocation) contributes to local economies through the direct impact of moving jobs and the 'multiplier effect' that these jobs can have, increasing demand for local goods and services and attracting jobs in related industries, therefore creating significant positive benefits for Manchester residents.

5.185. In estimation, the Proposed Development will support 4,900 gross direct construction person year equivalent jobs. During operation, 7,000 gross direct FTEs jobs will be provided (circa 50% new jobs and 50% safeguarded jobs) and an additional 70 gross direct FTEs will be created from the retail offerings.

5.186. It will be the catalyst for the development of the wider SRF site, helping attract substantial financial investment which will deliver additional positive socio-economic changes for New Islington, Ancoats and Greater Manchester as a whole, providing further opportunities for people and local businesses. It will also facilitate new, high quality public realm both onsite (including a new canal plaza to the Rochdale Canal, which will create a new lively and engaging place accessible to all) and offsite (through the delivery of the new park by MCC) and will transform a current gap in the city's fabric and deliver activity and local amenity at ground floor level.

5.187. The GPA is committed to delivering social value to the local community during the construction and operational phases of development. Social value is embedded in the project – which is borne out of the Government's commitment to locate more civil servants outside of London and support the growth of the Regions. The Applicant is committed to providing a range of employment, skills and training initiatives to maximise the accessibility of employment opportunities to local residents within the City, and will explore how this can be achieved in partnership with Manchester City Council's Work and Skills Team for both the construction and operational phases. This could include commitment to an educational engagement programme for local schools, colleges and universities, offering site visits, career talks, STEM activities and work experience placements.

5.188. It is therefore considered that the Proposed Development will have a positive socio-economic impact, deliver social value to local residents and will support the sustainable growth of Manchester and is therefore supported by relevant planning policy and guidance as a whole.

Other Considerations

Relevant policies and guidance:
Development Plan • Core Strategy Policy DM1 – Development Management • Core Strategy Policy CC1 – Primary Development Focus: City Centre and Fringe • Core Strategy Policy CC5 – Transport • Core Strategy Policy C10 – A Place for Everyone • Core Strategy Policy EN1 – Design Principles and Strategic Character Areas • Core Strategy Policy EN19 – Waste **Material Considerations** • NPPF (2023) • GD04 Waste Storage and Collection Guidance for New Developments

Construction Management

5.189. The proposed approach for Construction Phasing and Methodology has been outlined by the Applicant in Chapter 6, Volume 2 of the Environmental Statement, and is submitted in support of this application. The Chapter sets out best practice for the construction process to minimise the impact on residential amenity and the surrounding area in line with Core Strategy Policy DM1 and has informed the assessments within the Environmental Statement technical chapters.

5.190. The overall duration of the construction is anticipated to be circa 48 months. It is anticipated that the package of enabling works will commence soon after planning permission is granted, subject to the discharge of all relevant pre-commencement conditions attached to the subsequent decision notice.

5.191. All associated construction activities for the Proposed Development will be duly managed to ensure minimal impact caused to neighbouring residents, including the adjacent school.

5.192. Site operating hours will adhere with Manchester City Council's 'Environmental Protection Information for Developers' which shall be as follows:

- Monday – Friday 07:30 – 18:00 hrs
- Saturday 08:00 – 16:30 hrs
- Sunday/Bank Holidays – No works permitted.

5.193. The Applicant also acknowledges that the Site is located in close proximity to other large-scale construction sites, some of which may be progressing at the same time as the Proposed Development. The Applicant is committed to working collaboratively with neighbouring developers and contractors to coordinate activities and mitigation measures such that the works (and any associated inconvenience) are collectively managed.

5.194. It is anticipated that a condition be attached to any subsequent planning permission that secures a full Construction Management Plan which will clearly outline provisions to protect amenity and co-ordinate activities with nearby developers.

5.195. As a result, the Proposed Development is therefore considered to be in accordance with relevant planning policy and guidance in respect of construction management, when taken as a whole.

Waste Management

5.196. MCC has prepared a Waste Storage and Collection Guidance Note (GD04) which contains minimum standards to be considered for the storage and collection of waste. This guidance follows the recommendations set on the Waste Management Plan for England, strongly encouraging and promoting high levels of quality recycling.

5.197. The note states that all planning applications for new developments and conversions must include a Waste Management Strategy that includes:

- An estimated storage area for the waste produced by the development, including residential, F&B and retail uses;
- Details of internal and external stores for both waste and recycling; and,
- Location of the proposed collection point and details of the route the collection will take.

5.198. Core Strategy Policy EN19 'Waste' requires all developers to demonstrate the proposals consistency with the principles of the waste hierarchy.

5.199. Full impact of the Proposed Development on materials and waste is included within Chapter 15 of Volume 2 of the Environmental Statement and its associated technical appendices, prepared by AtkinsRéalis and submitted in support of this Application.

5.200. The Environmental Statement identifies the potential impacts of the Proposed Development on waste and materials to include:

- High volume, permanent use of materials (e.g., aggregate, asphalt, concrete, steel) over 60 years, with smaller quantities of plastic, wood, and glass.
- High volume, short-term use of landfill void capacity during construction, with key waste streams including soil, aggregate, concrete, and smaller quantities of metal, wood, vegetation, municipal waste, and septic tank waste.
- Low volume, long-term use of materials for operational maintenance activities, similar to construction materials but in much smaller volumes.
- Low volume, long-term use of landfill void capacity for waste generated during operation, including maintenance activities and day-to-day staff waste.

5.201. Mitigation measures will involve following the waste hierarchy during detailed design and construction which will lead to material use and waste generation prevention, reduction, reuse, recycling, and recovery.

Construction Effect

5.202. Applying the waste hierarchy during the construction phase, the Applicant commits to using aggregates with a minimum 30% recycled content and recycle or recovery of 70% of wastes that are managed off-site.

5.203. A Site Waste Management Plan (SWMP) is appended to the Environmental Statement and will be completed on an iterative basis by the Principal Contractor as the Proposed Development progresses through detailed design and construction and will describe the approach to managing and minimising construction, demolition and excavation waste.

5.204. In conclusion, the Proposed Development is not expected to result in any significant adverse impacts in respect of waste and materials during construction. By adhering to the waste hierarchy and implementing robust mitigation measures, including the utilisation of a SWMP waste generation and resource consumption can be minimised. These efforts will not only lead to cost savings but also enhance the overall environmental and social responsibility of the Proposed Development.

Operational Effects

5.205. To minimise impact of the Proposed Development during operation on materials and waste, an Operational Waste Management Strategy (OWMS) has been developed by AtkinsRéalis and is submitted in support of the Application.

5.206. The OWMS will ensure that adequate waste and recycling segregation and storage facilities area provided to handle waste and recycling from the operation of the Proposed Development, in accordance with Manchester City Council waste and recycling storage requirements and on the basis of weekly collections.

5.207. Two dedicated waste and storage rooms will be provided in the basement of the Proposed Development. The waste and recycling will be transferred via either a bin tug or tow tug to the loading area on ground floor, where waste and recycling will be collected.

5.208. It is expected 16no. of 1,100 litre Eurobins will be required for office recycling, and 16no. of 1,100 litre Eurobins will be required for office residual waste.

5.209. All receptacles will be clearly labelled and/or colour coded to enable easy identification and segregation of waste into the correct stream (e.g., recyclables, residual waste, etc.). In addition, signs will be placed on the walls behind the receptacles.

5.210. The facilities management team will be responsible for transporting waste and recycling to the waste and recycling storage rooms from offices on all floors. It will then be the responsibility of facilities management team to transport the waste and recycling to the ground floor loading area, prior to the scheduled collection time. Following collection, the facilities management team will be responsible for returning the receptacles, to the waste and recycling storage rooms.

5.211. As a result, the Proposed Development is therefore considered to be in accordance with relevant planning policy and guidance in respect of waste and recycling (including GD04 Waste Storage and Collection Guidance for New Developments), when taken as a whole.

Operational Management

5.212. The office uses are proposed to be operational 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

5.213. An Operational Management Plan: Commercial Use Strategy for Retail Premises, prepared by AtkinsRéalis is submitted in support of this application and relates specifically to the operational procedures for the retail units, included on the Ground Floor of the South Building.

5.214. The Strategy focusses on attracting high-quality tenants that can provide a diverse mix of retail, food and beverage, and service options, making the development a destination for both office workers and the broader community. To ensure the greatest flexibility for lettings, units have been designed to be capable of being combined to create larger spaces if demand requires.

5.215. The units will be strictly controlled by the GPA as part of the campus management strategy with leases enabling control over this and for the benefit of ensuring local amenity is protected.

5.216. It is therefore proposed that a Condition is included on the subsequent consent which requires the final Operational Management Strategy for the units to be agreed with the Local Planning Authority in advance of the operation of each unit.

TV Reception

5.217. Under MCC planning guidance, any development over four storeys requires a TV Reception Impact Assessment. The report should assess the possible interference created by the Proposed Development on TV and radio reception within the area.

5.218. A Television and Radio Baseline Survey Report has been undertaken by PagerPower, to determine the potential effects on the local reception of television broadcast services arising from the Proposed Development.

5.219. It is concluded that the Proposed Development may cause reduction in signal strength however the impacts are unlikely to be noticeable considering a high level of baseline signal strength. It is concluded that there is no requirement of any pre-emptive mitigation measures.

5.220. Based upon these findings, no requirement for pre-emptive mitigation has been identified. In the event that effects are reported, further investigation should be undertaken to identify the cause if this interference and if this is found to be due to the Proposed Development mitigation measures should be installed in line with the

recommendations set out within the TV Reception Impact Assessment report. It is anticipated that this will be the subject of a compliance condition attached to any to any subsequent planning permission.

5.221. As a result, the Proposed Development is therefore considered to be in accordance with relevant planning policy and guidance in respect of TV reception when taken as a whole.

Aviation

5.222. The Manchester Barton Aerodrome is located approximately 11km to the west and Manchester Airport is approximately 14km south of the Site. Manchester Airport Group were consulted in respect of the Proposed Development as part of the EIA Scoping process and confirmed that aviation could be scoped out of the assessment.

5.223. The Proposed Development will rise to 92.950 and is of a scale commensurate with its City Centre location. As such, no significant adverse effects are expected to arise from the Proposed Development in respect of aviation.

5.224. The Proposed Development is therefore considered to be in accordance with relevant planning policy and guidance in respect of aviation, when taken as a whole.

Summary

5.225. This section of the report provides a summary of how the Proposed Development has been comprehensively assessed in relation to the Development Plan and other material considerations. This has taken place during an extensive process of pre-application consultation and technical due diligence including the preparation of an Environmental Impact Assessment and other technical reports.

5.226. The conclusion of that process is that the proposals are in accordance with the Development Plan when taken as a whole and positively address the material planning considerations such that they merit the support of the Local Planning Authority.

6. Tall Building Statement

This Section comprises a Tall Building Statement, considering the Proposed Development against the criteria and guidance within Historic England's Guidance on Tall Buildings (2022) and Core Strategy Policy EN2.

6.1. Proposals for tall buildings will be supported where it can be demonstrated that they:

Policy EN2/HE Tall Building Guidance criteria		Assessment
☆☆☆☆☆	Policy EN2: Are of excellent design quality. HE Tall Building Guidance: • Responds to local context. • Architectural Quality and functional design.	The buildings have undergone significant design development to ensure that they are of exceptional design quality. The project architect – AtkinsRéalis is a top 10 UK-based global design practice whose reputation is built on a culture of open collaboration, creating and delivering excellence. AtkinsRéalis' vast portfolio of work demonstrates that they have the experience to work with the wider design team to deliver attractive and well used spaces and successful places. The Proposed Development seeks to improve the visual amenity of the Site, currently vacant since the demolition of the Former Central Retail Park which was the last use of the SRF Area. The Proposed Development forms a missing part of the jigsaw between Ancoats and New Islington, and would contribute in re-activating the Great Ancoats Street frontage. The requirement from the Civil Service was for 84,000 sq. m of office floorspace accommodated across two buildings to provide modern and efficient workplace. Early technical environmental assessments including in respect of daylight, sunlight and overshadowing, wind, townscape and visual impact, and heritage alongside consideration of the indicative massing parameters in the SRF, have all informed the scale of the Proposed Development. The massing and design of the buildings has been through an extensive process of design development, technical due diligence and consultation to arrive at a high-quality solution which meets the needs of the Civil Service. Key design responses have included stepping of the building frontages helps to reestablish the street frontage to Great Ancoats Street and also maintain respectful distances from the mill buildings and school. The highest quality materials have been proposed which are appropriate to their civic purpose and respond to the Site's location adjacent to a number of heritage assets. An attention to detailing will be maintained to ensure an exemplar of good design. A full breakdown of the design evolution of the Proposed Development can be found in the Design and Access Statement prepared by AtkinsRéalis and submitted in support of this Application.

	Policy EN2: Are appropriately located.	The redevelopment of the Site is a long-standing key strategic priority for MCC and the SRF sets a vision for the Site to form part of a high-quality, sustainable office district with an attractive public realm at its centre, including a new green space, building upon the strategic location of the Site and its strong connections to the local neighbourhoods, city centre, and transport networks. The Proposed Development is located within a highly sustainable location in terms of transport with easy access to the Site by sustainable modes, including the New Islington Tram Stop, Manchester Piccadilly and Victoria Train Stations. There are also a number of bus services that run along Great Ancoats Street with many services linking Manchester City Centre and further afield. The Site is also easily accessible by walking and cycling from the City Centre and the surrounding neighbourhoods and is close to associated supporting amenities. It is within easy access of the City's Inner-City Ring Road which connects with key arterial routes leading to the strategic motorway network.
	Policy EN2: Contribute positively to sustainability. HE Tall Building Guidance: Sustainable Design and Construction.	Sustainability goals lie at the heart of the Proposed Development with numerous key measures being introduced to enhance the environmental performance and sustainability of the buildings throughout the lifecycle of the project. The focus has been to develop a site which is as energy efficient as possible by following the principles set out in the energy hierarchy to ultimately reduce CO2 emissions associated with the operational energy of the development. The physical characteristics of the building fabric have evolved as follows: • The solid elements of the façade will be made from a precast material chosen for its inherent reduction in embodied energy. It will also improve the airtightness of the façade resulting in less energy escaping from the buildings. • Minimising the number of façade system types and materiality variations improves material efficiency, thus help reducing embodied carbon in production, transportation and installation. • Using deep external reveals used in south facing windows help to reduce solar gain, which in turn reduces the need for air condition and other cooling methods, leading to lower energy consumption. • Incorporating photovoltaic panels to transform the Proposed Development into an energy-generating entity, reducing reliance on non-renewable energy sources, and lowers carbon footprint. The Proposed Development will be designed and built to strive for a BREEAM excellent accreditation, and EPC A rating, and NABERS UK (DfP) 5 stars which will ensure that the Proposed Development is on a net zero carbon trajectory in operation.

		The Proposed Development will include 320no. cycle parking spaces and only 50no. accessible car parking spaces (plus 5 spaces associated with facilities management and operations). It is also located in an area that is highly accessible by sustainable transport mode.
	Policy EN2: Contribute positively to place making, for example as a landmark, by terminating a view, or by signposting a facility of significance. HE Tall Building Guidance: A well designed inclusive environment.	The Proposed Development is located in a key site in Manchester City Centre, with extensive frontage along Great Ancoats Street (the Inner City Ring Road), it is a key arrival point from the eastern part of Manchester further enhancing its importance to the City from a regeneration perspective through transforming the arrival experience from this part of the City. The Proposed Development's scale and massing pave the way for it to become a landmark development for the City, whilst the extensive public realm offering contributes positively to place making, enhanced by new retail uses within new canal plaza and reactivated frontage to Great Ancoats Street, which will create a new lively and engaging place. Albeit not within the remit of this Application, the park within the SRF Area further enhances the amenity offering in this part of the City. The Applicant has set out their intent to deliver inclusive environments within their vision for great places to work. The Proposed Development is designed to be welcoming and accommodating to all, regardless of background, abilities or circumstances. The interior is tailored around comfort and wellbeing, with human-centred design and aims to create a welcoming atmosphere, fostering collaboration, productivity and a healthy work environment.
	Policy EN2: Will bring significant regeneration benefits.	The Social Value Statement, prepared by Deloitte, submitted in support of this application summarises the significant regeneration benefits associated with the proposed development. The Proposed Development will contribute to sustainable patterns of development through bringing a key vacant, brownfield city centre site back into productive use to create a high-quality, sustainable office district which has strong connections to the local neighbourhoods and wider city centre, and is highly accessible by sustainable modes of transport. The Proposed Development will be the catalyst for the development of the wider SRF site, helping attract substantial financial investment which will deliver additional positive socio-economic changes for New Islington, Ancoats and Greater Manchester as a whole, providing further opportunities for people and local businesses. It will also facilitate new, high quality public realm both onsite (including a new canal plaza to the Rochdale Canal and new improved frontage to Great Ancoats Street, which will create a new lively and engaging place accessible to all) and offsite (through the delivery of the new park by MCC). It will also transform a current gap in the city's fabric and deliver activity and local amenity at ground floor level. The Proposed Development will play an important part in placemaking and physical regeneration and inward investment (including public sector

		relocation) contributes to local economies through the direct impact of moving jobs and the 'multiplier effect' that these jobs can have, increasing demand for local goods and services and attracting jobs in related industries, therefore creating significant positive benefits for Manchester residents. In estimation, 4,900 gross direct construction person year equivalent jobs and £80 million per annum in GVA generated across a four-year construction phase. During operation, 7,000 gross direct FTEs jobs will be provided, with 50% new jobs and 50% safeguarded jobs created. An additional 70 gross direct FTEs will be created from the retail offerings. The Site also does not currently make any meaningful contribution to either biodiversity or the City's green and blue infrastructure and the Proposed Development will enhance local biodiversity and the quantum and quality of public open space. In addition, the Proposed Development will facilitate a new park at the heart of SRF (being brought forward concurrently by MCC under a separate planning application), through delivering the final levels for this part of the SRF area and providing a financial contribution towards the design and ongoing maintenance. Once delivered, the new park will have a significant contribution to Manchester's green infrastructure network
	Policy EN2: The effect of the tall building on the local environment and its micro-climate, including creating an attractive, pedestrian friendly local environment. HE Tall Building Guidance: Impact on the local environment.	The Site currently represents a large, unutilised area of the City Centre. Despite its accessible location, the Site is left in a derelict state since the demolition of the former Central Retail Park and does not contribute positively to the local environment. The Proposed Development seeks to transform this through the creation of a world class office campus for the Civil Service. One of the key aims of the Proposed Development is the creation of high quality public realm on the Site, activating frontages (especially along Great Ancoats Street and area facing the Rochdale Canal). The wider SRF Area would also feature a public park (under separate application) which contributes to the Site being an attractive, pedestrian friendly local environment. The effect on the local environment and microclimate has also been considered through the design development process and presented within the Environmental Statement submitted in support of this Application.
	Policy EN2: That the proposals for a tall building are viable and deliverable.	The proposals have been subject to robust financial modelling and testing to ensure that the proposals are both viable and deliverable.

7. Public Benefits

This section sets out the economic, social and environmental benefits of the Proposed Development.

Public Benefits	Assessment of Proposed Development
Economic Benefits	
A viable use of an unused brownfield site	Redeveloping urban/brownfield land is a national, regional and local priority and the redevelopment of the Site has been a key regeneration priority for the City for a considerable period of time. The Site has been vacant since the demolition of the Former Central Retail Park. The Proposed Development will bring this key vacant, brownfield city centre site back into productive use to create a high-quality, sustainable office district which has strong connections to the local neighbourhoods and wider city centre, and is highly accessible by sustainable modes of transport. It will also transform a current gap in the city's fabric and deliver activity and local amenity at ground floor level, as well as facilitating new, high quality public realm both onsite and offsite (through the delivery of the new park by MCC). Furthermore, the Proposed Development will act as a catalyst for the development of the wider SRF site, helping attract substantial further investment into the area which will deliver additional positive benefits.
Supporting the growth of Greater Manchester	The GPA is committed to investing in regional growth whilst delivering office solutions meeting the government's needs and objectives, whilst becoming more representative of the entire UK, across departments, functions and professions through relocating circa. 22,000 government roles from London into a number of government hubs across the UK, with the aim to accommodate half of all UK-based Senior Civil Service roles outside of London. This will have the following benefits: • rebalance an historic bias towards London; • provide an economic boost to towns and cities across the UK; • create new career opportunities for people across the UK; and, • make the Civil Service even more diverse, effective, and representative. Inward investment (including public sector relocation) contributes to local economies through the direct impact of moving jobs and the 'multiplier effect' that these jobs can have, increasing demand for local goods and services and attracting jobs in related industries, therefore creating significant positive benefits for Manchester residents. There will also be a significant positive impact on the local economy.

Public Benefits	Assessment of Proposed Development
Supporting employment opportunities for GM Residents	In estimation, 4,900 gross direct construction person year equivalent jobs will be supported across a four-year construction phase. During operation, 7,000 gross direct FTEs jobs will be provided, with circa 50% new jobs and 50% safeguarded jobs created. An additional 70 gross direct FTEs will be created from the retail offering.
Environmental Benefits	
Sustainable Development	The Proposed Development will contribute to sustainable patterns of development through bringing a key vacant, brownfield city centre site back into productive use to create a high-quality, sustainable office district which has strong connections to the local neighbourhoods and wider city centre, and is highly accessible by sustainable modes of transport. The Proposed Development has been developed to be as energy efficient as possible by following the principles set out in the energy hierarchy to ultimately reduce CO2 emissions associated with the operational energy of the Proposed Development. It will target a BREEAM excellent accreditation, and EPC A rating, and NABERS UK (DfP) 5 stars which will ensure that the Proposed Development is on a net zero carbon trajectory in operation.
Provision of a significant area of high-quality public realm	A key guiding design principle within the SRF is to deliver public realm which is "high-quality inclusive open space for the local community, staff and visitors." The Proposed Development includes an extensive area of high quality, landscaped public realm, complementing the design principles and ambition of the Applicant to create an exciting and welcoming office campus that supports the Applicant to attract and retain a world-class workforce. In terms of hard landscaping, a comprehensive palette of high-quality materials has been developed to support the ambitious placemaking aspirations for the Proposed Development. For soft landscaping, the planting proposals have been carefully considered and the planting scheme will create an attractive public realm, introduce vertical scale, provide seasonal interest, and improve biodiversity, as well as provide numerous wider environmental benefits, such as shade, shelter and support with rainwater management. The landscaping and public realm design has been fully coordinated with the design for the new park (being brought forward concurrently by MCC under a separate planning application). The Proposed Development will facilitate the park through creating the site levels to integrate and improve connectivity and accessibility into the existing Cottonfields Park and improve connectivity across New Islington. The Applicant is also contributing to the cost of designing the new park and will contribute towards the future maintenance of the park.
Improvements to Manchester's Green and Blue Infrastructure (including biodiversity)	The existing Site does not effectively contribute to the City's green and blue infrastructure as it is a vacant site that mainly consists of hardstanding and some mixed trees and shrubs. The Proposed Development will open-up a vacant site and provide new routes through the Site for the public to enjoy. It will improve the quality of the pedestrian and cyclist environment and improve linkages to and between areas of green infrastructure, including other areas of open space in the city. Along Great Ancoats Street, the proposals take pedestrians away from traffic, creating new attractive and green

Public Benefits	Assessment of Proposed Development
	pedestrian route adjacent to the South Building and its active frontage. Street trees form part of the landscaping proposals which creates an attractive and soft edge to the Site, greening Great Ancoats Street. The Proposed Development will also provide a more attractive interface between the Site and the Rochdale Canal through a new high quality and attractive Canal Plaza adjacent to the Canal. This new space will have a local identity and will provide an area where people can dwell, relax and enjoy the canal and its heritage setting, contributing to the overall quality of life and natural environment. The new space will encourage increased access to this key blue route by making its towpath a more attractive environment, increasing safety and subsequently increasing footfall, which will improve wider pedestrian and cyclist connectivity within this part of the City Centre. The landscaping proposals aim to maximise biodiversity delivery on and off site. This will be dealt with via the use of a planning condition which requires a Biodiversity Gain Plan to be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority before the commencement of development. In satisfying this condition, the Applicant will seek to achieve the BNG requirements offsite within Manchester in the first instance, to ensure this benefit remains within the City.
Improvements to the setting of Ancoats Conservation Area	In its current vacant condition, the Proposed Development detracts from the setting of Ancoats Conservation Area. The Proposed Development would be legible as a modern intervention within the setting of the conservation area, however, would be sympathetic to its character and appearance due to the use of a simple block form and repetitive fenestration. The presence of the Proposed Development would enhance the setting of Ancoats Conservation Area through: • re-establishing a coherent urban form across the Site and enabling movement through this area, creating a more coherent and integrated townscape, and resolving the disparate and imbalanced setting of the conservation area along the Rochdale Canal. • creating channelled views along the canal corridor, better highlighting the relationship between the mills and canal, and better reflecting the historic setting of the conservation area, and • creating a new public realm space to the south of the canal which would have a beneficial impact on the conservation area, providing an area from which the relationship between the historic mills and canal could be better appreciated.
Social Benefits	
Contribution to Placemaking	Major commercial developments, such as the Proposed Development, can play an important part in placemaking, physical regeneration and inward investment. The Proposed Development forms the missing piece of the jigsaw in the wider regeneration initiatives in the Ancoats / New Islington Area, and will transform a derelict site into a high quality office campus, together with extensive associated public realm (including facilitating new off-site public realm) and active ground floor uses to the canal and Great Ancoats Street which will contribute to an improved overall environment in this area of the City Centre.

Public Benefits	Assessment of Proposed Development
Increased public realm provision	The Site is currently inaccessible to the public and enhancing the quantum and quality of public open space is one of core principles of the SRF. As previously noted, the Proposed Development will deliver an extensive area of high quality, landscaped public realm on site, as well as will facilitating the delivery of the adjacent park (both through physically delivering the site levels and contributions to the design costs and future maintenance). From a social perspective, the increased public realm provision provides extensive public benefits including: • improved connectivity and accessibility into the existing Cottonfields Park; • improved connectivity across Ancoats and New Islington • encouraging physical activity therapeutic benefits; and • providing opportunities for people for meet, play or socialise.
Quality of the Proposed Development	As set out within Section 6 of this Statement, the buildings have undergone significant design development to ensure that it is of exceptional design quality. The elevation treatments have been carefully considered throughout the design development process to ensure the Proposed Development is robust and deliverable. The material strategy is crafted to suit the Proposed Development's intended civic nature, and reflect similar buildings across the City. The materials are of a high quality, responding to the high-quality design intent. An attention to detailing will be maintained throughout to ensure an exemplar of good design.
Accessibility and pedestrian connectivity	The Proposed Development has been designed to ensure effective movement and permeability through and around the Site by pedestrians and cyclists and from a number of routes/directions. The need to ensure effective and secure vehicular access for pick-up and drop-off, servicing, accessible parking, and emergency access has also been critical to the Proposed Development. The current pedestrian environment in the surrounding of the SRF Area has a negative impact on pedestrian experience. The significant provision of public realm as part of the Proposed Development will unify the wider area and activate a great extent of Great Ancoats Street, facilitating the Site to become a place of social interaction. Inclusivity is embedded at the core of the Proposed Development, which is designed to class-leading inclusive and accessible design standards to ensure it can be easily accessible by a wide and diverse range of people. A range of inclusive amenities are incorporated into the Proposed Development which serve the wellbeing of a diverse staff community. Full adherence to the Government Workplace Inclusive Design Standards March 2020 (V1.0) is resulted, which exceeds the requirement of Design for Access 2 (2003) guidance document.
Social value	The GPA is committed to delivering social value to the local community during the construction and operational phases of development. Social value is embedded in the project – which is borne out of the Government's commitment to locate more civil servants outside of London and support the growth of the Regions. The Applicant is committed to providing a range of employment, skills and training initiatives to maximise the accessibility of employment opportunities to local residents within the City, and will explore how this can be achieved in partnership with

Public Benefits	Assessment of Proposed Development
	Manchester City Council's Work and Skills Team for both the construction and operational phases. This could include commitment to an educational engagement programme for local schools, colleges and universities, offering site visits, career talks, STEM activities and work experience placements.

8. Conclusion

8.1. The Former Central Retail Park site has been a long-standing regeneration priority for the City and Manchester City Council have set a clear direction for the site. The vision within the endorsed SRF is to create a high-quality, sustainable office district with an attractive public realm at its centre, including a new green space, building upon the strategic location and its strong connections to the local neighbourhoods, city centre, and transport networks.

8.2. The Proposed Development fully aligns to this vision through delivering a flagship development for the GPA with a focus on the digital sector. The GPA's aim is to create a new, dynamic and diverse commercial district which will deliver a range of exemplary and innovative workplaces, promoting inclusivity, health and well-being. It will provide buildings that are high-quality, sustainable, resilient, adaptable, reliable, and simple to operate, creating environments for diverse communities to collaborate and perform to their highest potential.

8.3. Greater Manchester was specifically selected for its longstanding legacy of technological advancement, deep-rooted in the Industrial Revolution and the significant pipeline of exceptional talent in Greater Manchester from the City's universities to support the Proposed Development and the focus on digital skills. The scale and location of the Site provides an opportunity to build on Manchester's existing digital and technology ecosystem and to support the City's ambitions to be at the forefront of the UK's growth journey. It will make a significant contribution to accelerated economic growth and the rebalancing of the national economy, increasing Greater Manchester's share of all UK-based Senior Civil Service roles outside of London and creating new career opportunities for its residents. The inward investment will also contribute to the Greater Manchester economy through increasing demand for local goods and services and attracting jobs in related industries, therefore creating further significant positive benefits for Manchester residents.

8.4. A comprehensive design evolution process has been undertaken, building on the principles established within the SRF. The proposed scale and massing respond to the local context and has been informed by detailed technical analysis including in respect of daylight, sunlight and overshadowing, and townscape and heritage. Specific regard has been had to seeking to minimise and mitigate any potential impact on adjacent uses (in particular the school), and as a result, the Proposed Development is well integrated into and responds positively to its immediate urban context.

8.5. The materials proposed are of a high quality, responding to the high-quality design intent and the proposed civic nature of the buildings. An attention to detailing will be maintained throughout construction to ensure an exemplar of good design.

8.6. An extensive process of pre-application consultation has been undertaken with a range of stakeholders including MCC, Historic England, Local Ward Councillors, Greater Manchester Police and the wider community.

8.7. The Applicant has also consulted with Coop Academy New Islington Primary School through the design development. A series of embedded design mitigation has been included to minimise the impact on the school including stepping the massing away from the boundary, installing a sculptural fin to the North Building to direct views from the offices towards the park, and embellishing the boundary wall through artwork to be agreed with the school. Furthermore, the Applicant has committed to installing the permanent boundary to the school within the initial enabling works package to provide additional screening throughout the construction period, in addition to the measures within the OCEMP.

8.8. The Proposed Development has also been considered in the light of a comprehensive planning approach to the wider SRF site including its interfaces with the adjoining park proposals at the heart of the SRF for which MCC, as the landowner, has concurrently submitted an application to the Local Planning Authority seeking full planning permission. The Proposed Development will facilitate the Park through physically delivering the site levels, and contributions from the Applicant towards the design costs and future maintenance.

Benefits

8.9. The Proposed Development will result in a number of benefits:

- A viable use of a vacant site – The Proposed Development forms a missing part of the jigsaw between Ancoats and New Islington, and would transform a current gap in the city's fabric and deliver activity and local amenity at ground floor level.
- Providing high quality, well-designed buildings - improving the visual amenity of the existing Site, currently occupied by areas of hardstanding.
- Providing significant area of high-quality accessible public realm and facilitating additional offsite public realm within the adjacent park.
- Improving pedestrian connections – providing effective movement and permeability through and around the Site by pedestrians and cyclists and from a number of routes/directions.
- Improving the setting of Ancoats Conservation Area and the Rochdale Canal:
    - reestablishing an urban grain across the Site, creating a more coherent townscape setting for the historic mills and restoring their place at the centre of an urban grid.
    - Further enhancing and enlivening the setting of the mills by creating the new Canal Plaza public realm from which the group of historic mills can be viewed and appreciated.
- Delivering Sustainable Development:
    - Contributing to sustainable patterns of development through bringing a key vacant, brownfield city centre site back into productive use to create a high-quality, sustainable office district which has strong connections to the local neighbourhoods and wider city centre, and is highly accessible by sustainable modes of transport.
    - Once operational, through the implementation of a number of energy strategies in the design, delivering two highly energy efficient buildings, with sustainability embedded at the heart of the scheme.
- Supporting employment opportunities and economic growth.
- Play an important part in placemaking and physical regeneration - inward investment (including public sector relocation) contributes to local economies through the direct impact of moving jobs and the 'multiplier effect' that these jobs can have, increasing demand for local goods and services and attracting jobs in related industries, therefore creating significant positive benefits for Manchester residents.
- Acting as a catalyst for the development of the wider SRF site - helping attract substantial further investment into the area which will deliver additional positive benefits.

8.10. The cumulative effect of all of these benefits will be very significant for Manchester. It is clear that the Proposed Development provides a number of public benefits that will deliver economic, social and environmental benefits to the local community.

Summary

8.11. This Planning and Tall Building Statement has assessed all applicable planning policies, guidance and other material considerations and provides full and robust justification for the Proposed Development, alongside a full suite of supporting technical assessments which have been prepared and submitted as part of this application.

8.12. A full appraisal of how the Proposed Development addresses the specific planning policy considerations and other material considerations, is set out within Sections 5, 6 and 7 of this Statement. In conclusion, a detailed assessment of the proposals has been undertaken against planning policy at all levels. Taking all of this into account, it can be concluded that the Proposed Development is considered to be in accordance with the Development Plan when taken as a whole. It is further supported by the assessment of other material considerations including the endorsed SRF for the Site and the NPPF and it has been demonstrated that the

Proposed Development will deliver the overarching economic, social and environmental objectives of sustainable development as a whole.

8.13. As such, the Proposed Development therefore merits the support of the Local Planning Authority.

Appendix A: Planning Application Documents

Document	Prepared by
Application Forms and Notices	Deloitte
Covering Letter	Deloitte
Site Location Plan	AtkinsRéalis
Full suite of existing and proposed plans, sections and elevations, including landscaping plans	AtkinsRéalis
Design and Access Statement (Including Landscaping, Signage and Delivery/Servicing Strategies and Accommodation Schedule)	AtkinsRéalis
Planning and Tall Building Statement	Deloitte
Statement of Community Involvement	Counter Context
Crime Impact Statement	Arup
Obtrusive Lighting Assessment Report	AtkinsRealis
Operational Management Strategy	AtkinsRealis
Response to Blue and Green Infrastructure Statement	Deloitte
Social Value Statement (includes Local Labour Statement)	Deloitte
Topographical Survey	AtkinsRéalis
Ventilation, Extraction and Odour Statement	AtkinsRealis (with technical inputs)
Fire Statement	AtkinsRéalis
TV Reception Survey	Pager Power
Utility Statement, including GPR Survey results	AtkinsRéalis
Energy Statement for Planning (including Environmental Standards Statement)	AtkinsRéalis
Environmental Impact Assessment	

Document		Prepared by
Volume 1: Non Technical Summary		AtkinsRéalis
Volume 2: Environmental Statement		
1.	Introduction	AtkinsRéalis
2.	Description of the Site and Proposed Development	AtkinsRéalis
3.	Policy Context	AtkinsRéalis
4.	EIA Approach and Methodology	AtkinsRéalis
5.	Alternatives Considered and Design Evolution	AtkinsRéalis
6.	Construction Phasing and Methodology	AtkinsRéalis
7.	Air Quality	AtkinsRéalis
8.	Biodiversity	AtkinsRéalis
9.	Climate Vulnerability	AtkinsRéalis
10.	Effects on Climate	AtkinsRéalis
11.	Daylight, Sunlight, Overshadowing and Solar Glare	DPR
12.	Ground Conditions and Contamination	AtkinsRéalis
13.	Historic Environment	AtkinsRéalis
14.	Human Health	AtkinsRéalis
15.	Materials and Waste	AtkinsRéalis
16.	Noise and Vibration	AtkinsRéalis
17.	Socio-Economics	AtkinsRéalis
18.	Transport	AtkinsRéalis
19.	Water Resources and Flood Risk	AtkinsRéalis
20.	Wind Microclimate	AtkinsRéalis
21.	Major Accidents and Disasters	AtkinsRéalis
22.	Type 1 Cumulative Effects	AtkinsRéalis
23.	Residual Effects and Conclusions	AtkinsRéalis
Volume 3: Townscape and Visual Impact Assessment		SLHA

Document		Prepared by
Volume 4: Technical Appendices		
2.1	Planning Drawing Pack	AtkinsRéalis
4.1	EIA Scoping Report	AtkinsRéalis
4.2	EIA Scoping Opinion	
5.1	Design and Access Statement	AtkinsRéalis
6.1	Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan	
7.1	Air Quality Assessment	AtkinsRéalis
8.1	Target Notes and photographs	AtkinsRéalis
8.2	Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment	AtkinsRéalis
8.3	Arboriculture Impact Assessment	AtkinsRéalis
9.1	Climate Vulnerability Baseline	AtkinsRéalis
11.1	Daylight, Sunlight, Overshadowing and Solar Glare	AtkinsRéalis
11.2	Obtrusive Lighting Report	AtkinsRéalis
12.1	E3p Phase 1 and 2 Geo-Environmental Site Assessment	E3p
12.2	AtkinsRéalis Ground Investigation Report	AtkinsRéalis
12.3	Conceptual Site Models, Impact Assessment Table and Definitions	AtkinsRéalis
13.1	Detailed desk-based assessment	AtkinsRéalis
13.2	Heritage Statement	AtkinsRéalis
13.3	Heritage gazetteers	AtkinsRéalis
13.4	Archaeological Watching Brief Report; Former Central Retail Park, Great Ancoats Street Manchester	AtkinsRéalis
14.1	Human Health Statistics	AtkinsRéalis
15.1	Site Waste Management Plan	AtkinsRéalis
15.2	Operational Waste Strategy	AtkinsRéalis
16.1	Noise Assessment	AtkinsRéalis
18.1	Transport Assessment (TA)	AtkinsRéalis

Document		Prepared by
18.2	Framework Travel Plan (FTP)	AtkinsRéalis
18.3	Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP)	AtkinsRéalis
19.1	Water Framework Directive (WFD) Assessment	AtkinsRéalis
19.2	Flood Risk Assessment (FRA)	AtkinsRéalis
19.3	Drainage Strategy	AtkinsRéalis
20.1	Wind and Microclimate Assessment modelling methodology and results	AtkinsRéalis
21.1	Major accidents and disasters long list	AtkinsRéalis
Volume 5: Figures		

Deloitte.

This report has been prepared for Government Property Agency [the Applicant] and on the understanding that it will be made publically available.

All copyright and other proprietary rights in the report remain the property of Deloitte LLP and any rights not expressly granted in these terms or in the Contract are reserved.

No party other than the Applicant is entitled to rely on the report for any purpose whatsoever and thus we accept no liability to any other party who is shown or gains access to this document.

The information contained within this report is provided to assist the Applicant with this Planning Application. The report makes use of a range of third party data sources. Whilst every reasonable care has been taken in compiling this report, Deloitte LLP cannot guarantee its accuracy.

If this document contains details of an arrangement that could result in a tax or National Insurance saving, no such conditions of confidentiality apply to the details of that arrangement (for example, for the purpose of discussion with tax authorities).

Deloitte LLP is a limited liability partnership registered in England and Wales with registered number OC303675 and its registered office at 1 New Street Square, London, EC4A 3HQ, United Kingdom.

Deloitte LLP is the United Kingdom affiliate of Deloitte NSE LLP, a member firm of Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu Limited, a UK private company limited by guarantee (“DTTL”). DTTL and each of its member firms are legally separate and independent entities. DTTL and Deloitte NSE LLP do not provide services to clients. Please see www.deloitte.com/about to learn more about our global network of member firms.

© 2024 Deloitte LLP. All rights reserved.