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FORMER CENTRAL RETAIL PARK – THE PARK

Volume 2, Chapters 1-6

Manchester City Council

October 2024

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background

This Environment Statement (ES) has been prepared in respect of the proposals for the Park development (herein referred to as the 'Proposed Development') on a central section of the Former Central Retail Park (FCRP) at Ancoats in Manchester (herein referred to as the 'Site') see Figure 1-1. Manchester City Council (MCC) (herein referred to as the 'Applicant') are submitting an application for full planning permission for the Proposed Development.

The Proposed Development will form one part of a wider development of the FCRP site (see Figure 1-2). A Strategic Regeneration Framework (SRF) was produced for the entire FCRP site in March 2023[1] which details the context and design drivers behind developing the area in to a 'high-quality sustainable office district with an attractive public realm at its centre, including a new green space'. The SRF outlines the three different developments that are proposed as part of the overall regeneration of the site: Phase 1, Phase 2 and the Park.

The area of the Site is 0.91 ha and sits centrally within the wider FCRP site which is approximately 4 ha in total. The Phase 1 development will occupy the FCRP site to the northwest and the Phase 2 development will occupy the FCRP site to the southeast. The Site is located in Manchester City Centre's north-eastern fringe. The Site is bound by Great Ancoats Street to the south, Cotton Field Park and Co-op Academy New Islington to the north, Phase 1 development to the northwest and the Phase 2 development to the southeast.

EIA Scoping Report has been prepared in line with the requirements of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 as amended (the "EIA Regulations"), to support the request for an EIA Scoping Opinion from MCC.

1.2 Consenting

The Proposed Development will be consented via a full planning permission, under The Town and Country Planning Act 1990. EIA is being undertaken for the Proposed Development as the applicant has voluntarily entered into the process in accordance with provision 5(1) and (2) of the EIA Regs which states:

> *5.—(1) Subject to paragraph (3) and regulation 63, the occurrence of an event mentioned in paragraph (2) shall determine for the purpose of these Regulations that development is EIA development.*
>
> *(2) The events referred to in paragraph (1) are—*
>
> *(a)the submission by the applicant or appellant in relation to that development of a statement referred to by the applicant or appellant as an environmental statement for the purposes of these Regulations; or*
>
> *(b)the adoption by the relevant planning authority of a screening opinion to the effect that the development is EIA development.*

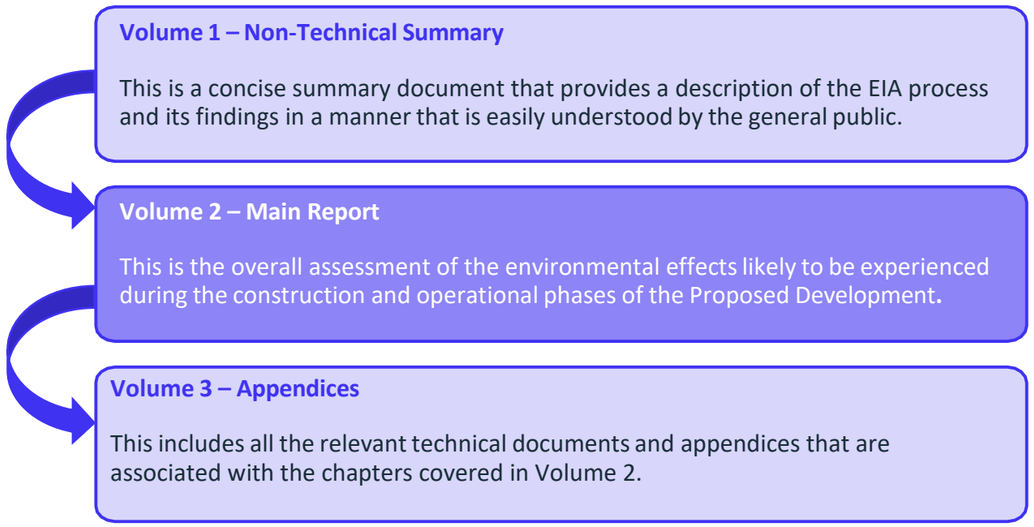
1.3 Purpose of this report

Under the EIA Regulations, when determining the planning application, MCC as the Local Planning Authority (LPA), is required to take into account the likely significant environmental effects that could arise as a result of the Proposed Development. The EIA Regulations require the applicant to submit the necessary information for the Council (in its role as the Local Planning Authority) to fulfil these requirements in the form of an ES. This ES sets out the required information to enable MCC to fulfil its legal obligations under the EIA Regulations.

1.4 Structure of the Environmental Statement

This ES comprises three volumes which relate to each other as shown in Figure 1-1. This document is Volume 2, the Main Report.

Figure 1-1 Volumes of the ES



Schedule 4 of the EIA Regs sets out the information which is required within an ES. Table 1-1 sets out these requirements and identifies where the information can be found within this report.

[1] Former Central Retail Park draft regeneration framework | Manchester City Council

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Site Boundary
Phase 1
Phase 2

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Metres
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Figure 1-2

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Table 1-1 Location of ES requirements under Schedule 4 of the EIA Regulations

Schedule 4 Requirements	Location within the ES
Paragraph 1	
A description of the Proposed Development including in particular: • a description of the location of the development; • a description of the physical characteristics of the whole development, including, where relevant, requisite demolition works, and the land-use requirements during the construction and operational phases; • a description of the main characteristics of the operational phase of the development (in particular any production process), for instance, energy demand and energy used, nature and quantity of the materials and natural resources (including water, land, soil and biodiversity) used; • an estimate, by type and quantity, of expected residues and emissions (such as water, air, soil and subsoil pollution, noise, vibration, light, heat, radiation and quantities and types of waste produced during the construction and operation phases.	Volume 2, Chapter 2 (and Chapter 3) construction?)
Paragraph 2	
A description of the reasonable alternatives (for example in terms of development design, technology, location, size and scale) studied by the developer, which are relevant to the proposed project and its specific characteristics, and an indication of the main reasons for selecting the chosen option, including a comparison of the environmental effects.	Volume 2, Chapter 6
Paragraph 3	
A description of the relevant aspects of the current state of the environment (baseline scenario) and an outline of the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the development as far as natural changes from the baseline scenario can be assessed with reasonable effort on the basis of the availability of environmental information and scientific knowledge.	Volume 2, Baseline sections of Chapters 7 to 20 inclusive
Paragraph 4	
A description of the factors specified in regulation 4(2) likely to be significantly affected by the development: population, human health, biodiversity (for example fauna and flora), land (for example land take), soil (for example organic matter, erosion, compaction, sealing), water (for example hydromorphological changes, quantity and quality), air, climate (for example greenhouse gas emissions, impacts relevant to adaptation), material assets, cultural heritage, including architectural and archaeological aspects, and landscape.	Volume 2, Impact assessment sections of Chapters 7 to 20 inclusive
Paragraph 5	
A description of the likely significant effects of the development on the environment resulting from, inter alia: • the construction and existence of the development, including, where relevant, demolition works; • the use of natural resources, in particular land, soil, water and biodiversity, considering as far as possible the sustainable availability of these resources; • the emission of pollutants, noise, vibration, light, heat and radiation, the creation of nuisances, and the disposal and recovery of waste; • the risks to human health, cultural heritage or the environment (for example due to accidents or disasters); • the cumulation of effects with other existing and/or approved projects, taking into account any existing environmental problems relating to areas of particular environmental importance likely to be affected or the use of natural resources; • the impact of the project on climate (for example the nature and magnitude of greenhouse gas emissions) and the vulnerability of the project to climate change; • the technologies and the substances used. The description of the likely significant effects on the factors specified in regulation 4(2) should cover the direct effects and any indirect, secondary, cumulative, transboundary, short-term, medium-term and long-term, permanent and temporary, positive and negative effects of the development. This description should take into account the environmental protection objectives established at Union or Member State level which are relevant to the project, including in particular those established under Council Directive 92/43/EEC(**1**) and Directive 2009/147/EC(**2**).	Volume 2, Impact assessment sections of Chapters 7 to 20 inclusive
Paragraph 6	
A description of the forecasting methods or evidence, used to identify and assess the significant effects on the environment, including details of difficulties (for example technical deficiencies or lack of knowledge) encountered compiling the required information and the main uncertainties involved.	Volume 2, Method of assessment sections of Chapters 7 to 20 inclusive
Paragraph 7	
A description of the measures envisaged to avoid, prevent, reduce or, if possible, offset any identified significant adverse effects on the environment and, where appropriate, of any proposed monitoring arrangements (for example the preparation of a post-project analysis). That description should explain the extent, to which significant adverse effects on the environment are avoided, prevented, reduced or offset, and should cover both the construction and operational phases.	Volume 2, Mitigation sections of Chapters 7 to 20 inclusive
Paragraph 8	

Schedule 4 Requirements	Location within the ES
A description of the expected significant adverse effects of the development on the environment deriving from the vulnerability of the development to risks of major accidents and/or disasters which are relevant to the project concerned. Relevant information available and obtained through risk assessments pursuant to EU legislation such as Directive 2012/18/EU(3) of the European Parliament and of the Council or Council Directive 2009/71/Euratom(4) or UK environmental assessments may be used for this purpose provided that the requirements of this Directive are met. Where appropriate, this description should include measures envisaged to prevent or mitigate the significant adverse effects of such events on the environment and details of the preparedness for and proposed response to such emergencies.	Scoped out of assessment – See Scoping Report
Paragraph 9	
A non-technical summary of the information provided under paragraphs 1 to 8.	Volume 1
Paragraph 10	
A reference list detailing the sources used for the descriptions and assessments included in the environmental statement.	Volume 2, within each chapter

**Rule 7A(2):The environmental impact assessment must identify, describe and assess in an appropriate manner, in light of each individual case, the direct and indirect significant effects of the proposed works on the following factors:*

- *Population and human health;*
- *Biodiversity, with particular attention to species and habitats protected under any law of any part of the United Kingdom which implemented Directive 92/43/EEC and Directive 2009/147/EC;*
- *Land, soil, water, air and climate;*
- *Material assets, cultural heritage and the landscape; and*

The interaction between the factors referred to in the above sub-paragraphs.

1.5 Report authors

In accordance with the EIA Regulations, the environmental assessment process has been undertaken by a team of qualified consultants who are registered and/or chartered with their relevant professional institutions. Evidence of competency of the EIA technical leads, who are responsible for the production of the assessments reported in Chapters 7 – 20 is provided in Section 3 of each chapter.

AtkinsRéalis is registered to the EIA Quality Mark with the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA). The EIA Quality Mark is a voluntary scheme operated by IEMA that allows organisations that lead the co-ordination of statutory EIAs in the UK to make a commitment to excellence in their EIA activities and have this commitment independently reviewed.

2. Description of the Site and Proposed Development

The wider site was formerly a retail destination (known as Central Retail Park), characterised by large retail warehouses and surrounded by surface car parking. These retail units have since closed and been demolished and currently, the Site is vacant brownfield land, comprising hardstanding (see Figure 2-1). As discussed in section 1.1, the FCRP site is undergoing wider regeneration in combination with the plans for the Proposed Development. The Site foSite description

wider siteAs discussed in section 1.1, the FCRP site is undergoing wider regeneration in combination with the plans for the Proposed Development. The Site for

The the Proposed Development sits centrally within the FCRP site and separates the proposed sites for the Phase1 and Phase 2 developments to its west and east respectively. This section describes the Site specific to the Proposed Development as previously outlined in Figure 1-2.

Site is a large, concreted area with patches of scrub dotted throughout it, with a small vacant building structure located on the western boundary. Trees line the edge of the Site and limited vegetation is present including buddleia. In relation to the FCRP site shown in Figure 2-1, the Site is located at the point shown furthest east. The Site is currently used as an informal skate park constructed with concrete ramps and similar structures.



Figure 2-1 Birds eye view of the western half of the FCRP site from The Residence Inn, Great Ancoats Street

There is a 5 m ground level change across the Site between its northwest corner, descending towards its southeast corner where Great Ancoats Street and Old Mill Street intersect with remnants of the old buildings seen throughout.

Currently the Site has a main vehicular access point located off Great Ancoats Street, and a secondary access point off Old Mill Street, formerly used for deliveries and waste collections.



Figure 2-2 View down Hugh Oldham Way (east to west), off Old Mill Street

2.1 Surrounding areaa

The Site is located in Ancoats, Greater Manchester. The location of the Site in its wider geographical context is shown in Figure 1-1.

The Site is within the north-eastern fringe of Manchester city centre, within a mixed-use area that is predominantly commercial and residential in nature. It is a dense urban environment comprising a mixture of high- and low-rise properties.

Key residential areas include those surrounding New Islington Marina, Union Street, New Islington and Weybridge Roads which are north of the Site. This region alone comprises over 600 residential dwellings. A further 800+ new developed residential properties are located south east of the Site, along Old Mill Street. Additionally, over 700 residential properties are located between Redhill Street and Jersey Street, northwest of the Site.

Regarding the commercial developments surrounding the Site, there are significant numbers of businesses located at the Urban Exchange, a retail outlet on Great Ancoats Street opposite the Site. Occupiers include Aldi, GO Outdoors and PureGym. Poland Street, north of the Site, comprises several warehouses with occupiers including Powells Tea and Coffee Merchants, Ancoats Food Factory and a Recycling Centre. Other clusters of commercial properties are located in proximity to the Site such as those on Ducie Street and Laystall Street (south of the Site) and Cutting Room Square (west of the Site).

The built environment is broken up by a network of busy main roads such as the Great Ancoats Street ring road (A665) south west of the Site, Old Mill Street east of the Site and Redhill Street north west of the Site.

A range of sensitive environmental receptors are located within the surrounding area. These are shown on Figures 2-5 and 2-6. The Site is adjacent to Cotton Field Park which is located to the north and is defined by open green space. Co-op Academy New Islington is located to the west of the park.

Rochdale canal breaks up the urban environment and borders the western border of the Site. The canal connects to Cotton Field Wharf Marina, north of the Site. This marina includes a variety of commercial properties as well as residential and facilitates for boat mooring.

The Site is not within a conservation area; however, the boundary of the Ancoats Conservation Area is located 127 m northwest to the Site. There are six other conservation areas within 1 km of the Site. These are described in more detail in Chapter 12 Historic Environment.

There are 202 Listed Buildings within 1 km of the Site, the closest being Grade II listed 32 and 34 Laystall Street located 124 m southwest from the Site.

The Site is located within the Manchester Air Quality Management Area (AQMA), which covers Manchester City Centre, the area around Manchester Airport and the main arterial traffic routes in the city. The pollutant declared for the AQMA is annual mean nitrogen dioxide (NO_2) with the source determined as a mixture of road types.

New Islington Marina is the closest waterbody to the Site, located adjacent to the northern border of the Site within Cotton Field Park. The Site is within Flood Zone 1 (low probability of flooding).

There are three Noise Important Area (NIA) within 1 km of the Site. The Site is located within NIA ID: 10962.

There are no historic landfills or permitted waste sites within 300 m of the Site. The closest is historic landfill (ID: EAHLD16530) located 790 m south-east of the Site.



Figure 2-3 Cotton Field Park and New Islington Marina, adjacent to the north east of the Site

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- Site Boundary
- Phase 1
- Phase 2
- 1km Site Buffer
- 250m Site Buffer
- Historic Landfill
- Open Green Space
- Conservation Areas
- Noise Important Areas
- Sites of Biological Importance
- Air Quality Management Areas

Listed Buildings

- Grade I
- Grade II
- Grade II*

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Irk (Wince to Irwell)

Ashton Canal and Peak Forest Canal (Lower Section)

Rochdale Canal (Western Section)

Medlock (Lumb Brook to Irwell)

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- Site Boundary
- Phase 1
- Phase 2
- 1km Site Buffer
- 250m Site Buffer
- Flood Zone 2
- Flood Zone 3

River, Canal and Surface Water Transfer Waterbodies

- Canal
- River

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2.2 Future anticipated baseline

It is known that the Phase 1 development will be constructed prior to the Proposed Development which will also use the Site to locate a construction compound. Phase 1 is anticipated to be constructed between 2025 and 2029, thus construction of the Proposed Development is not anticipated to commence until 2030 (see Volume 2, Chapter 3). Therefore the future baseline of the Site that will be assessed will comprise partial vegetation clearance and groundworks completed within the central corridor of the Site, finished with bare earth.

Upon review of live planning applications on the MCC planning website for future development, it has been concluded that these will also have all been constructed prior to the Proposed Development. Therefore, the surrounding area of the Site will comprise that which is described within section 2.2, but also additional developments as outlined below:

- Phase 1 development adjacent to the west of the Site;
- Five office buildings and new public realm southeast of the Site, at New Islington Green (128191/FO/2020);
- Four three-bedroom townhouses with associated car / cycle parking, recessed balconies and rooftop terraces between Ducie Street and Store Street (132574/FO/2021);
- A part-33, part-11, part 9 and part 7 storey residential building above semi-basement level, with associated residents' amenity space at Port Street (132489/FO/2021);
- A part 4, part 11 storey residential development with associated parking and amenity space on Store Street (126608/FO/2020);
- A 20-storey building to create a 154-bedroom hotel with ancillary café, bar, restaurant and gym between Great Ancoats Street and Laystall Street (135662/FO/2022);
- Two residential apartment buildings comprising Block 1: part 9, part 10 and Block 2: a 12-storey building on Port Street (135675/FO/2022);
- A part 5 and part 10 storey building comprising residential apartments and townhouses, residents' amenity space and commercial space between Jersey Street and Poland Street (137346/FO/2023);
- An 8-storey building to form 118 residential apartments and ground floor commercial floorspace on Poland Street (130354/FO/2021);
- A residential development comprising 34 no. 3 storey dwellinghouses, 2 no. 6 storey apartment blocks comprising 60 no. apartments with commercial space at the ground floor adjacent to New Islington Marina (122598/FO/2019);
- A part 16/ part 11 storey building to form 106 no. apartments (C3 Use Class) together with ground floor commercial uses opposite Store Street (126669/FO/2020); and
- A residential development of 28 two-bedroom apartments and 13 one-bedroom apartments with rooftop garden on Ducie Street.

Full detail on the developments and their locations are provided within Volume 2, Chapter 20 of this ES.

2.3 Planning history

The retail park previously on the site was approved in 1987 (ref. 30070) and included 'the erection of non-food retail warehouse units with associated car parking and servicing, and fast-food operation'. Since then a series of applications have been submitted for minor alterations such as shopfront alterations and signage.

An application approved in June 2012 (ref. 101259/FO/2012/N1) for:

> *'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'.*

The scheme was never implemented. In July 2019 a planning application was submitted for the Creation of a 440-space public car park for a temporary period of 2 years. The application (ref. 124181/VO/2019) was approved by MCC's Planning Committee, and the permission was granted in October 2019. However, the permission was the subject of a successful Judicial Review by the lobby group Trees Not Cars which challenged the decision to grant planning permission to build a car park next to a primary school. The LPA's decision was overturned on the basis that it had failed to consider the impacts of a car park on air quality and pollution levels and volume of traffic in the local area.

2.4 Proposed Development

Figure 2-6 below shows an illustrative drawing of the design of the Proposed Development to provide context to the following sections.



Figure 2-6 Illustrative masterplan of the design

Levels

The design of the Proposed Development has accounted for the significant 5m level changes within the existing site between the northwest and south east of the Site. To account for the level changes across the Site, ten sets of natural stone steps at 150 mm in depth each will be located throughout the Site, finished with tactile paving at either end and accompanied with handrails. The natural stone is proposed to be pennant sandstone with integrated high contrasting nosing with the tactile paving similarly comprising pennant sandstone. The sets of steps are designed with handrails that have a 50 mm diameter and integrated lighting. Eight of the ten sets of steps will be located within the south and southeast of the Site where the greatest level changes are located. The steps will each lead to terraced gardens, the approach taken to create usable level changes throughout the design. There will also be sloping footways throughout the design to ensure it is accessible to all, in particular wheelchair users.

Where necessary, level changes will be finished with gabion clad concrete retaining edges to ensure integrity. These are in-situ concrete retaining walls that are finished with gabion baskets secured with clamp bars. These will all be located within the southern half of the Site where the greatest level changes are.

Hardworks

Pedestrian footways will connect throughout the Proposed Development and comprise a variety of materials. In the north and south of the Site, it will largely be composed of exposed aggregate concrete and the edges will be finished with natural stone (100 mm x 100 mm x depth TBC). There will be five areas of feature paving, comprising three smaller areas (two small areas in the northeast and one in the southeast of the Site) and two much larger areas. One will be located across the width of the Site where it interfaces with Great Ancoats Street, and the other centred in the Site creating a main walkway area connecting the park to both the Phase 1 development and subsequent Phase 2 development. These five areas will all be made of natural stone paving with a rubbed finish (100 mm x 100-250 mm x depth TBC). The pathways will be finished with a natural stone kerb edging using UK sourced sandstone with dimensions of approximately 150 mm x 900 mm x 250 mm per stone. To mark the interfaces between changing materials, natural stone channels will be used. These will be made up of UK sourced limestone and will be approximately 150 mm x 900 mm x 150 mm per stone.

This connection of pedestrian footways will be broken up by other areas of hardworks with intended purposes. There will be three designated play areas underlain with Corkeen, a material composed of 100% natural cork. These will be located within the north of the Site and then two along the centre and east of the ‘dogleg’ of the Site along Great Ancoats Street.

To provide direction through the Proposed Development, two types of boardwalks have been incorporated within the design. Type one will be made of composite decking in a colour comparable to coppered oak and will be located within the north of the Proposed Development. The second type will be located within Cotton Field Park and facilitate a seamless connection between the existing park and Proposed Development. This will be made of hardwood timber decking to match that which already exists within Cotton Field Park.

The final element of hardworks within the Proposed Development is the area of loose gravel located adjacent to the type one boardwalk in the north of the Site and will be used as a ‘boardwalk planting area’.

Three natural stone walls are proposed as part of the design. One is located in the northwest corner of the Site and two are located on the east edge of the northern central lawn and adjacent ornamental flowering. These will be made of UK sourced sandstone and will be 300 mm in width and 500 mm in height and length. They will provide additional security for the Proposed Development by creating a vehicle secure line across the Site.

Sheet metal feature wall will be installed along the Phase 1 development boundary. The dimensions will likely be 2,000 mm high and 10 mm thick. This provides visual interest and design to the Proposed Development, whilst also increasing distinction and privacy between the two developments.

Softworks

The softworks include all planting within the Proposed Development and comprises amenity turf, trees and planting mixes.

Amenity turf is proposed to be laid in three locations, two of which function as central lawns within the design and the other being a smaller lawn in the south of the Proposed Development. The proposed seed mix will include 15-30% of fine leaved rye grass and 15% smooth stalked meadow grass. These lawns will be finished with a natural stone kerb edging using UK sourced sandstone with approximate dimensions of 300 mm x 900 mm x 250 mm per stone.

Twelve trees will be removed within the Site to allow for the construction of the Proposed Development. They are located along Hugh Oldham Way and parallel to Great Ancoats Street. These trees have all been identified as low to moderate in quality. An additional 966 trees are proposed to be planted and are assumed to comprise an even split between native and non-native species. A list of potential species has been compiled by Planit as part of the RIBA Stage 2 design. These include:

- Acer saccharinum ‘Pyramidale’,
- Pinus nigra,
- Corylus avellana,
- Magnolia grandiflora ‘Galissonnière’,
- Alnus x spaethii ‘Spaeth’,
- Prunus lusitanica ‘Augustifolia’,
- Tilia cordata,
- Fagus sylvatica, and
- Metasequoia glyptostrobodies.

All trees located on hardstanding will be protected with a tree grille.

There are three proposed planting mixes for the vegetation in the Proposed Development. Planting mix 1 is defined by ornamental flowering and will be used in the majority of designated planting areas within the Site. Planting mix 2 comprises wildflower grassland and will be used along the banks adjacent to Great Ancoats Street and also against the boundary of the Phase 1 development in the southwest corner of the Site. The third planting mix comprises native habitat and this will be used within one large area of planting which borders the Phase 1 development in the north of the Site.

Drainage

The drainage strategy for the Proposed Development is focused on the discharge of surface water to permeable surfaces and filter drains. Small areas of permeable surface are proposed throughout the Site, aligning with some of the proposed planting zones. Filter drains with perforated pipes will run around the edges of all softworks and areas of planting and turf. These will all be connected through surface water pipes that run underground.

This network of pipes will ultimately connect to the existing manhole in the southeast of the Site and discharge surface water to the sewers at this point.

A series of manholes and surface water inspection chambers will be incorporated into the design to allow for maintenance activities.

Lighting

The lighting design comprises a range of features with a variety of design and practical purposes. These include:

- 40 lighting columns scattered throughout to provide strategic lighting to the walkways throughout the design;
- 36 LED light strips to illuminate handrails and balustrades, further increasing accessibility for thr park users during levels of low natural lighting;
- 19 lighitng bollards predominantly positioned to highlight the edge of walkways;

- Three wayfinding lighting features at the entrance to the park;
- 58 tree uplighters to trees;
- 42 LED light strips to seating items; and
- Four gateway lighting features.

Street furniture

Where the Proposed Development connects with Cotton Field Park, two new gates are proposed along Hugh Oldham Way. The existing fence line of the Site is proposed to be moved north of Hugh Oldham Way to align with these access points.

Within two areas of Corkeen hardstanding, a play area and/or outdoor exercise area are proposed, one within the north of the Site and the other in the southeast. The equipment will be chosen to tie in with the historic interpretation theme of the Proposed Development. In the southwest of the Site, three areas of native habitat will have play features incorporated. These include a stainless-steel slide, play stepping stones that will be incorporated into the slopping edge of the ground and a raised Corkeen path through planting. Along a fourth area of native habitat, within the 'dogleg' of the Proposed Development, a 2 m climbing traversing wall is proposed.

Fourteen bespoke timber slat benches will be located throughout the Site, edging areas of planting and providing seating along the footways. These will include arm rests and approximately 50% of each bench will include a backrest. They will be made of Forest Stewardship Council UK (FSC) certified hardwood timber, with a galvanised steel frame. There will similarly be three bespoke timber slat benches on stone plinths located within the Site. Two are in the northwest of the Site and the other in the south. All three line the edges between hardstanding areas and those of planting and grassland. These will also serve as an additional security measure for the Proposed Development, creating a vehicular secure line.

Timber seating cubes (500 mm x 500 mm x 500 mm) will be located in clusters throughout the Proposed Development, notably in the northeast corner, nearby the interface with the Phase 2 site, southwest corner and southeast corner. This will also be made of FSC certified hardwood timber.

Four timber slat loungers made of FSC certified hardwood timber with galvanised steel frames will be located in the north of the Site, overlapping and connecting an area of ornamental flowering and a public footway.

Approximately 16 sets of timber picnic table and benches will also be incorporated throughout the Proposed Development, similarly, using FSC certified hardwood timber. This will be located on hardstanding ground, lining the edges of one central lawn, two other areas of planting and the New Islington Marina. These are located in the southern half of the central corridor of the Proposed Development as well as the connection with Cotton Field Park.

A total of 54 cycle spaces have been proposed within the design and these will comprise stainless steel cycle stands which occupy two bikes each. The size of these will be approximately 750 mm x 750 mm.

3030 bins will be located throughout the Proposed Development and will include 155 for general waste and 155 for recycling waste. This will be approximately 1000 mm high, 450 mm wide and 550 mm deep.

Six bee posts are proposed as part of the design. These will be cast of concrete and will be located in the south east and the north of the Site. Additionally, there will be two bird posts which will be located on a tall post to tie in with the design of those in Cotton Field Park already.

For utilities, there will be two external water points. The exact location and specification of these is subject to change but indicatively will be located in the southeast corner and north of Site. Similarly, there will be two pop up power points approximately located in the north and the centre of the Site.

To support accessibility and usability of the Proposed Development, a variety of wayfinding structures are proposed. These include:

- two gateway markers located at both the north and south of the Site,
- two fingerposts located in the centre and south of the Site, and
- three interpretation posts located in the north, south and southeast of the Site.

To manage access within the Proposed Development, bollards have been incorporated within the design. Static bollards will be located within footways throughout the Site, notably across the proposed interface with the Phase 1 development, and any key entrances along Great Ancoats Street. One protective manual telescopic bollard will be installed to manage and allow for maintenance access within the Proposed Development. This will be in the northeast corner of the Site in the centre of a footway.

Operation

General operation

Once in operation, the Proposed Development will be open 24 hours a day. However the connections to Cotton Field Park will operate under the same timings as those currently practiced as follows:

- April – October: 8:00am – 8:00pm;
- November – March: 8:00am – 7:00pm.

Access to the Proposed Development outside of these timings will be maintained to Old Mill Street when Cottonfield Park is closed, as part of the development of the Phase 2 site, or in the event of that development not being brought forward in advance of the completion of the park, via a dedicated access route between the new park and Old Mill Street.

The users of the Proposed Development will consist of local residents, visitors and workers from surrounding residential communities and commercial properties. The Proposed Development will provide new spaces for exercise, recreational activities, and active travel, ultimately increasing connectivity between communities.

Energy Use

The main sources of operational energy use will arise from the lighting, CCTV, if required, and pop-up power points. The CCTV, if required, is assumed to be operational 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The lighting is assumed to be operational based on solar or timing sensors and therefore its associated energy consumption will vary daily and seasonally. The pop-up power points are assumed to be used infrequently during maintenance activities and therefore will likely have the lowest energy consumption of the three features.

Electricity is expected to be sourced via the National Grid. A review of the electrical requirements of the Proposed Development has been undertaken and identified potential connection points between Site and its electricity supply. A desktop utilities survey conducted by Electricity Northwest identified that the LV cabling that used to serve the retail park remains in place. If the cable is tested and proven to be in good serviceable condition, it could be repurposed to supply the park.

Additionally, there's an existing feeder pillar on the south side of the Site, near Great Ancoats Street. It currently sits within the Phase 1 boundary but has the potential to be relocated within the Proposed Development's boundaries. However, the current ownership and condition of the feeder pillar are unknown and would need investigation to pursue this course of action.

Located on the north side of the park is a 6/0.415kV substation (CENTRAL RETAIL PK 166490). According to the survey, 2 cables from this substation enter the Site boundary, a 3-core 95 mm^2 and a 3-core 185 mm^2 cable. If these cables are tested and verified to be in good condition, they could be connected to a new feeder pillar for supplying the Proposed Development. An on-site survey would be necessary to pinpoint the exact location of these cables.

Maintenance

The Proposed Development will require minimal operational maintenance. The main activities will include waste removal, refurbishment and replacement of street furniture, maintenance of the drainage system when needed and general upkeeping of the landscaping and vegetation.

Vehicle movements

The Park will provide an amenity for the local residential and business community, as well as for passersby. No parking will be provided as part of the Proposed Development and it is not anticipated to be a trip attractor, other than for the local surrounding community, including people working in the proposed adjacent office developments, and for people passing by.

Consequently, the Park is only anticipated to generate local trips, with the vast majority being made on-foot and a few being made by bicycle. Many of these trips will also be linked, or pass-by trips, rather than trips made solely to access the Park.

Maintenance of the Park is anticipated to generate very few, infrequent vehicle trips, typically less than one return trip per day. Furthermore, the maintenance of the Park will be incorporated into the maintenance regime for Cotton Fields Park to the north-east, which will minimise additional trips associated with park maintenance.

3. Construction

3.1 Introduction

Only partial groundworks are within the scope of the assessment of the Proposed Development. The vegetation clearance and earthworks of the central corridor of the Site are within the scope of works for the Phase 1 development. This is because the Site will be used as a site compound during the construction of the Phase 1 development which is proposed to take place between 2025 and 2029, and excess cut material from the Phase 1 development will be used to create the finished levels of the Proposed Development. Only the vegetation clearance and earthworks within the 'dogleg' of the Site parallel to Great Ancoats Street and within the connection to Cotton Field Park are within the scope of the Proposed Development. The existing concrete will be retained and built on-top of, instead of removing the need to 'break' ground and minimising the amount of waste produced.

A Draft Construction Management Plan (CMP) setting out construction related environmental mitigation measures has been prepared and submitted as part of the ES (Volume 3, Appendix 3.1). A detailed CMP will be prepared by the contractor prior to commencement.

3.2 Programme

The total construction programme is expected to span a period of approximately 12 months from 2030 at the earliest, within which there will be elements of ground works, hard and soft works such as tree and vegetation planting and installation of street furniture. The Proposed Development is anticipated to be delivered in three continuous phases.

Table 3-1 Construction programme

Phase		Timescale
1 – Site Establishment		Eight weeks
2 – Construction Execution	Earthworks	Six weeks
	Hard engineering	16 weeks
	Soft engineering	16 weeks
3 – Commissioning and Handover		Two weeks

The sequence of activities is further clarified below to demonstrate the consecutive nature of the programme:

- Weeks 1-8: Mobilisation and site establishment
- Weeks 9-15: Construction Execution- Earthworks
- Weeks 16-32: Construction Execution- Hard Engineering
- Weeks 33-49: Construction Execution- Soft Engineering
- Weeks 50-52: Commissioning and Handover

The programme is based upon on the assumption that working hours of 07.00hrs to 18.00hrs Monday to Friday will be followed, with no work at weekends or Bank Holidays (unless otherwise agreed with MCC). No night-time working is assumed to occur at any point during the construction phase.

There will be three main stages during construction as outlined in the following sections.

Phase 1: Site establishment

The first stage is to secure the Site, by establishing a works compound and materials and equipment laydown areas, Site access, and erecting security fencing to control access onto the Site.

It is assumed that the disused service road off Old Mill Street will be used for access to the Site throughout construction.

Phase 2: Construction execution

Construction methods are still to be confirmed; however, they will be comparable to those of any similar scale recreational development. Broadly, the works activities will include:

- Earthworks:
  - Completion of earthworks/groundworks still outstanding following the construction of the Phase 1 development,
- Hard engineering:
  - Foundations and hardstanding construction,
  - Drainage infrastructure construction,
  - Lighting installation,
- Soft engineering:
  - Landscaping and vegetation planting, and
  - Street furniture installation.

Phase 3: Commissioning and handover

Upon completion of the works, the Principal Contractor will provide the operator with all as-built information, build records, and any relevant Inspection and Test Plans which identify the completion status and acceptance at the end of construction, ready for handover.

3.3 Construction methodologym

The following sections provide a brief overview of the methodology to be followed for the construction of the Proposed Development.

Site logistics

Access to the Site will be via the disused service road off Old Mill Street. The gates to the Site will be manned during working hours. Where required, appropriate vehicle wash facilities will be in place to ensure all vehicles leave the Site clean.

It is anticipated that all construction compounds, welfare facilities and material storage will be contained within the Site boundary. Power will be obtained from the existing grid connections to the Site so that mobile generators will not be required.

Any temporary public road or footpath closures associated with the construction of the Proposed Development will be agreed with the relevant MCC departments and relevant diversion signage will be put in place. This includes temporary cordoning within Cotton Fields Park where works are planned to take place.

Construction

The works will generally comprise the following:

- Residual groundworks on the Site that have not been undertaken as part of the Phase 1 construction,
- Earthworks to achieve the intended levels of the Site,
- Construction of the underground drainage system (as detailed in the following section),
- Erection of permanent fencing and gates to connect to Cotton Field Park,
- Construction of all hardstanding areas, namely the paths throughout the Proposed Development and the boardwalk within Cotton Fields Park,
- Installation of lighting design (as detailed in the following section),
- Turfing of the grassland areas and planting of trees,
- Landscaping and planting of remaining vegetation,
- Construction of all street furniture including seating and waste bins.

Infrastructure

The main infrastructure to be constructed includes that of the drainage and lighting design for the Proposed Development. The drainage design will comprise the following:

- Hardstanding areas forming public pathways throughout the Site,
- Filter drains to collect and direct surface water,
- Combined sewer – the surface water will discharge to the existing sewer in the south east corner of the Site.

It is expected that the construction of the drainage infrastructure will occur early on in the programme of works and therefore will serve as both the construction and operational drainage strategy.

Chapter 2 of this ES provides a more detailed description of the design of the Proposed Development and therefore the infrastructure to be constructed.

Plant and machinery

The type and quantity of plant and machinery proposed to be used are detailed in Table 3-2 below. This also details maximum total hours of operation of each plant and assumed 'on-time' rates of each, based on the aforementioned programme and phasing assumptions.

Table 3-2 Construction plant and machinery

Type	Quantity	Construction stage	Max hours of operation	% on-time
Telehandler	1	All	2,100	50
Bowsers and pumps	1	Hard engineer and soft engineering	1,600	100
Vibration compactor and whackers	1	Hard engineering	800	25
Forklift	1	All	2,100	25
Cultivators	1	Earthworks	300	25
Tracked Excavator	1	Earthworks	300	50
Dumper	1	All	2,100	50
Bulldozer	1	Earthworks	300	50
Roller	1	Earthworks	300	50
HGV 8 Wheel wagon	1	All	2,100	25
Road sweeper	1	All	2,100	25

3.4 Traffic management planmp

The Site is well served from the disused service road off Old Mill Street which connects to the surrounding local road network. Construction of the Proposed Development is not anticipated to generate a sufficient number of construction vehicles per day.warrant assessment.

Deliveries

It is anticipated that all deliveries will arrive via the disused service road off Old Mill Street which connects to the north of the Site.

Where appropriate, wheel washing facilities will be in place to ensure the maintenance of the road network in proximity to the Site is maintained. Sweeping of Old Mill Street will be undertaken when necessary.

Loading and unloading of material deliveries will occur within the Site whenever possible. Should exceptional circumstances occur, special measures will be instigated to accommodate these occurring outside of the Site.

Parking

Throughout the construction period, the average size of construction workforce would fluctuate depending on the activities being undertaken. It is assumed the workforce would be no larger than 50 people due to the scale of the Proposed Development. It is assumed that this would include a 70/30 split between construction and office-based personnel.

Similarly to deliveries, it is expected that all personnel will arrive via the disused service road off Old Mill Street which connects to the north of the Site. It is anticipated that site personnel will be encouraged to utilise the extensive public transport options available.

3.5 Health and safetys

Construction materials

The materials being used within the design do not generate a risk to construction personnel using the appropriate PPE and following manufacturers guidance.

Material storage will be within the Site with access through the Site entrance for deliveries. Stockpiling of materials will be kept to a minimum where possible, with deliveries timed appropriately to align with the programme of works taking place.

Site security and safety

Protecting the public from risks associated with the construction works is high priority of this application. Measures such as dust and noise control and the erection of perimeter fencing will be taken.

Appropriate action will be taken to ensure the Site is secure at all times from unauthorised access. The provision of CCTV would be considered if required to aid the prevention of unauthorised activities.

3.6 Environmental managementm

The Principal Contractor will be responsible for construction management and will have in place a Construction Management Plan (CMP). A draft Construction Management Plan including relevant mitigation measures identified within this ES is included in Appendix 3.1. The Principal Contractor will need to incorporate this draft CMP into a final

CMP which will include detailed Risk Assessed Method Statements (RAMS), organisational responsibility, communications strategy, monitoring and record keeping, accident and emergency procedures and processes etc.

3.7 Waste management strategy

As all concrete is being retained and only partial earthworks are within the scope of the Proposed Development it is assumed there will be minimal waste associated with the construction. Any waste that is produced will be disposed of in accordance with best practice and will avoid landfill where possible. Waste specific mitigation is discussed within Chapter 14 of this ES. A draft Site Waste Management Plan (SWMP) has been produced as part of the planning application for the Proposed Development (Volume 3, Appendix 14.1).

4. Policy context

4.1 Introduction

MCC's Development Plan currently comprises:

- Manchester City Council Core Strategy (2012) ("the Core Strategy")[2];
- Manchester Proposals Map (2012)[3];
- Saved Policies of the Manchester Unitary Development Plan 2005 ("the UDP")[4];
- Greater Manchester Joint Waste Development Plan Document (2012)[5];
- Greater Manchester Joint Minerals Plan (2013)[6]

4.2 National planning policy

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2023)[7]

The NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied. It provides a framework within which locally prepared plans can provide for sufficient housing and other development in a sustainable manner. Preparing and maintaining up-to-date plans should be seen as a priority in meeting this objective.

Climate Change Action Plan (2020-2025)[8]

The main ambition of this plan is to ensure that all of Manchester's residents are protected from the impact of climate change, but that equality impact assessments are undertaken on specific projects to ensure that any changes that are made do not have a negative impact on the city's most vulnerable people. This plan builds on MCC's commitments to tackling climate change over the next 5 years and builds on previous action plans over the last decade. The Council, alongside a number of other strategic partners in the city, has produced this plan to support the delivery of the citywide Manchester Climate Change Framework 2020-25 which has been produced by the Manchester Climate Change Partnership and Agency. It summarises the specific actions that are required to ensure that the Council reduces its direct emissions by at least 50% by 2025 whilst also playing our full part in supporting and influencing the city to do the same. It also covers the Council's plans for adapting to the expected impacts of climate change and supporting and influencing others, including through the implementation of the Manchester Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy 2015-25.

The Manchester Climate Change Partnership Framework 2022 Update (2020-25)[9]

This Framework is Manchester's high-level strategy for meeting the commitment in the Our Manchester Strategy 2016-25 to 'play our full part in limiting the impacts of climate change'. It has been produced by the Manchester Climate Change Agency (the Agency), on behalf of the Manchester Climate Change Partnership (the Partnership). The Partnership and Agency have been working together since February 2018 to champion climate change action in the city.

Greater Manchester's Five-year Environment Plan (2019)[10]; and City Centre Transport Strategy (2021)[11]

Great Manchester is taking the initiative and setting out bold plans to give people, communities and businesses the confidence and aspiration to create a city region which is fit for the future. This plan is about environmental responsibilities, alongside securing economic future and well-being.

The City Centre Transport Strategy has been produced following input from residents, commuters, businesses, visitors, transport operators and other stakeholders to understand the existing transport challenges and future aspirations for the city centre of those that use it each day. There have been several exercises to gauge the views of the people who live in, work in and visit the city. Conversations in the summer of 2018 with people, businesses and stakeholders were held to which over 3,700 responded, followed by discussions with a number of key stakeholders at the start of 2020 who helped to co-design the strategy. Manchester and Salford City Councils and Transport for Greater Manchester have collaborated in developing this strategy.

4.3 Local planning policy

The Manchester Local Plan[12]

The Manchester Local Plan guides development within Manchester, it sets out Manchester's approach to development and is used to guide decisions on planning applications across the city. It was previously known as the Local Development Framework. It consists of:

- Places for Everyone (PfE)[13] Joint Development Plan for Bolton, Bury, Manchester, Oldham, Rochdale, Salford, Tameside, Trafford and Wigan 2022 to 2039 (Adopted in 2024);
- Core Strategy2012-2027[14] (Adopted 2012): the key document in the Local Plan. This must be read alongside the Addendum to Manchester Core Strategy 2024; and
- Extant (remaining) Unitary Development Plan[15] policies (adopted 1995): many of these policies were replaced by the Core Strategy.

Former Central Retail Park-Strategic Regeneration Framework (FCRP SRF) (2023)[16]

The FCRP SRF sets out the vision to create a high-quality, sustainable office district with an attractive public realm at its centre, including a new green space. It was prepared by MCC with input from the Government Property Agency (GPA) to guide the future development of a key long-term strategic regeneration site in the city centre. The SRF has

[2] Core Strategy | Manchester City Council
[3] Local Development Framework Area Map Browser (arcgis.com)
[4] Extant Unitary Development Policies (UDP) | Manchester City Council
[5] Greater Manchester Joint Waste Development Plan Documents | Manchester City Council
[6] The Greater Manchester Joint Minerals Plan April 2013 (greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk)
[7] National Planning Policy Framework (publishing.service.gov.uk)
[8] The Councils Climate Change Action Plan 2020-25 and Appendices.pdf (manchester.gov.uk)
[9] Manchester+Climate+Change+Framework+2020-25.pdf (squarespace.com)
[10] Five-Year Environment Plan - Greater Manchester Combined Authority (greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk)
[11] [Insert title of report] (ctfassets.net)
[12] Local Plan | Local Plan | Manchester City Council
[13] Places For Everyone - Greater Manchester Combined Authority (greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk)
[14] Core Strategy 2012-2027 | Core Strategy 2012-2027 | Manchester City Council
[15] Extant Unitary Development Policies (UDP) | Manchester City Council
[16] FCRP SRF MCC 2023

been developed with full regard to National Planning Policy, Manchester's Statutory Development Plan Documents and the suite of strategic and regeneration policies that are driving renaissance in the city.

Guide to Development in Manchester - Supplementary Planning[17]

The Guide to Development in Manchester - Supplementary Planning Document and Planning Guidance aims to support and enhance the ongoing shaping of the city by providing a set of reasoned principles which will guide developers, designers and residents to the sort of development we all want to see in Manchester. Its role is to inform the ongoing development of the city over the next decade by highlighting its many and varied existing qualities and describing how they can be enhanced in the future.

Supplementary Planning Document and Planning Guidance (SPD)[18]

The document sets out MCC's stance on a wide range of issues, demonstrating, where applicable, their links to the Manchester Unitary Development Plan (UDP).

UDP Part 1 Policies H2.7, I3.1 and S2.5 all deal with the Council's expectation that new development, whether for residential, industrial, commercial or retail purposes, should have a high standard of design making a positive contribution to the City's environment. UDP Part 1 Policy E3.3 encourages new development along the City's major radial and orbital routes to be of the highest quality.

Our Manchester Strategy 2016-2025[19]

The Our Manchester Strategy 2016 – 2025 sets the long-term vision for Manchester's future. It details the priorities that everyone in the city –public, private, voluntary and community organisations, and residents – should work on together to put Manchester in the top-flight of world class cities by 2025.

Design for Access 2 (2003)[20]

Design for Access 2 is Manchester City Council's best practice guidance of inclusive design standards. These standards are based upon the Social Model of Disability and as a result, in some areas, improve upon the current government guidance and regulations. Design for Access 2 provides a practical approach to inclusive design and gives references for more detailed technical guidance.

Stronger Together: Greater Manchester Strategy (2013)[21]

The Greater Manchester Strategy (GMS) published in 2009 was a response to the Manchester Independent Economic Review. It was a worthy response and formed the basis for the establishment of the Greater Manchester Combined Authority and the Local Enterprise Partnership. It also provided a solid platform for Greater Manchester's engagement with government. However, since that publication there have been significant changes within the economic context, which have prompted the need for a revisit of Greater Manchester Combined Authority's (GMCAs) priorities in achieving this.

Manchester City Centre Strategic Plan (2015-2018)[22]

As both the economy and population of Manchester have grown, large-scale mixed-use developments incorporating commercial, residential and leisure uses are driving change at its boundaries. These developments include Ancoats and New Islington to the east, the Green Quarter and NOMA to the north, and Castlefield and St George's to the south west. These locations have increasingly become attractive places to live for people working and spending their leisure time within the city centre. Since the previous Strategic Plan was published in 2009, there has been a significant change in the policy and funding context in which the city operates, as a result of the change of government and the strengthening of the Greater Manchester City Region structures.

Manchester green and blue strategy (2015-25)[23]

MCC have published a strategy to support the investment and growth of green infrastructure within the city. The four objectives of the strategy focus on:

1. Improving the quality of existing green infrastructure,
2. Use green infrastructure as a key component of new developments;
3. Improve connectivity and accessibility to green infrastructure; and
4. Improve and promote the benefits of green infrastructure.

The strategy specifically references parks and their purpose in forming green infrastructure networks within the built environment.

Places for Everyone Joint Development plan[24]

The Places for Everyone (PfE) plan provides objectives and guidance policies to help create inclusive and sustainable economic growth across nine boroughs. It reinforces the ambition to bring forward development on brownfield land and provide greater protection of environmental assets whilst also supporting wider strategies around clean air, walking and cycling and underpins the ambition to be a carbon neutral city region by 2038.

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17 Guide to Development in Manchester - Supplementary Planning Document and guidance | Manchester City Council
18 Supplementary planning documents and Guidance | Supplementary planning documents | Manchester City Council
19 Our Manchester Strategy- Forward to 2025 | Manchester City Council
20 Design for Access 2 | Manchester City Council
21 gm_strategy_stronger_together.pdf (greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk)
22 City Centre Strategic Plan 2015 - 2018 | Manchester City Council
23 Manchester green and blue strategy | Manchester City Council
24 https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/media/9578/places-for-everyone-joint-development-plan-document.pdf

5. EIA approacha and methodologym

5.1 Introduction

The key stages of the EIA process are summarised in Figure 5-1.

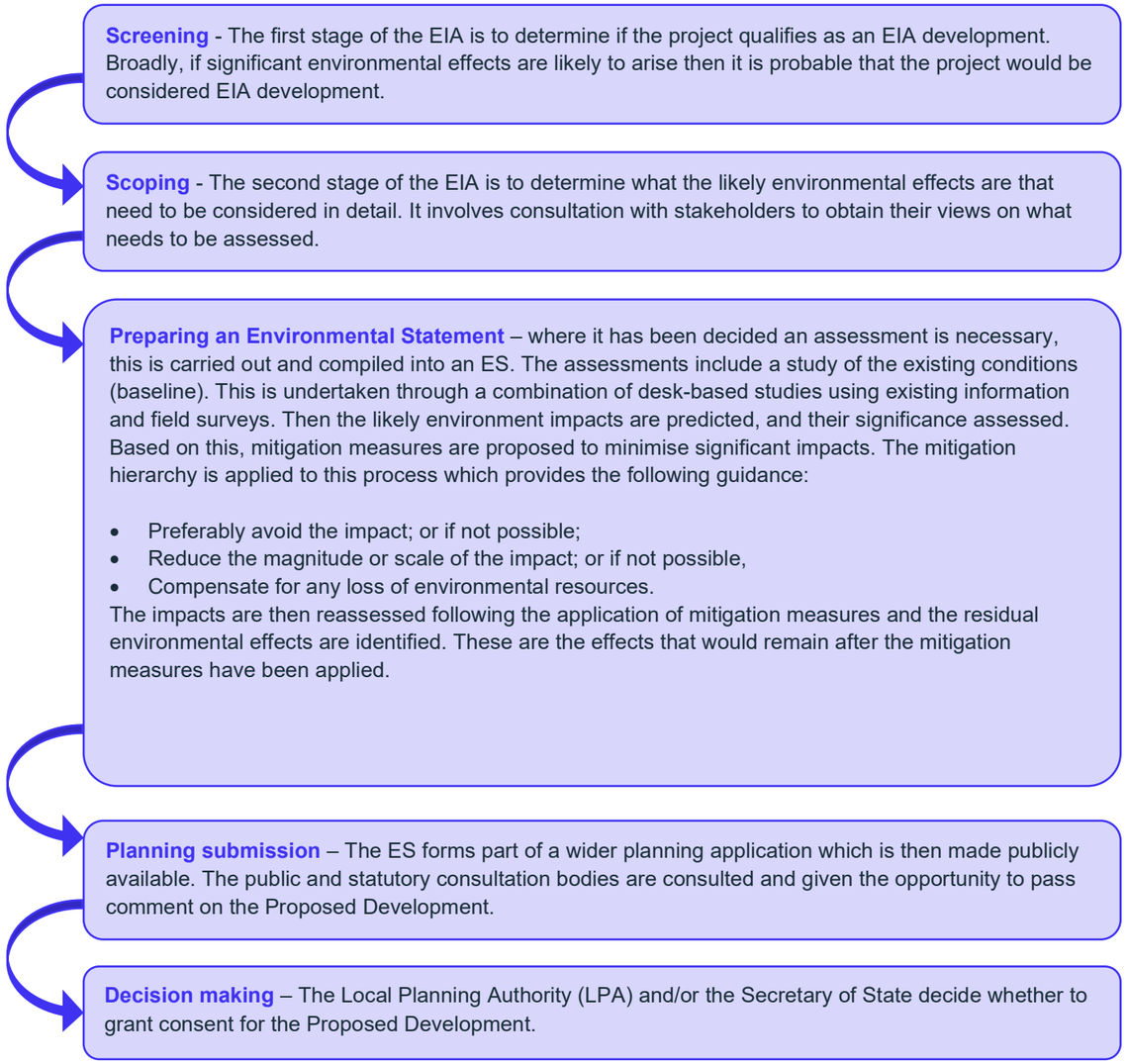


Figure 5-1 Key stages of the EIA process

5.2 Screening, scoping and consultation

As discussed in section 1.2 of this ES, the applicant has voluntarily entered into the process in accordance with provision 5(1) and (2) of the EIA Regulations, therefore a screening opinion was not requested and instead the Scoping process was undertaken as the first stage. A Scoping Report was submitted to MCC and a Scoping Opinion was requested. A Scoping Opinion is a written statement of the relevant planning authority's opinion as to the scope and level of detail of the information to be provided in the ES. The ES must provide the information requested in the Scoping Opinion. The purpose of the Scoping stage is to identify the issues which could result in likely significant effects so that these can be assessed and reported in the ES.

5.3 Structure to technical chapters

For the assessments scoped into the EIA, a chapter is produced which follows the structure set out below.

- Executive summary: This provides an overview of the discipline specific impact assessment, including a brief summary of the baseline, key impacts and where relevant any positive and/or adverse significant effects as a result of the Proposed Development.
- Introduction: This section briefly introduces the individual environmental assessments and the content that will be covered within the chapter.
- Competent expert evidence: This outlines the suitably capable experts that have contributed to the impact assessment and lists the relevant qualifications held by each person.
- Relevant legislation and guidance: An overview of legislation and guidance which the impact assessment has relied on, aligned to and followed is described. This includes international, national and local policies where relevant.
- Assessment method: This section details the specific method applied to the impact assessment, including details on how the baseline was identified and a matrix for assessing significance. It outlines how the following three key factors are identified.
- Baseline Conditions: Provides a description of the existing environment in terms of the discipline specific environmental aspect. Generally, this section also highlights the sensitivity of each receptor within the baseline that is then going to be assessed.
- Potential impacts: A list of possible impacts is provided based on professional judgement in relation to the nature and scale of the Proposed Development. A list is identified for both the construction phase and operational phase of the Proposed Development.
- Assessment of effects: This section comprises a table for the construction and/or the operational phases and includes a breakdown of impacts on each receptor assessed, the magnitudes of these and any mitigation applied. The beneficial and/or adverse residual effects are then identified along with their associated significance likely to be experienced as a result of the Proposed Development.
- Additional mitigation and enhancement measures: Where mitigation is listed within section 8 of the chapters, details of what this entails is provided in this section.
- Cumulative effects: Where relevant, the cumulative effects of the Proposed Development on specific environmental receptors have been considered in each chapter along with additional committed developments. Chapter 20 (Cumulative Effects Assessment) also considers the in-combination effects on receptors from all of the different assessments undertaken in this ES.
- Summary and conclusion: To conclude the chapter, this section provides a brief overview of the main points discussed within the assessment and indicates the main conclusions drawn from it such as any significant beneficial and/or adverse effects on the relevant environmental receptors as a result of the Proposed Development.

5.4 Impact assessment

Environmental impacts cause environmental effects, and these should not be confused as the same thing. The impact assessment first identifies the impacts relevant to each of the environmental aspects and which receptors would be affected by the impact. An evaluation of the effect is undertaken to determine whether it would be significant or not. This is done by considering the following criteria:

- Sensitivity of the receptor – In general the more sensitive a receptor is to an impact the more significant the effect is likely to be. The importance of the receptor is also considered as part of its sensitivity.
- Magnitude of the impact – This is sometimes referred to as the scale of the impact. The larger the magnitude of the impact, the more likely the resulting effect would be significant. Impact magnitude can refer to the spatial scale of the impact and the degree atat which an impact causes beneficial or adverse effects.
- Duration of the effect – This refers to how long the effect would last and is broadly characterised into permanent and temporary effects.
- Reversibility of the effect – Some effects would overtime be reversible with or without mitigation, whilst other effects may be permanent and irreversible. There is a close relationship between effect duration and reversibility, but they are distinct.

Both primary effects (which are direct effects) and secondary effects (which are indirect effects that may occur as a result of mitigating a primary effect) are considered.

Effects can be adverse or beneficial and both types of effect have been considered within the assessments.

Broadly speaking effects are categorised as follows:

- Major adverse / beneficial
- Moderate adverse / beneficial
- Minor adverse / beneficial
- Negligible / no effect

Major and moderate effects are generally regarded as being significant whereas minor and negligible effects are not significant. The method of assessment sections in each of the environmental aspect chapters provide further detail on how effects have been evaluated for the specific environmental aspect.

5.5 Mitigation measures

Mitigation measures have been identified where a significant adverse effect is likely to occur. Most effects can be mitigated but sometimes mitigation would not be undertaken because it is technically very difficult, it is prohibitively expensive, or because it may result in undesirable secondary effects.

There is a hierarchy of mitigation as shown in Figure 5.2 which shows the primacy of the mitigation for reducing environmental effects. The preference is to avoid any impact at all so that the baseline is maintained and there are no adverse environmental effects. If mitigation is not possible then consideration can be given to compensation and, if that is not possible, to remediation of an effect. Mitigation measures relating to the design of the Proposed Development will all be delivered within the permanent land within the Site boundary.

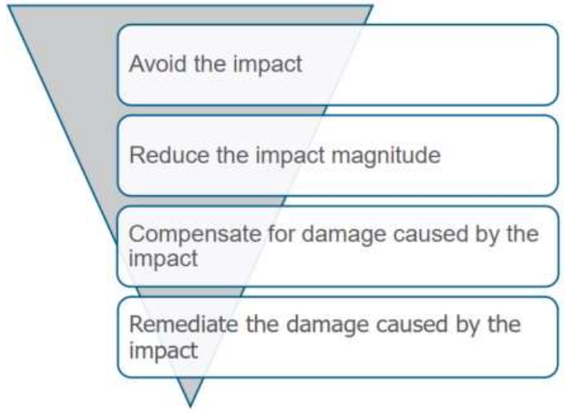


Figure 5-2 Mitigation hierarchy

5.6 Assumptions and limitations

The environmental assessment process aims to assist good decision making based on the quality of the information provided including the potential environmental effects of the Proposed Development. Due to the nature of the assessment and the prediction of effects arising from events that have yet to take place, there is an inherent level of uncertainty within the assessments. Assessments use methods that are well established and accepted to minimise this uncertainty.

As with any project, the design of the Proposed Development continues to evolve as further information is obtained and the design becomes more detailed. In this case, The Royal institute of British Architects[25] (RIBA) Stage 33 design has been used as the basis of the assessment. The level of detail presented within this ES about the Site and the design is considered sufficient to identify and understand the main environmental issues and significant effects that could arise as a result of the Proposed Development.

Where uncertainties or limitations exist, a worst-case scenario is assumed so that effective mitigation measures can be identified and implemented. Where a worst-case scenario has been used in the assessments, this is described in the relevant sections. The extent to which these uncertainties, limitations and assumptions are likely to affect the assessment outcome (where applicable) is also outlined.

Specific limitations, uncertainties and assumptions relating to each of the environmental aspects are described in relevant assessment chapters.

[25] RIBA Plan of Work (architecture.com)

6. Alternatives

6.1 Introduction

This chapter sets out the requirements stated in the EIA Regulations to provide “A description of the reasonable alternatives (for example in terms of development design, technology, location, size and scale) studied by the ApplicantApplicant, which are relevant to the proposed project and its specific characteristics, and an indication of the main reasons for selecting the chosen option, including a comparison of the environmental effects.".

In the case of the Proposed Development, the alternatives refer to previous superseded plans for the FCRP. The Proposed Development forms part of the Central Retail Park SRF (March 2023)[26]. This supersedes two development frameworks produced in 2015 and 2020. The following sections outline these frameworks as well as the design decisions that have ultimately led to the design of the Proposed Development.

6.2 Alternatives considered

Central Retail Park Development Framework 2015[27]

This framework proposed to upgrade some of the then existing retail units on the western part of the site and release the eastern part of the site for redevelopment as a residential-led scheme as shown in Figure 6-1.

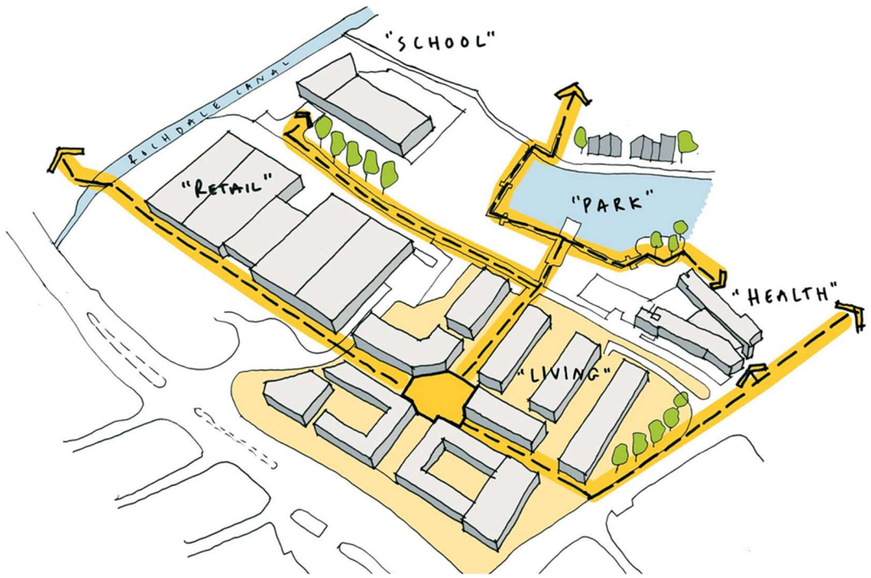


Figure 6-1 Design for FCRP proposed within the 2015 Framework.

Source: Central Retail Park Development Framework 2015, page 45

The key components included:

- A reimagined retail park in the northwest of the site comprising refurbished retained retail units and a new food retail offering;
- New high quality residential developments;
- Pedestrian routes connecting Great Ancoats Street and the New Islington Neighbourhood; and,
- A public realm and landscaping throughout to create public routes and spaces throughout the site.

This framework was ultimately developed further and led to the 2020 framework.

Central Retail Park Development Framework 2020 (Draft)[28]

Following the demolition of the vacant retail properties in 2019, the development framework was developed by MCC in 2020 which reconsidered the development opportunities of the Site. This was a step change from the 2015 framework and set out the objective for the comprehensive redevelopment of the whole site, with a mix of uses including new offices and workspaces, as well as a small amount of quality housing.

The proposed design within the framework included a link to Cotton Field Park as well as a new public square as shown in Figure 6-2.

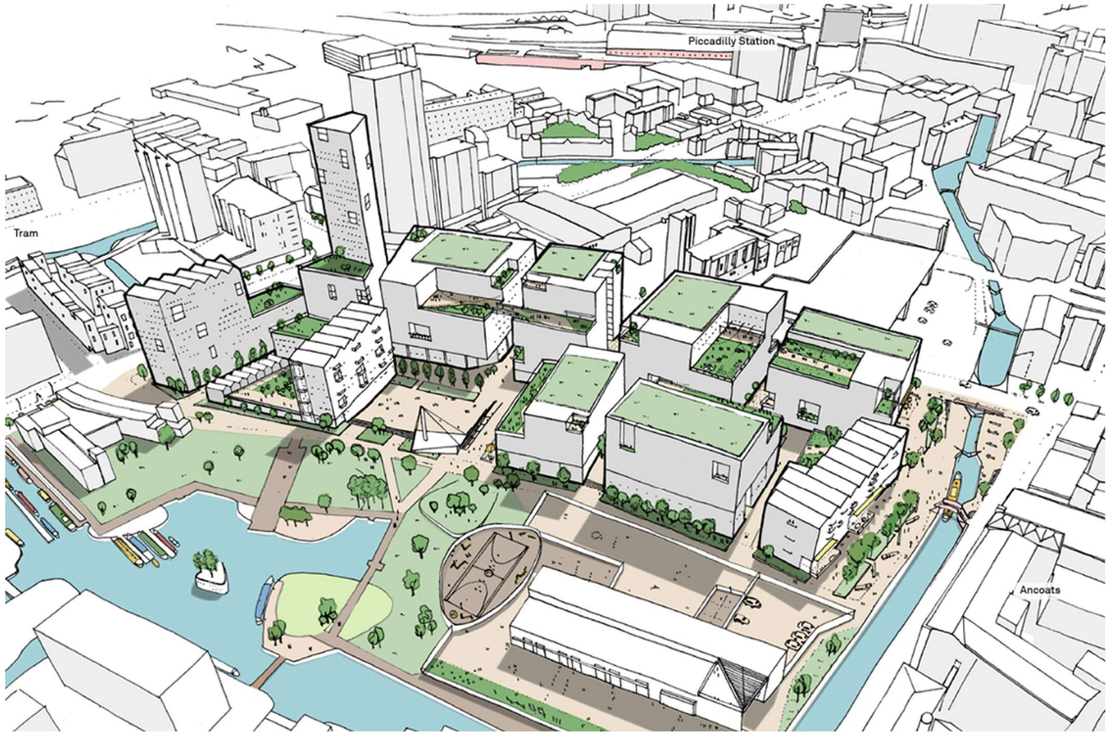


Figure 6-2 Design for FCRP proposed within the 2015 Framework.

Source: Central Retail Park Development Framework 2020, page 47

[26] Central Retail Park SRF March 2023.pdf
[27] CRP Development Framework November 2015.pdf(Review) - Adobe cloud storage
[28] Central Retail Park Development Framework Draft August 2020.pdf(Review) - Adobe cloud storage

Central Retail Park SRF March 2023

The updated SRF supersedes the 2020 development framework and was developed with the aim of responding to the latest market requirements and consultation feedback from residents[29].

The revised SRF has improved connectivity, increased green space and biodiversity, and will aim to achieve the highest standards of sustainable design. The revised SRF also aligns with the city's active travel aspirations, to provide attractive and safe walking and cycling routes for visitors and residents.

The new draft SRF for the FCRP site also responds to a potential interest from the Government Property Agency (GPA) to locate government offices on the FCRP site. The GPA is exploring options for delivering office solutions in Manchester to meet the needs of various civil servant departments. This supports the Government's commitment to locate more civil servants outside of London and support levelling up.

Key design drivers and features forming the SRF include:

- Creating a world class commercial office district to address the demand for new Grade A offices;
- Expanding and increasing connection to the green spaces and the marina;
- Providing a safe office environment to support government uses; and,
- Enhancing local biodiversity, and the quality of public open space.

The updated design and approach to the redevelopment of the FCRP site responds to feedback from residents that expressed a desire for more green open space to be included. This planning application represents the significant increase in green space offering in the Site and relates to the provision of a public realm within the wider development of the FCRP site.

Design development

Since the release of the 2023 SRF, the overall FCRP site it has ultimately been split into three individual sites; Phase 1, a public realm (the Proposed Development), and Phase 2.

The design of the Proposed Development has evolved throughout the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) design stages[30]. These changes have been driven by a commitment to make the Proposed Development accessible and inclusive to all, maximising green open spaces whilst also supporting active travel routes through the Site.

At early design stages, three concepts were considered for the layout of the Proposed Development:

1. Green;
2. Greener; and
3. Greenest.

These concepts provided three alternative options for the spatial arrangement within the Proposed Development. The first option, *Green,* was deemed the most formal design concept, with the *Greenest* being the most informal. The preferred option was the second concept, *Greener*. This was considered preferrable as it allowed for ample usable space whilst creating an environment that would still feel lush and green.

Option two was concluded to provide the best balance of ecological benefits to the Site as well as usable recreational space to provide wider benefits to the users of the Proposed Development.

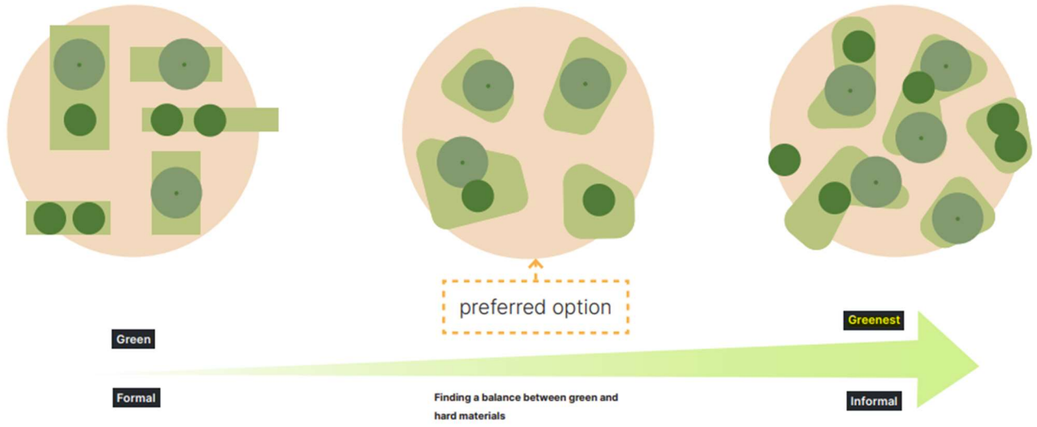


Figure 6-3 Spatial arrangement options considered for the Proposed Development

A key driver of design decisions is accessibility. The balance of soft and hardstanding proposed by the *Greener* option is preferable largely due to the opportunities it presents in maximising the accessibility of the Proposed Development to all groups of people. Having enough hardstanding within the Site enables hard engineer solutions to be implemented to address the challenge of level changes within the Site. Alternative designs were considered for how the Site would address these level changes:

1. 30 steps with no break;
2. 30 steps split into two flights with a rest point halfway up; and
3. 30 steps split into five flights with a potential of six rest points from the bottom to the top.

Whilst taking up the largest amount of space, option 3 was concluded as the preferred option as it created a positive and less intimidating elevation throughout the design. Importantly, it was decided that it would be easier to integrate a ramp and planting within this layout therefore increasing accessibility and greenspace around the Proposed Development.

In relation to the layouts of the step free route that would weave between the steps, two options were proposed:

1. Ramp up quickly at 1:12; and
2. Slope up at 1:21.

Option two was considered the preferred option due to its gentler gradient which means no handrails would be required and it would create a less intimidating incline. Ultimately, a gentler slope gradient would improve user experience and ensure no barriers were met by those that require the step route through the Proposed Development.

6.3 Summary

The 2023 SRF has identified an effective and efficient use of the FCRP site to facilitate wider growth and development of the city. It will support economic growth in the region whilst also supporting social prosperity through the provision of and improved accessibility of green space to local communities.

The design for the Proposed Development will achieve the goals of the SRF by;

[29] Our refreshed plans for the former Central Retail Park site on Great Ancoats Street | Former Central Retail Park Consultation 2023 | Manchester City Council

[30] RIBA Plan of Work (architecture.com)

- Expanding the green space within Cotton Field Park and connecting to the Marina to benefit wider users of the area and provide a larger and better-connected green space which in turn has the potential to generate social value;
- Enhancing local biodiversity through tactical planting and the inclusion of both bee posts and bird boxes;
- Resolving level changes by incorporating a terraced design within the Site and utilising natural materials to create steps and slopes to ensure it is accessible to all; and
- Facilitating links between the district and the city by increasing connectivity through the Site via new, high quality public pathways.

Whilst the superseded development frameworks were not assessed for their environmental effects, the 2023 SRF aims to significantly increase green spaces, planting and ecological features through the design of the Proposed Development and by default offers potential environmental benefits. For the reasons outlined within this chapter, the 2023 SRF and design of the Proposed Development is the preferred option for development of the FCRP.

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