



Manchester Business Park

Response to the Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy for Manchester

December 2025

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. This ‘Response to the Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy for Manchester’ (“the Statement”) accompanies an application for Full Planning Permission submitted to Manchester City Council (MCC) for Manchester Business Park (“the Proposed Development”).
- 1.2. The Applicant is a subsidiary of Ask Real Estate Property Ltd (the “Applicant”).
- 1.3. The Statement sets out how the Proposed Development responds to the vision and objectives set out in the Manchester Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy (2022) (‘The G&BI Strategy’).
- 1.4. In turn, this Statement also demonstrates how the Proposed Development is in compliance with the following policies from the Local Development Plan:

Manchester Core Strategy (2012) – Updated March 2024 following adoption of Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan	• Policy EN9 – Green Infrastructure • Policy EN15 – Biodiversity and Geological Conservation
The Places for Everyone Plan (2024)	• Policy JP-Strat13 – Strategic Green Infrastructure • Policy JP-G2 – Green Infrastructure Network • Policy JP-G3 – River Valleys and Waterways • Policy JP-G6 – Urban Green Space • Policy JP-G7 – Trees and Woodland • Policy JP-G8 – A Net Enhancement of Biodiversity and Geodiversity

- 1.5. It should be read in conjunction with the Design and Access Statement (prepared by AEW) and the Landscape Plans (prepared by Land Studio), and the supporting technical documents: Environmental Standards Statement prepared by Hannan Associates and Arboriculture Impact Assessment prepared by Bowland tree consultancy submitted in support of the Application.

The G&BI Strategy

- 1.6. Manchester’s Great Outdoors: A Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy for Manchester 2015-25 was adopted by MCC in July 2015 and subsequently updated in 2022, highlighting approaches, challenges and projects that will help bring the Strategy to life over the coming years.
- 1.7. MCC recognises that green and blue infrastructure is an essential part of creating a successful, liveable city. Parks, river valleys, gardens, street trees, green roofs, canals and many other components all form part of a rich network that is integrated with the built environment in the world’s most popular cities.
- 1.8. The overarching vision for the Strategy remains as follows:

“By 2025, climate-resilient well-maintained green and blue spaces remains an integral part of all neighbourhoods. The city’s communities will be living healthy, fulfilled lives, enjoying access to parks and green spaces, and safe green routes for walking, cycling and exercise throughout the city. Green and blue infrastructure will be supporting Manchester’s growth.”

- 1.9. Four objectives have been established to enable the vision to be achieved:
- Improve the quality and function of existing green and blue infrastructure;
 - Use appropriate green and blue infrastructure as a key component of new developments to help create successful neighbourhoods and support the city’s growth;
 - Improve connectivity and accessibility to green and blue infrastructure within the city and beyond; and,
 - Improve and promote a wider understanding and awareness of the benefits that green and blue infrastructure provides for residents, the economy and the local environment.
- 1.10. Section 3 of the updated G&BI Strategy outlines the progress to date and noted that the G&BI Strategy has acted as catalysts for some of the most groundbreaking environmental projects in Manchester. The Strategy has encouraged collaboration, bringing together organisations in order to deliver bold, innovative action that will benefit Manchester for many years to come.
- 1.11. Section 3.4 of the G&BI Strategy recognises that Manchester is a growing city, with plans for significant growth and development over the coming decade. High quality, green and open space that is appropriate to its location, well designed and well maintained will be an important and integral part of creating successful developments and supporting the city’s growth.
- 1.12. The G&BI Strategy provides initial guidance on how developers can achieve this and recognises that different approaches will be required for different types of development and that different solutions, appropriate to the location, will be needed on each scheme. By considering green infrastructure from the beginning of the design process, developers will be able to understand the surrounding landscape, opportunities to enhance and link to it, and the types of green and open space that could be incorporated within and add value to the development itself.

The Application Site

- 1.13. The Site extends to 3 hectares and currently comprises a vacant parcel of ‘undeveloped’ land within Manchester Business Park. Its most recent use was as a garden nursery, which ceased in the late 1990s. A dense area of trees and shrubland is focused on the north and west perimeter of the Site while open grassland forms the majority of the Site.
- 1.14. The Site is located immediately north of Manchester Airport and the A555 Ringway Road West, on Aviator Way. The wider Manchester Business Park is bounded to the west by the MIX Manchester Development Area, for which a Strategic Regeneration Framework (“SRF”) was endorsed by Manchester City Council in November 2024. This SRF will bring forward up to 2 million sq. ft. of advanced manufacturing space, R&D labs and office space as well as hotels, leisure facilities and public areas.
- 1.15. It is located within the Airport City Strategic Employment Location, which is designated under Core Strategy Policy EC 11 as an area for high technology industries, logistics,

offices, warehousing and ancillary commercial facilities aiming to support the economy of the City Region and capitalise on access to the Airport.

2. Assessment of the Proposed Development

2.1. This section outlines the vision and objectives of the Manchester Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy 2022 and response from the Proposed Development.

Green and Blue Infrastructure Objectives

2.2. As set out in Section 1, the G&BI Strategy establishes four objectives to enable the vision to be achieved. Table 2.1 below considers the Proposed Development (as described in Section 1) against these objectives.

Table 2.1 The Proposed Development's Response to Green and Blue Infrastructure Objectives

Objective:	Responses:
1. Improve the quality and function of existing Green and Blue Infrastructure to maximise the benefits it delivers.	The existing Site primarily comprised of grassland, and therefore does currently contribute to the green infrastructure in the City. The key areas of ecological interest on the Site, however, relate to the tree canopies that border the perimeter. The Proposed Development will result in the loss of some green infrastructure, however these will be the areas considered to be of negligible ecological importance, being widespread and common within the urban context of Greater Manchester. Furthermore, the Site has long been allocated for development. The Proposed Development prioritises retaining the valuable habitat along the perimeter, and contributes to the enhancement of this key Green Infrastructure asset as it prioritises retaining the valuable habitat along the perimeter of the Site, maintaining and enhancing the areas of hedgerows and trees, ensuring their continued ecological role. A significant volume of new planting will be concentrated along the north and west perimeter of the Site to enhance the density and ecological value of the existing habitat. Where tree removal is unavoidable, any trees that are lost will be replaced on a 2:1 basis, utilising native species. All trees to be lost are low quality (Grade C), self-seeded specimens which offer limited screening due to their low heights. Furthermore, the integration of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) helps to effectively manage surface water runoff, thereby strengthening Manchester's water management resilience.

Objective:	Responses:
2. Use appropriate Green and Blue Infrastructure as a key component of new developments to help create successful neighbourhoods and support the city's growth.	The Proposed Development effectively addresses objective two through the considered integration of green infrastructure. This is evidenced by the extensive native species planting proposed in the landscape design, to mitigate the unavoidable loss of existing shrubland and maximising biodiversity gain within the available space. This enhanced Green Infrastructure that borders the Site will provide suitable foraging and community habitat for protected species. Furthermore, the enhancement of the Site's borders with additional planting provides screening and amenity for the residences to the north and the pedestrian footpath to the west of the Site. This approach ensures that green infrastructure is a key feature of this new development, which will have a positive impact on the wider area.
3. Improve connectivity and accessibility to Green and Blue Infrastructure within the City and beyond.	The Proposed Development ensures that the Green and Blue Infrastructure connectivity provided by the Site is maintained. The landscaping has been thoughtfully designed to retain key habitats, such as the dense boundary hedgerows, preserving and enhancing these existing ecological corridors. The landscaping proposed to the south of the Site and the provision of office space fronting onto Aviator Way also provides an improved environment along Aviator Way.
4. Improve and promote a wider understanding and awareness of the benefits that Green and Blue Infrastructure provides to residents, the economy and the local environment.	The development's design reflects the Applicant's commitment to sustainable development and will help to enhance public understanding and appreciation of Manchester's green and blue infrastructure assets. This innovative and sensitively designed scheme reflects the growing need for new developments to mitigate the impacts of climate change. An accompanying ecological assessment ensures minimal impact on surrounding habitats and biodiversity.

Relevant Local Development Plan Policies

Manchester Core Strategy (2012)

Policy EN9 Green Infrastructure

- 2.3. Core Strategy Policy EN9 sets out that new development will be expected to maintain existing green infrastructure in terms of its quantity, quality and multiple function. Where the opportunity arises and in accordance with current G&BI Strategy, the Council will encourage developers to enhance the quality and quantity of green infrastructure, improve the performance of its functions and create and improve linkages to and between areas of green infrastructure.

Policy EN15 Biodiversity and Geological Conservation

- 2.4. Core Strategy Policy EN15 states the Council will seek to maintain or enhance Sites of biodiversity throughout the City and that developers will be expected to identify and implement reasonable opportunities to enhance, restore or create new biodiversity, contributing to linkages between valuable or potentially valuable habitat areas where appropriate.

Places for Everyone Plan (2024)

Policy JP-G2 – Green Infrastructure Network

- 2.5. Policy JP-G2 states *“a strategic approach will be taken to the protection, management and enhancement of our Green Infrastructure in order to protect and enhance the ecosystem services which the Green Infrastructure Network provides, including flood management, climate change mitigation and adaptation.”* Where it is deemed feasible, new and existing green infrastructure should be integrated into new development so as to protect, enhance, and expand the green infrastructure network.

Policy JP-G3 – River Valleys and Waterways

- 2.6. Policy JP-G3 states *“river valleys and waterways will be protected and improved as central components of our Green Infrastructure Network and a vital part of a Nature Recovery Network, making a major contribution to local identity, quality of life and the natural environment.”*

Policy JP-G6 – Urban Green Space

- 2.7. Policy JP-G6 stipulates that existing urban green space will be protected whilst new urban green space is encouraged to be delivered. Development should be designed to support the positive use of nearby green spaces, such as by offering a high-quality setting, providing natural surveillance, and facilitating easy access by walking and cycling.

Policy JP-G7 – Trees and Woodland

- 2.8. Policy JP-G7 references there should be a considerable increase in provision of street trees within urban areas, and public access to trees should be enhanced particularly by sustainable travel models.

Policy JP-G8 – A Net Enhancement of Biodiversity and Geodiversity

- 2.9. Policy JP-G8 promotes biodiversity enhancement through various initiatives and put strong emphasis on nature conservation, access to nature, and habitats enhancement.

Applicant's Response to Relevant Planning Policy

- 2.10. The Proposed Development has been carefully designed to integrate Green and Blue Infrastructure principles, ensuring that ecological impacts are minimised to the greatest extent possible without compromising the operational requirements and viability of the Proposed logistics and industrial scheme.
- 2.11. To address the considerations and to demonstrate a proactive commitment to environmental management, the Proposed Development incorporates a range of measures:
- **Retention of Key Habitats:** The design prioritises the retention of the most ecologically valuable features, specifically the dense boundary hedgerows, trees, and scrub along the western and northern perimeters of the Site. This ensures the continued provision of vital ecological corridors and screening benefits for adjacent residential properties and pedestrian routes.

- **Compensatory Planting:** The design has sought to maximise the retention of the existing trees on Site. Where the removal of existing trees is unavoidable, a robust planting scheme will be implemented. Any trees to be removed are of low quality (Category C) and self-seeded specimens of limited height and will be replaced at a ratio of 2:1. This substantial new planting will be concentrated along the Site's borders, further enhancing the density and ecological value of these key habitats, as well as providing additional screening.
- **Native Species Planting:** New planting, including trees, hedgerows and wildflowers, will utilise native species appropriate to the local Manchester environment. This approach supports local wildlife and enhances ecological connectivity.
- **Creation of New Habitats:** Beyond general planting, the scheme will include specific habitat creation features such as Bird and Bat Boxes.
- **Integration of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS):** The Proposed Development will incorporate a comprehensive SuDS strategy, including features such as permeable paving. These elements will help to manage surface water runoff thereby contributing to the resilience of Manchester's water management systems.
- **Minimising Construction Impact:** Measures will be put in place during the construction phase to protect retained habitats, including temporary protective fencing, exclusion zones, and careful material storage.

2.12. These measures demonstrate a commitment to ensuring the Proposed Development aligns with and contributes to Manchester's strategic objectives for green and blue infrastructure and biodiversity enhancement.

Biodiversity Net Gain

- 2.13. The Environment Act 2021 mandates a minimum 10% biodiversity net gain (BNG) for most new developments, calculated using a standard metric. This involves assessing pre-development habitats and planned enhancements, aiming to balance development needs with environmental protection. Developers must either create new habitat or offset losses elsewhere, while still adhering to the established mitigation hierarchy.
- 2.14. The Preliminary Ecological Assessment undertaken by Land Studio in March 2025 identifies the Site as predominantly neutral grassland in moderate condition, and mixed scrub. Neither of these are classified as a priority habitat, however due to the large site area there will be quite a high net value lost / to be replaced. There are also native hedgerow with trees to the western boundary, which represent priority habitat.
- 2.15. Given the existing overall value of the Site, achieving 10% net gain onsite will be a significant challenge. The Applicant has sought to maximise the gains achieved on site through the following measures:
- Significant new tree and shrub planting focused to the rear of the Site to densify the existing vegetation buffer.
 - Additional landscaping buffers to along the Aviator Way frontage and within the internal service yards and circulation spaces.
 - Seeking to retain as many trees as possible, and only removing those with a low value (Cat C). Any trees removed will be replaced at more than the 2:1 requirement.
- 2.16. However, even with these measures in place will not be possible to achieve 10% net gain onsite given the site constraints. However, the Applicant's ownership at Manchester

Business Park is wider than the Application Site, and includes other landscaping areas where additional on-site habitat enhancements will be provided to supplement that provided by the Proposed Development (see Figure 2.1 below).

Figure 2.1: Wider Applicant Ownership and Indicative Locations for additional habitat planting



- 2.17. Therefore, the 10% net gain will be achieved through a combination of onsite planting, wider habitat enhancements across Manchester Business Park and, where necessary, off-site provisions or financial contributions, ensuring an overall net positive impact on biodiversity in the wider Manchester area.
- 2.18. It is not yet known how much can be delivered within the Applicant's wider ownership and they will seek to maximise this. Should off-site provisions or financial contributions also be required, the first preference should be that these are within the same National Character Area ('NCA') as the Site, which is Manchester. However, MCC do not currently have any and therefore, the Applicant has confirmed that the following options are currently available for this:
- Environment Bank - confirmed availability in Cheshire (adjacent National Character Area (NCA))
 - Lancashire Wildlife Trust – confirmed availability in adjacent NCA (Cutacre, Bolton)
 - Biomark - confirmed availability in adjacent NCA (Oswestry)
- 2.19. The final solution to achieving the required minimum 10% biodiversity net gain will be secured through the use of a planning condition which requires that 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 maximise the amount delivered on site at Manchester Business Park before looking at off-site options firstly in Manchester (should any NCA's have been introduced by MCC within the timescales), and then surrounding NCAs.

3. Summary

- 3.1. The Proposed Development at Manchester Business Park, currently comprising undeveloped land, has been meticulously designed to integrate Green and Blue Infrastructure (G&BI) principles. This ensures that ecological impacts are minimised while maintaining the operational viability of the proposed logistics and industrial scheme.
- 3.2. Demonstrating a proactive commitment to environmental management, the design incorporates a comprehensive range of measures. These include the retention of key habitats, such as dense boundary hedgerows and scrub, extensive compensatory planting (at a 2:1 ratio where removal is unavoidable), the use of native species, and the integration of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS).
- 3.3. While acknowledging the inherent challenge of achieving Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) on a previously undeveloped site, the project is committed to mitigating biodiversity loss and achieving a net positive impact through on-site enhancements and, where necessary, off-site provisions.
- 3.4. Overall, the Proposed Development aligns with the vision and objectives of the G&BI Strategy and complies with all relevant Local Development Plan policies.



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