

## 4. Alternatives

### Introduction

- 4.1 A statutory requirement for inclusion in an ES is the reporting of the consideration of alternatives which have been considered by the Applicants in the development and evolution of a proposal. Schedule 4 of the EIA Regulations states that an ES is required to provide:

*“A description of the reasonable alternatives (for example in terms of development design, technology, location, size and scale) studied by the developer, which are relevant to the proposed project and its specific characteristics, and an indication of the main reasons for selecting the chosen option, including a comparison of the environmental effects.”*

- 4.2 This chapter describes the alternatives that were studied by the Applicants for the Proposed Developments and the process of design evolution in response to the EIA process.
- 4.3 Firstly, the chapter considers the ‘no development’ option, which describes the likely conditions at the site in the absence of implementing the Proposed Developments.
- 4.4 Secondly, the constraints and opportunities identified in relation to the site have been considered and have influenced the design of the Proposed Developments. The Applicants and the design team have undertaken a continuous review process to improve the design, taking into account the views of key consultees, stakeholders and the public. This design evolution process is described in detail and the reasons for the selection of the preferred option stated.
- 4.5 No alternative sites were considered for the development as the site is allocated in the South Ribble Local Plan (adopted in July 2015) as a Major Site for Development (under Policy C1).

### No Development Option

- 4.6 The ‘no development option’ evaluates the likely environmental conditions at the site in the absence of implementing the Proposed Developments. Schedule 4 of the EIA Regulations states that the assessment provide *“an outline of the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the development as far as natural changes from the baseline scenario can be assessed”*. A description of the baseline scenario is set out in Chapter 3: Site Description.
- 4.7 In the absence of the Proposed Developments it is not expected that there would be any significant changes to the baseline conditions. There is no indication that in the absence of development the use and therefore management of the site would alter and therefore it is considered that the environmental conditions of the site

would remain at its existing level as described in Chapter 3: Site Description. Under the 'no development' scenario, therefore, the site would remain under the same ownership and management and would continue to be primarily used for agriculture.

- 4.8 As noted in Chapter 3: Site Description, the Site (comprising Application A and Application B) consists of grasslands, arable farmland, marshland, dense/continuous and scattered scrub, standing water, drainage ditches, running water, hedgerows, tall ruderal, inundation vegetation, broad-leaved and coniferous trees,, buildings, private garden, bare ground and hardstanding. The majority of the site consists of improved and poor semi-improved grassland, which has been heavily grazed, and arable farmland. The intensive grazing of the fields has resulted in the loss of floristic diversity within the grassland fields. The arable fields are also of low ecological value due to their intense management. If no development occurs, the grassland will remain under the same management.
- 4.9 Ecological features that are of higher value, such as hedgerows, tall ruderal and trees on site would remain under the same management if the Proposed Development did not come forward. In order to facilitate the Proposed Development, there is the potential that some of these features may have to be removed. (Refer to Chapter 7: Ecology and Nature Conservation).
- 4.10 The site has remained largely undeveloped fields and agricultural land until the present day with the exception of a few residential properties and light industrial activities. Potential sources of contamination on site are generally limited to the current light industrial processes including a dairy farm, poultry farm, small garages and other agricultural activity. Should the development not come forward, ground conditions would remain unchanged. (Refer to Chapter 10: Ground Conditions).
- 4.11 There are no main watercourses located within the site boundary, there are a number of Ordinary Watercourse features present within the site itself which generally drain to the south and east of the existing site. These are primarily open channels located along field boundaries adjacent to hedge and fence lines.
- 4.12 The Flood Map for Planning shows that the entirety of the site is located within Flood Zone 1, this is land assessed as having less than a 1 in 1000 (0.1% AEP) annual probability of flooding in any one year. The site contains areas of very low, low, medium and high risk with regards to surface water flooding. In the absence of the Proposed Development the existing hydrological regime of the site would remain unchanged.
- 4.13 The 'no development' option has been dismissed by the Applicants, as the reason for their involvement in the site is to bring forward the development of the site in line with Policy C1 of the South Ribble Local Plan. The "no development" option would mean the site is not developed and the potential benefits of the scheme would not be realised.

## Summary

- 4.14 In the absence of the proposals, the baseline environment is not anticipated to change and would remain as agricultural land for the foreseeable future. The perceived negative effects of the Proposed Development should be weighed against the benefits of the scheme and SRBC's ambitions for the site to be developed for residential use and associated community facilities. Given the above, and the site allocation, the Applicants have not considered not proceeding with the development of the site in line with the allocation.

## Design Evolution

- 4.15 The Applicants and the design team for the outline application have regularly liaised with SRBC during a series of pre-application meetings in order to ensure that the evolving design meets the aspirations for the Proposed Development site. The Applicants have also engaged with statutory consultees and the public for a number of years including during the previous submission as outlined in the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) which is submitted as a standalone report in support of the planning application.
- 4.16 The key points of design evolution of the Proposed Development are as follows:
- An active travel first approach.
  - Protecting the route of the CBLR in line with Policy A1.
  - Removing orchard land from the Site.
  - Restricting maximum building heights around existing sensitive receptors adjacent to the site.
  - Removing four-storey element from building heights plan.
  - Including landscape buffers along the western and eastern borders adjacent to Penwortham Way and the railway line respectively.

## Conclusions

- 4.17 The consideration of alternatives has included the evaluation of a "no development" option and alternative design options. The design of the scheme has evolved through consultation with SRBC, key stakeholders and the public and the findings of the series of studies that make up the EIA. A detailed description of the development proposals is presented in Chapter 5: The Proposed Development.