

4 Consultation, Alternatives and Design Evolution

4.1 Consultation

Consultation with the LPA

- 4.1.1 The various pre-application discussions with statutory and non-statutory consultees and the local community all have an influence over the evolution of the design of the EIA proposals and the scope of the EIA. This section summarises the consultation process undertaken with key stakeholders and includes the key issues raised during these discussions.
- 4.1.2 Full details of this are provided within the Design and Access Statement (DAS) and Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) submitted as part of the suite of planning application documents.
- 4.1.3 The Proposed Development has evolved since conception and work has been undertaken by the design team to address the comments made by officers, where possible. A detailed explanation of how the scheme has evolved to take account of the consultation process is provided in the DAS. Details of how this evolution has been informed by environmental considerations is set out below.

Public Consultation

- 4.1.4 The Applicant has sought to involve the local community and stakeholders extensively to help shape the proposals.
- 4.1.5 A public exhibition was held on 27th November 2024 at the Crane Youth and Community Association Community Centre on Fuller Way, Hayes, UB3 4LW.
- 4.1.6 This venue was chosen for its proximity to the Site, and the ease of access it therefore offered local residents and neighbours. Additionally, this allowed attendees to more easily visualise for themselves how the Proposed Development would be situated in the surrounding landscape.
- 4.1.7 The exhibition was attended by two members of the public in addition to representatives from Savills, Ark, and NWA. A series of display boards were presented to the public, which included details about the proposed design of the development, and how key considerations had been addressed. Feedback from the consultation event included concerns around the potential impact of the height of the buildings and their impact on the view from residential properties in the immediate area, however the creation of jobs for the locality was seen as a positive.
- 4.1.8 Full details of the public consultation and responses are provided within the SCI.

4.2 Alternatives

Alternative Sites

- 4.2.1 Schedule 18, Paragraph 3(d) of the 2017 Regulations requires an ES to include “a description of the reasonable alternatives studied by the developer, which are relevant to the proposed development and its specific characteristics, and an indication of the main reasons for the option chosen, taking into account the effects of the development on the environment”.

- 4.2.2 The 2017 Regulations do not require the full assessment of all potential alternatives, only a reasonable account of those actually considered by a developer prior to the submission of the planning application.
- 4.2.3 For this site there are two realistic types of alternative, the 'do nothing', where the existing site remains in its current state (as set out in Chapter 2), or alternative layouts to the Proposed Development submitted for planning approval. Therefore assessment of alternatives has considered options within the following two categories:
- 'Do Nothing': Under this scenario no development is implemented at the Site and baseline conditions continue in their current trends.
 - A different design: Under this scenario the Proposed Development is realised with alternative scales and layouts in the context of developmental constraints present at the Site.

The 'Do Nothing' scenario

- 4.2.4 Under the 'do nothing' scenario, the Site would remain in its current condition. Data centre are becoming key infrastructure required to enable the functioning of a modern economy and there is strong demand for services generated by data centres. Under a 'do nothing' scenario the economic benefits of the Proposed Development, through the construction and operational phases, would not be realised. Furthermore, it is considered that the existing uses on site would continue to be underutilised.

A Different Design

- 4.2.5 Through an iterative design process evolution of the illustrative masterplan and the parameters of the Proposed Development, including building layout, height and land use were informed through consultation with the key stakeholders. Design comments were taken on board at each stage in the consultation with these bodies.