4. Alternatives

4.1 A statutory requirement for inclusion in an EIA is the reporting of the consideration of alternatives in the development of a proposal. Schedule 4 of the EIA Regulations states that an EIA 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 Applicant for the Proposed Development 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 Development.

4.4 Secondly, the constraints and opportunities identified in relation to the Site have been considered and have influenced the design of the Proposed Development. The Applicant 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 and the reasons for the selection of the preferred option stated.

4.5 No alternative sites were considered by the Applicant, as the site is allocated for development in the LDP as part of the KSS2 allocation. In the absence of the Proposed Development i.e., 'no development scenario' the site would remain as it is currently.

No Development Scenario

4.6 A no development option evaluates the likely environmental conditions at the site in the absence of implementing the Proposed Development. Schedule 4 of the EIA Regulations states that the assessment must 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 brief description of the baseline scenario has been presented in **Chapter 3: Site Description** and further details have been provided within the technical chapters.

4.7 In the absence of the proposals, the baseline environment is not anticipated to change in the short term.

4.8 The site is situated within the KSS2 allocation for housing as outlined in the Adopted Local Development Plan (LDP). As such, it is recognised that although the baseline environment would not change in the short term significantly, in the longer term some form of development is likely come forward on the site.

4.9 Although construction activities have the potential to increase the dust and noise in the local area, these will be controlled by best practice measures set out within a Construction Environment Management Plan ('CEMP') and will only be temporary effects on local receptors. In the absence of the Proposed Development there will be no temporary disruption caused during the construction period.

4.10 Once complete, the Proposed Development offers new housing and new amenities in the local area. As a result, under the no development scenario the benefits associated with the Proposed Development would not be realised. Any potential adverse effects of the proposed development should be weighed against the benefits of the scheme including the provision of housing and new educational facilities within an allocated site. The Proposed Development also offers new greenspace, community infrastructure and recreational opportunities, with improved pedestrian and cycle access throughout. In the absence of the Proposed Development, these effects would not occur, and the site would remain in the current condition.

Design Evolution

4.11 The Applicant and the design team for the application have regularly liaised with WCBC in order to ensure that the design evolves to meet the aspirations for the site. The Applicant has also engaged with statutory consultees and the public. Further information relating to this can be found in the Planning Statement (J10-HE-PS-RevA, April 2024), which is submitted as part of the planning application.

4.12 The key points of design evolution are discussed within the Design and Access Statement (Tetratech, April 2024) prepared in support of the application and include the following:

- Utilities - A utility assessment identified a combined sewer that runs through the centre of the site from north to south, which requires a 12m easement either side. This easement restricts development but enables a green corridor to run centrally through the site.

- Drainage - The areas identified for attenuation basins have been developed following drainage assessments and infiltration testing. The basins are proposed to the east and south of the site with swales along part of the southern primary route/avenue.

4.13 Considering these points, the design has evolved through an iterative process as well as responding to comments received from Officers during pre-application discussions. Although the masterplan is illustrative only and the exact layout is reserved for the detailed design stage, the shape and form of the proposals has been informed by the physical context of the site, emerging planning policy framework (local and national), along with a host of technical enviro-engineering influences such as drainage design and utilities as well as a landscape-led approach that emphasises retention of existing vegetation where possible.

Conclusion

4.14 The consideration of alternatives has included the evaluation of a "no development" option, whereby it is likely the site would remain as it is currently in the short to medium term. The design of the scheme has evolved through consultation with WCBC and key stakeholders. A detailed description of the development proposals is presented in **Chapter 5: The Proposed Development**.