Title: **Planning Statement**

Project: **Emergency Access at ASOS Distribution Centre, Barnsley.**

Prepared for: asos



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Our Ref: OXF10415

RPS Planning & Development
Sherwood House
Sherwood Avenue
Newark
Nottinghamshire
NG24 1QQ

Tel: 01636 605700
Fax: 01636 610696
Email: rpsnewark@rpsgroup.com

QUALITY MANAGEMENT

Prepared by:	Kitty Clifford
Authorised by:	Jonathan Smith
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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This statement sets out the case in support of a full planning application submitted to Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council (BMBC) in relation to the ASOS Distribution Centre site at Park Springs, Houghton. The application is being submitted to request approval for the creation of a means of emergency access and egress to and from the site onto Park Spring Road (A6195).

1.2 The key reason for requiring the emergency access is to provide an additional route for vehicles either based at the site or visiting for storage and distribution purposes and staff movements to effectively enter and exit the ASOS site onto the A6195 during emergencies should the main point of access become unusable, or alternatively for emergency vehicles to enter the site from the A6195.

1.3 At present, the ASOS site only has a single means of vehicular access onto the A6195 via a gyratory junction; which provides access to the operational storage and distribution centre as well as the staff and visitor car parking area. This presents a number of potentially major operational challenges which may detrimentally affect the fundamental divisions of the business, should an emergency incident occur whereby the current (and sole) means of access is obstructed. Deliveries of goods and materials to and from the site are closely tied in with the on-line distribution process and are subject to a rigorous and carefully organised schedule which could be easily disrupted by an emergency. As such, the ramifications of this issue could be severe to ASOS which necessitates the process to apply for planning permission and secure the development of an additional road junction in order to continue the abovementioned operations, used only when necessary to do so.

1.4 In addition to securing the core operational attributes of the business, the proposed development will have a role in facilitating the evacuation from the site in the quickest, safest and most efficient way possible, and allowing the site to be more compliant from an overall health and safety perspective.

1.5 This supporting statement outlines the context within which the application is made and provides a detailed assessment of the main planning considerations, together with a reasoned justification in support of the development. The statement should be read in accordance with other documents as part of the existing planning approval for the site.

1.6 Section 2 of this statement provides a background to the site including reference to relevant planning history; Section 3 describes the details of the development that is proposed; Section 4 reviews relevant planning policy considerations; Section 6 considers the key planning issues relevant to the application and a justification on the merits of the application against planning policy; and Section 7 provides a summary and conclusions.

1.7 Accompanying drawings and plans are also included as part of the overall submission.

2 BACKGROUND

Site Location

2.1 The existing ASOS Barnsley site is located as the crow flies 6.4km east of Barnsley, adjacent to the A6195 Park Spring Road and takes access via the Houghton Main Colliery Roundabout. The ASOS building is located in close proximity to several villages including Grimethorpe to the north and Great Houghton to the east. The wider site is part of the major employment allocation known as 'Park Springs' and was formerly part of the now reclaimed Houghton Main Colliery site.



Figure 1: Park Springs Site Location

2.2 In terms of vehicular access, the site is only currently accessible directly from the Houghton Main Colliery Roundabout on the A6195. The site is bounded to the west by the A6195 and by strategic landscaping areas to the north, east and south, with undeveloped agricultural land beyond. Within the site, the main car parking area for staff and visitors is located to the north-west of the main building, with the main HGV yard and manoeuvring area being located to the east, accessible via a perimeter access road circulating the building. A perimeter fence separates the site from areas of public access.

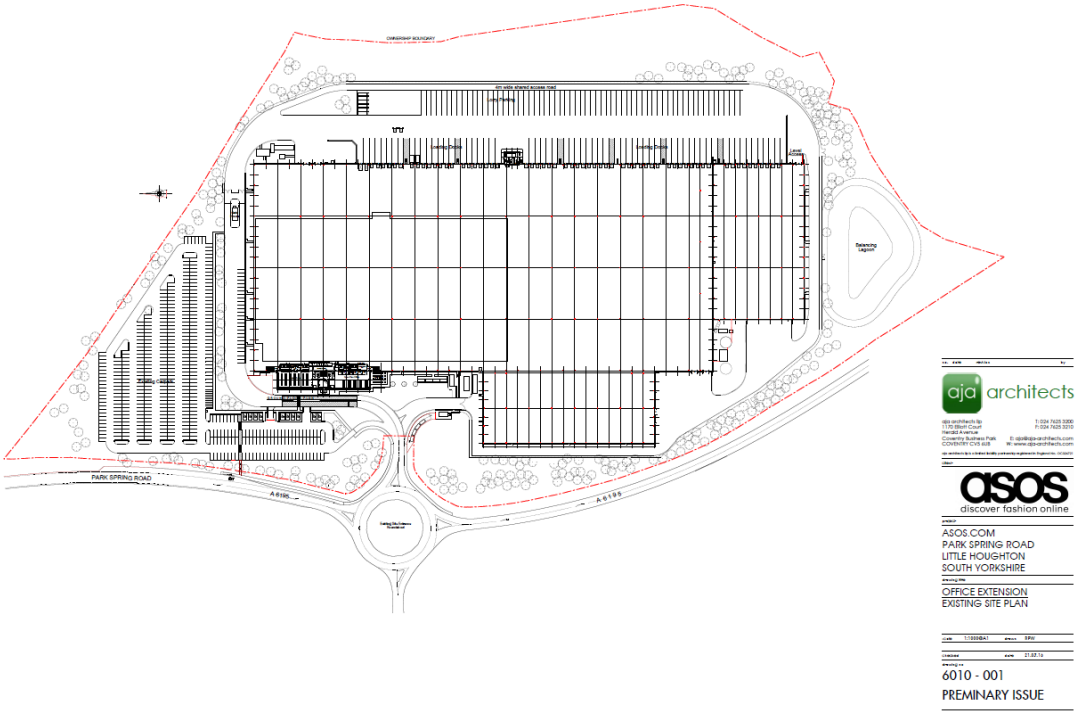


Figure 2: Approved planning layout.

Application History

2.3 The ASOS site has an extensive and detailed planning history. The wider site was subject to open cast colliery workings between 1997 and 2001. Prior to this the colliery was used for mining by UK Coal between the 1890s and 1991. Once open casting was completed, the land was reclaimed and compacted to provide a platform suitable for industrial development.

2.4 The existing warehouse was developed by Prologis and was constructed under Reserved Matters Approval 2005/1441 (which followed Outline Planning Permission B/03/0762/HR granted in 2003 for Class B1, B2 and B8 development of the site). The existing warehouse has more recently been granted planning permission for several extensions. To provide context to the current proposals, the relevant applications are detailed below.

2.5 Application Number: 2012/1018: Erection of extensions to southern and western elevations of existing distribution warehouse and extension to existing surfaced car parking area. Approved 24/10/2012.

2.6 Application Number 2013/1250: Minor Material Amendment to app 2012/1018 (Erection of extensions to southern and western elevations of existing distribution warehouse and extension to existing surfaced car parking area) to allow for minor works to building extension and car park and alterations to fire access track and boundary treatment. Approved 26/09/2014.

2.7 Application Number: 2016/1106: Erection of 3 storey extension to existing building. Approved 02/11/2016.

2.8 Application Number 2017/0338: Variation of condition of previously approved 2016/1106 to allow enclosure of previously approved external staircase. Approved 08.03.2017.

3 DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS

3.1 The application is for a purpose built road junction and means of emergency access to be created between the ASOS site and Park Spring Road, Houghton. The access route element of the development will be sited to the south-west of the warehouse building and approximately 240m to the south of the Houghton Main Colliery Roundabout. The proposals are necessary with particular consideration of the existing and future operational requirements of the ASOS business whereby any obstruction of the main entrance in an emergency could detrimentally impact the business.

3.2 A secondary measure for the scheme is to enable the safe and prompt evacuation of staff and their vehicles based at the site or for use by emergency vehicles. The route will only be used during emergencies of a scale and nature whereby the existing main site entrance to ASOS from Park Spring Road is obstructed, rendering access and egress from this point difficult.



Figure 3: Existing roundabout with access to site.

3.3 Provision of a new access will involve the construction of a single access road linking Park Spring Road to the west of the site and the existing internal circulation road passing south/ south-west of the main warehouse building as shown in blue at Figure 4.

3.4 As a purpose built road junction designed to relevant highway specifications, the proposed development will include an appropriately constructed road junction between the site and Park Spring Road. In the interests of vehicle user safety, when entering and exiting the access road (on the rare occasions when it would be utilised) the junction with Park Spring Road includes markings where the junction commences and bollards to control vehicle access and prevent illegal parking.

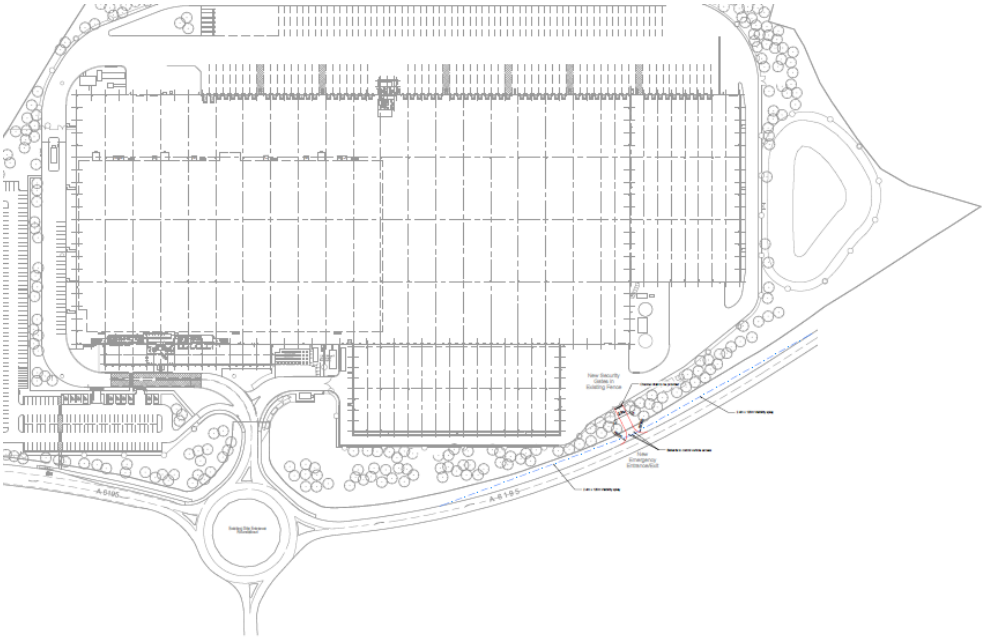


Figure 4: Indicative Plan of the proposed development

3.5 The access road will have a standard 5 metre width and 6 metre radii, with 2.4 x 120 metre visibility splays. New security gates will be installed in place of the section of existing security fencing to be removed. To accompany the abovementioned proposals, and in the interests of safety and security, street lighting either side would be provided where the route aligns the boundary of the site. The operation and physical infrastructure of Park Spring Road will remain as existing.



Figure 5: Existing view of the site in location of proposed access road.

3.6 As a point of note, the access will not be used during normal site operation, only being utilised during an emergency incident where it is likely that the main site entrance is in any way obstructed. The abovementioned provisions will help secure the access when it is not being used which will prevent any opportunities of accidental access into the site at this location.



Figure 6: View towards site location from northbound carriageway

3.7 Should an emergency incident arise requiring vehicles to entre or exit the site, the bollards will be removed and the access will be marshalled by a member of staff to ensure a managed and appropriate use; thus allowing the operational requirements of the business to be effectively maintained.

3.8 In the event of the main access into the site not being blocked by an emergency, operation of the access could still be carried out as a secondary measure in order to fully ensure the key logistical elements of the business are not constrained, or possibly to facilitate a quicker means of evacuation for employees exiting the site, or solely to allow emergency vehicles into the site.

3.9 Understandably, the construction of the emergency exit would require the removal of some of the existing landscaping on the south-western boundary of the site. At present this exists as an extensively planted verge implemented as part of the original landscaping scheme for the site.

3.10 Any loss of planting will be insignificant in relation to the retained scheme and it should be noted that there are no mature trees affected by the proposals. The proposed security gates will be set back from the main frontage and aligned with the retained security fencing to the rear of the landscaped area.

4 PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

4.1 This section considers the relevant planning policy framework for the site and surrounding area, having regard to the proposed application. It considers relevant national planning policy, together with policies within the statutory Development Plan and other local planning policy guidance.

National Policy

4.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was formally published on 27 March 2012. As a single integrated document with 13 distinct Core Development Principles, the NPPF represents the Government's streamlined planning policy direction for England. One of the key strands proposed within the NPPF is to place greater emphasis in favour of sustainable development when the social, economic and environmental benefits are clearly defined. In particular, development that serves to enable economic growth is supported from this regard.

4.3 For the purpose of this application, Core Planning Principles 6: 'Building a Strong, Competitive Economy' and 8: 'Promoting Healthy Communities' are the most relevant principle in the NPPF. Core Principle 6 states that local authorities should plan proactively to meet the development needs of business and support an economy fit for the 21st century. Core Principle 8 reiterates the important role of the planning system in creating safe and accessible developments. Planning policies area also expected to protect and enhance access to and from development.

Local Policy

4.4 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that determinations must be made in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In policy terms Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council (BMBC) has been in a period of transition as the Authority moves from the old planning system to the new, as defined by the aforementioned Act.

4.5 The principle for development of the site was established by relevant policies of the Unitary Development Plan 2000 (UDP 2000). However, the relevant local policy background has altered from the date of the original approval for the site. Most significantly, BMBC adopted its Core Strategy in 2011 (BCS 2011), with pertinent policies of the UDP being 'saved'. Since this time the Council has progressed with a New Local Plan and this is currently undergoing an Examination in Public. However, it is unlikely to be ready for adoption until late 2017/early 2018 and in the case of this application, the UDP saved policies together with the Core Strategy remains the material development plan. Although the Barnsley, Doncaster and Rotherham (BDR) Joint Waste Plan Development Plan Document (DPD) (March 2012) also forms part of the development plan, it is not considered relevant to the purposes of this application.

Unitary Development Plan 2000

4.6 The adopted Core Strategy supersedes a number of the Unitary Development Plan Policies. However, until all the Local Development Framework documents are in place, some parts of the Unitary Development Plan (UDP) are being "saved" to ensure comprehensive planning policy coverage remains in place. Saved parts of the UDP remain in force and will be used in

determining planning applications until replaced. The following policies are considered relevant to the planning application.

4.7 Policy DA4 states: "The site of the former Houghton Main Colliery is designated as an area of investigation for potential employment development."

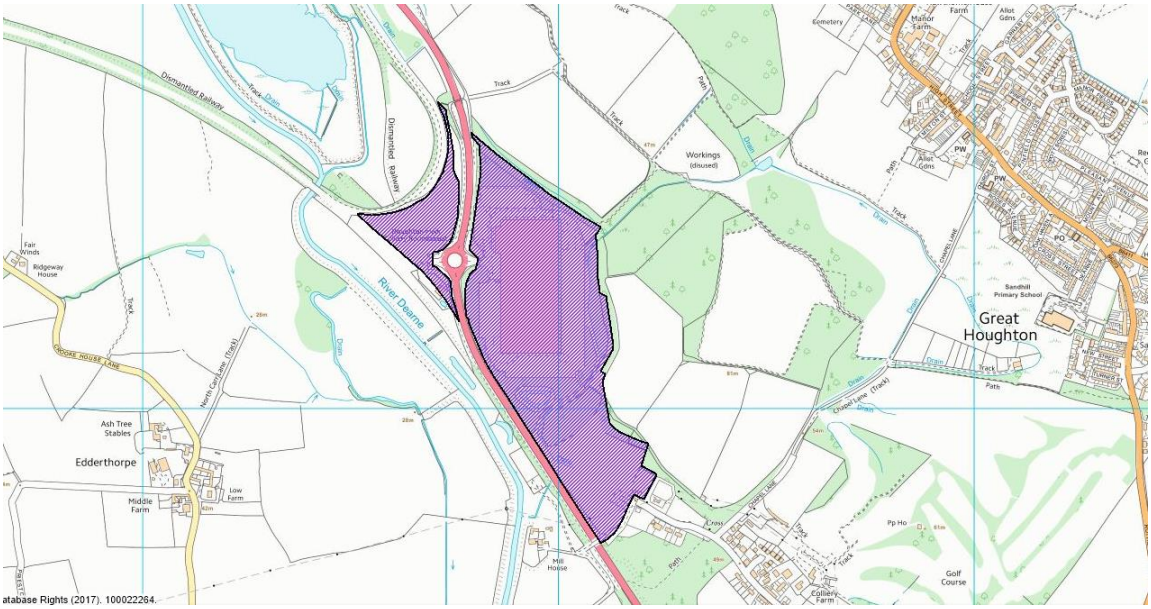


Figure 8: Policy extract from the UDP 2000

4.8 Policy ED7 states that areas defined on the proposals maps as employment policy areas will remain in employment use. Development will normally be permitted for business, industry and storage and distribution. Other employment generating uses may also be permitted if they are compatible with adjoining uses.

4.9 Policy T3 states that the existing strategic highway network for the Borough has been designated and will be reviewed as appropriate in order to concentrate heavy flows of traffic, particularly HGV's on the currently most appropriate routes.

4.10 Policy TC21 states that the external areas of Built Development will be expected to achieve good standards of both hard and soft landscape treatment.

Barnsley Core Strategy 2011

4.11 The main policy of note in the context of the application is Policy CSP 19 which seeks to safeguard existing employment land and land previously used for employment to protect future employment potential.

4.12 Policy CSP26 covers new development and highway improvement, considering the effects of traffic on local amenity and the suitability of the road network to accommodate the likely volumes of traffic expected as a result of the proposed development during all stages of development.

4.13 Policy CSP29 sets out criteria for the design, siting and external appearance of proposals.

Emerging Planning Policy

4.14 The Local Plan Publication Draft 2016 considers the future use of all land within the Borough. It also contains general and site specific policies which will be used to determine planning applications. The site is identified in this document as an existing employment site where Policy E5 'Uses on employment land' which relates to allocated employment land states:

"On allocated Employment Sites, or land currently or last used for employment purposes, we will allow the following uses:

- Research and development, and light industry
- General industrial
- Storage or distribution

Ancillary uses will be allowed where appropriate in scale. Other uses may be considered on their merits, particularly their contribution to the borough's economic offer and job density."

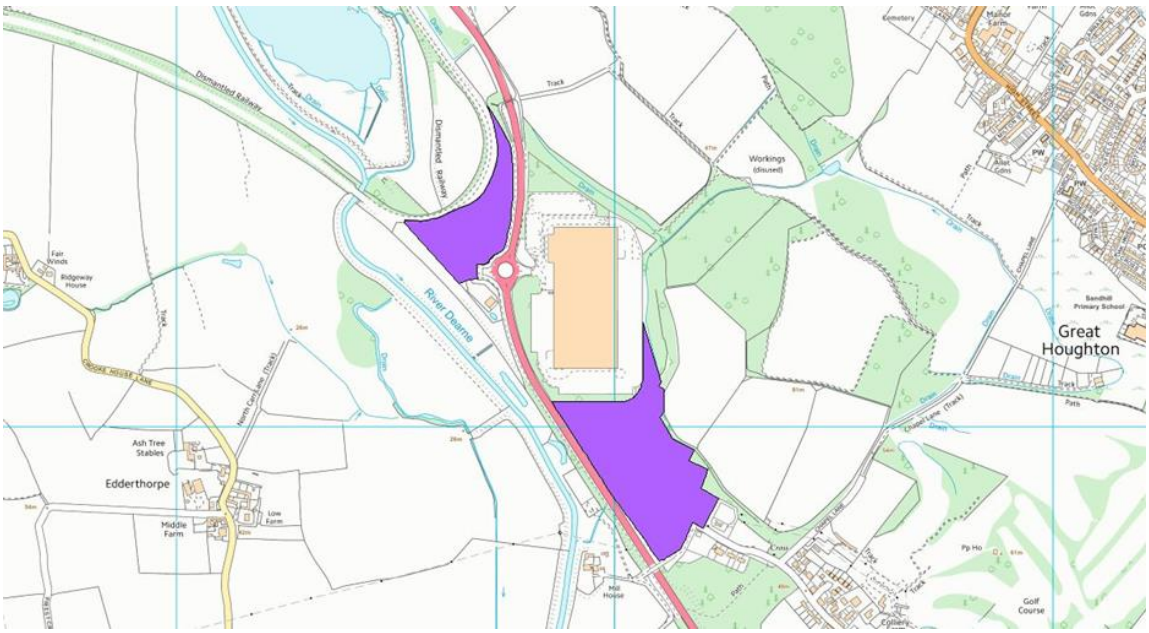


Figure 9: Policy extract from the emerging local Plan

4.15 Policy E3 'Employment Site Policies' states that all developments will be expected to comply with policy GD1 General Development and that planning permission will be expected to be granted if details are provided in accordance with site specific policies, including the allocated sites to the north and south of the ASOS site; N2 Park Springs, Houghton and N5 Land South of Park Springs, Houghton.

5 KEY PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

National Policy

5.1 As a development that will increase the overall health and safety credentials of the ASOS site, the emergency access will improve the operational efficiency of ASOS in the event of an incident that would otherwise reduce or, in the worst cases, halt operational, deliveries and staff movements at the site. With the access allowing for safe evacuation of the site in the event of an emergency and potential for vehicles to enter the site via an alternative route, overarching principles of the NPPF concerning sustainable economic development are strongly complied with in this instance.

Local Policy

5.2 In terms of local policy it is considered that the principle of providing the emergency access is fully in accordance with relevant policies in the Unitary Development Plan 2000 and the Core Strategy 2011. The proposed access will allow the ASOS site to receive additional, beneficial improvements to infrastructure and the health and safety of staff and visitors, which is a key credential of Core Strategy Policy CSP19 when promoting the retention and improvement of key employment sites in the Borough. The access is a sensitively designed ancillary use to the wider ASOS site that complements the development and its surroundings, and is therefore considered to be in compliance with saved policy T3 of the UDP and Core Strategy Policy CSP26.

5.3 The proposals will enable the ASOS site to have an emergency back-up means of access; the existing main site entrance off the Haughton Main Colliery roundabout and the new route south-west of the main building for the purpose of maintaining the logistical and operational requirements of the ASOS operation, which is as a multi-million pound business important to the vitality of the internet based and wider economy in Barnsley. Without such, this remains under significant risk by the sole means of vehicular access at the site.

5.4 A Transport Assessment has been undertaken and is submitted in support of this application. The provision of an emergency access would have to take into consideration the number of movements in and out of the site in order to gauge the potential traffic flows that may arise in the event of an emergency and the evacuation procedure that may be employed. It is confirmed that all elements of the ASOS site have already been thoroughly considered against the amount, type and timing of transport movements that might ensue. As such, emergency access route has been designed to have the capacity to allow a quick exit procedure for vehicles based at the site, using the latest traffic flow forecasts indicated in the Transport Statement. Entrance arrangements, marshalled to direct traffic in the interests of safety and security, will be made possible in a lower proportion of cases.

5.5 The proposed development is located in close proximity to the existing highway network and will therefore result in very little impact in terms of the physical presence of the access road and is therefore considered to be consistent with Policy T3. Overall, it has been demonstrated that the development proposal is consistent with the Development Plan and represents sustainable development. It is therefore considered that the development as proposed is afforded high level of support by the NPPF.

6 SUMMARY & CONCLUSIONS

6.1 This statement has set out the case in support of a planning application to request approval of the provision of an additional means of access on the south-western boundary of the ASOS site, for the purpose of maintaining the smooth running of logistical elements of the business, and for emergency access and egress to and from the site.

6.2 The statement has considered the material planning considerations relating to the proposed development, and through appropriate assessment, has demonstrated the proposal to be in accordance with established national and local planning policy and guidance. In particular, the application shows that the development will serve to allow the key deliveries to and from the site to continue, and will improve the health and safety of the overall site from an emergency access and evacuation perspective.

6.3 In view of the above, Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council, as Local Planning Authority, is respectfully requested to consider the application favourably and grant planning permission for the development.