

4 CONSIDERATION OF ALTERNATIVES

4.1 CONSIDERATION OF ALTERNATIVES

4.1.1 Schedule 4 (Part 2), of the EIA Regulations requires that the ES contain "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 ALTERNATIVE SITES

4.2.1 The Applicant has undertaken a site selection search to consider whether it would be preferable for the Proposed Development to be located at an alternative location.

4.2.2 The area of search was limited to locations in proximity to major industrial companies with high energy demand that could receive the energy generated from the REC operation, in particular Nissan.

4.2.3 **Figure 4.1** shows environmental constraints in the area surrounding the Application Site. This demonstrates that, in the wider context to the Nissan plant, sites are not considered appropriate, given the Green Belt designated open land to the north and south and residential areas to the east and west, plus identification of land for future development for other purposes. It is not therefore considered there is a realistic chance for planning permission to be granted for the REC in these locations and, as such, these areas were omitted from the site search.

4.2.4 The areas of search for alternative sites was therefore confined to land in the immediate vicinity of the Nissan car plant. A plan illustrating 11 sites which were identified, in principle, as possible locations for the development and therefore considered for accommodating this development is shown at **Figure 4.2**.

4.2.5 Each of the 11 potential sites were considered for their availability and technical, planning, and environmental suitability. This Assessment demonstrates that none of the other sites are more appropriate for this development than the Application Site, with all others not being considered appropriate for reasons such as size, proximity to sensitive uses or availability. The reasons for omission are included within **Figure 4.2**.

4.2.6 The Application Site is acceptable in principle for the development as it is of sufficient size to accommodate the REC, is identified for development both in planning policy and due to its Enterprise Zone status, and does not have any features or designations which would mean development here would be likely to be considered immediately unacceptable in environmental or planning terms. Note that the land to the south of this area was considered appropriate in principle as the northern part of the wider search area is immediately adjacent to residential properties.

4.3 SITE IDENTIFICATION AND FEASIBILITY

4.3.1 The site on land at Hillthorn Farm was chosen having established:

- Its availability for the proposed development;
- Its location in a site allocated for employment uses and within a defined Enterprise Zone;

- Its size which is capable of accommodating this facility and associated works;
- Its proximity to energy intensive industrial consumers to offer low cost secure energy, assisting in securing the future of those companies and their employees;
- Its access which very closely joins the strategic highway network, without the need to go through residential areas; and

The absence of restrictive designations or protection relating to its environmental or heritage value and Green Belt designation.

4.3.2 It has been shown that no other viable site alternatives that met all the above criteria were identified.