

APPLICATION NO.	P16/V1721/FUL
SITE ADDRESS	Grove Business Park, Downsview Road, Wantage, OX12 9FF
PARISHES	EAST CHALLOW and GROVE
PROPOSAL	Hybrid application comprising: Outline planning application for erection, demolition and conversion of buildings to provide up to 40,000m ² floor space comprising Class B1 and B8 uses with Class A3, Class D1 and Class D2 uses with all matters except access reserved. Full application for erection of Class B1 "incubator" Block (1,205m ² GIA) with associated car parking following demolition of 7 buildings (1,778m ²)
WARD MEMBERS	Yvonne Constance Ben Mabbutt Chris McCarthy
APPLICANT OFFICER	Grove Business Park Limited Peter Brampton

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that planning permission is granted subject to:

- i. **A section 106 legal agreement being entered into with the county council to secure a financial contribution towards Travel Plan monitoring; and**
- ii. **Conditions as follows for the “full” aspect of the application:**
 1. **Commencement three years.**
 2. **Approved plans.**
 3. **Slab levels to be agreed.**
 4. **Landscaping scheme to be agreed.**
 5. **Details of cycle parking to be agreed.**
 6. **Surface water drainage scheme to be agreed.**
 7. **Updated bat surveys to be agreed.**
 8. **Tree protection to be agreed.**
 9. **Travel plan to be agreed.**
 10. **Materials as specified.**
 11. **Turning, manoeuvring and parking as approved.**
 12. **Sustainable construction measures as approved.**
 13. **Implementation of landscaping scheme as specified.**
 14. **Use Class B1 only.**
- iii. **Conditions as follows for the “outline” aspect of the application**
 1. **Reserved matters submitted within 3 years, commencement within two years of approval of last reserved matter.**
 2. **Approved plans.**
 3. **Site-wide landscaping master plan to be agreed.**
 4. **Tree protection to be agreed.**
 5. **Surface water drainage scheme to be agreed.**
 6. **Foul water drainage scheme to be agreed.**

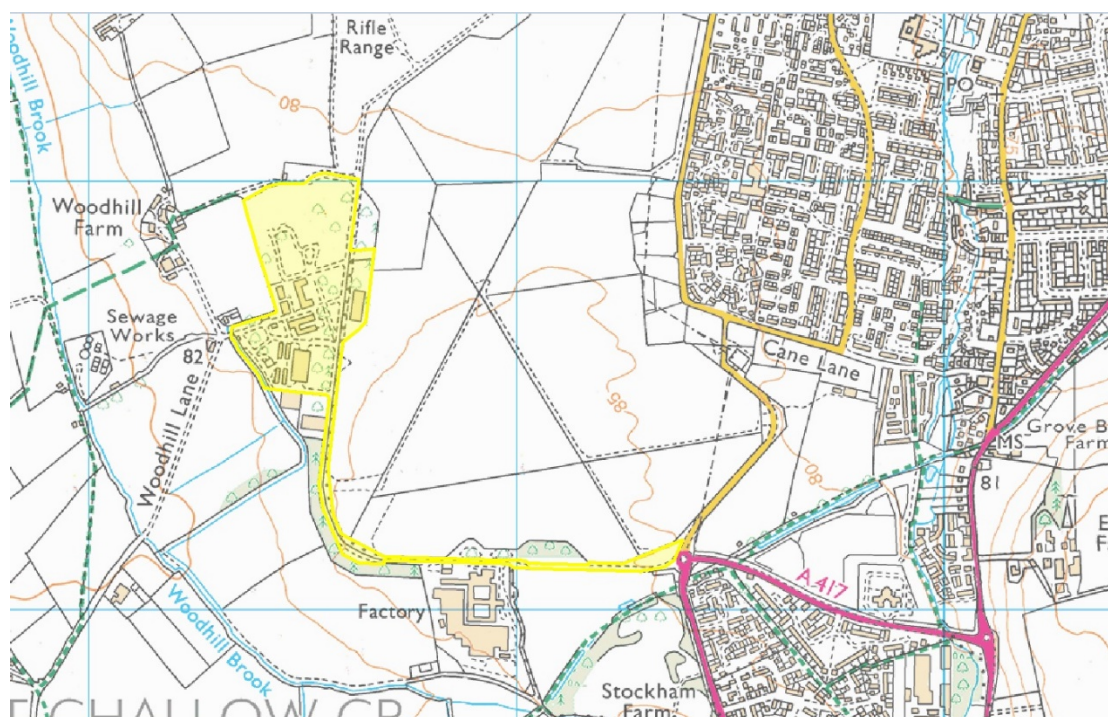
7. Biodiversity enhancement scheme to be agreed.
8. Travel plan to be agreed.
9. Pedestrian and cycle link improvements to be agreed.
10. Shuttle bus provision to be agreed.
11. Construction traffic management plan to be agreed.
12. Construction method statement to be agreed
13. Turning areas and car parking to be agreed
14. Written Scheme of Archaeological Investigation to be agreed
15. Programme of archaeological evaluation and mitigation to be agreed
16. Contaminated Land Investigation to be agreed
17. Building Heights to be as per approved Heights Parameter Plan
18. Sustainable construction measure as approved
19. Total amount of B8 storage accommodation not to exceed more than 1.6 hectares of the site
20. Total amount of ancillary accommodation (A3, D1, D2) not to exceed 2,500 square metres, with A3 less than 500 square metres
21. Any gates provided to be set back 12 metres from carriageway
22. Cycle parking, shower/washing/changing facilities to be provided as part of reserved matters
23. Noise attenuation measures to be provided as part of reserved matters

Informative – The indicative layout would not receive support at reserved matters stage.

1. PROPOSAL

- 1.1 This application is referred to planning committee as it represents a “large-scale” major development. The application was previously deferred from the committee meeting on the 19th October.
- 1.2 Grove Business Park lies to the west of Grove and the north-west of Wantage, although the majority of the site falls within the parish of East Challow. The Planning Statement accompanying the application confirms that the site area is approximately 13.7 hectares (including the long access road accessed from the roundabout at the junction of Mably Way (A417) and Denchworth Road on the northern edge of Wantage).
- 1.3 The site accommodates a mix of single and two storey office and warehouse buildings totalling around 19,000 square metres of floorspace. The existing uses are predominantly office, light industrial and storage, but there is also an on-site gym and police station. Approximately 5 hectares of the northern part of the site remain undeveloped at this time. The site is bounded to the east, southeast and northeast by the Grove Airfield site, a current allocation in the Vale of White Horse Local Plan for housing.

1.4 A site location plan is included over:



- 1.5 The application is a hybrid application seeking full planning permission for a new “Incubator” block on the site for B1 use of 1,205 square metres and outline planning permission (all matters reserved except access) for up to 40,000 square metres of B1, B8, A3, D1 and D2 uses. Seven existing buildings will be demolished in the southern part of the site as they are no longer fit for purpose.
- 1.6 The incubator block will provide 21 small B1 units designed to attract start-up businesses on short-term contracts allowing flexibility for the tenant and the landlord. 75 car parking spaces are provided for this building.
- 1.7 The indicative site plan shows the northern part of the site developed with eight new buildings, most of which will be Class B1 offices and light industrial units. There will be an element of B8 storage and also complementary accommodation such as a nursery (Class D1) and café (Class A3) that will work alongside the existing gym (Class D2) to serve workers on the Park.
- 1.8 Amended plans have been received following negotiations with officers that remove a new car park for the gym due to its impact on protected trees. Reduced copies of the application plans are **attached** as Appendix One. All of the plans, supporting information and application forms can be seen online at www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk

2. SUMMARY OF CONSULTATIONS AND REPRESENTATIONS ON CURRENT SUBMISSION

- 2.1 A summary of the responses received to the current proposal is below. A full copy of all the comments made can be seen online at www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk. Where relevant, further consultation responses were requested from relevant consultees once amended plans were submitted.

East Challow Parish Council	<p>No objections</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposal will generate much needed employment • Revamping of the buildings will be an improvement • Concerned about an increase in traffic and requests a Section 106 contribution towards the planned Western Relief Road
Grove Parish Council	No objections
Wantage Town Council	No objections, providing provision is made for biodiversity across the site
Local residents	<p>2 letters of objection have been received. The objections may be summarised as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased traffic on access road
Oxfordshire County Council	<p><u>Highways</u> No objection following receipt of Supplementary Transport Assessment as part of amendment to application.</p> <p>Conditions relating to Travel Plan, turning areas and car parking, cycle parking, shower/washing/changing facilities, gates, Construction Traffic Management Plan, Construction Method Statement, drainage, pedestrian and cycle improvements and provision of a shuttlebus requested.</p> <p>Section 106 contribution to Travel Plan monitoring requested</p> <p><u>Archaeology</u> No objection subject to conditions relating to a Written Scheme of Investigation and a programme of archaeological evaluation and mitigation</p>
Economic Development	Supports the application
Thames Water	No objection subject to condition requiring implementation of measures identified as necessary in

	Flood Risk Assessment
Drainage engineer	No objection subject to conditions relating to surface and foul water drainage strategies
Forestry officer	<p>No overall objection at this stage following submission of amended plans to remove car park serving gym</p> <p>Regarding the incubator building (the full element), extensive tree losses will occur, with further losses likely given the proposed SuDS scheme. The landscaping scheme proposed replacement planting as mitigation needs to adhere to the principles of a site-wide landscape masterplan that is yet to be submitted.</p> <p>Overall, the loss of mature, protected, trees is significant and the justification for removing some of the most important trees is often scant. The indicative layout appears to show that insufficient space will be left to some site boundaries to allow replacement planting to mitigate the proposed losses and this will need to be addressed at a later stage, alongside the provision of the landscape masterplan</p>
Landscape officer	<p>Concerned about the loss of mature trees and the lack of space for replacement planting within the indicative layout. Would recommend amendments to the detailed layout to address this concern.</p> <p>Proposed landscaping scheme for the Incubator building is unacceptable in terms of the range of suggested species.</p>
Countryside officer	<p>No objection</p> <p>Conditions relating to updated bat surveys and a biodiversity enhancement strategy requested</p>
Urban design officer	<p>No objection</p> <p>Comments relating to the location of parking, the use of soft landscaping, incorporation of SuDS features into the layout and the location of waste/recycling points provided.</p>
Environmental protection team	<p>No objection</p> <p>Details of plant equipment should be submitted at reserved matters stage due to the proximity of the outline proposals to the Grove Airfield site</p>

Contaminated Land officer	No objection Condition requiring further investigation requested
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3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

- 3.1 This site has a length planning history that is relevant to the assessment of this proposal. The most relevant applications are outlined in sequential order below.
- 3.2 P85/V0214/O – Approved 06/03/1986
Construction of 520,000 sq. ft. of buildings in 3 phases. For research and development offices, light or general industrial use – This permission was accompanied by a Section 106 agreement that provided a strategic highways improvement contribution of £440,000
- P88/V0334 – Approved 12/10/1988
Erection of seven units for light industrial/office use (30,000 sq. ft.) visitor centre, roads and preliminary landscape works – This is the C-shaped building in the centre of the site
- P97/V1088/O – Approved 14/12/2000
Erection of proposed B1 units – These are built out in the western corner of the site.
- P03/V2008/O – Approved 01/03/2004
Erection of warehouse and office accommodation, car parking and loading areas – This is located on the eastern side of the site
- P05/V1485 – Approved 05/01/2006
Erection of 18 light industrial/office units in two blocks with associated site work – These buildings are located in the northern part of the developed site between the two main access rounds
- P12/V0266 – Approved 12/04/2012
Erection of a two storey Police station with car parking, access and associated works – This is located on the eastern part of the site.
- There are also a number of permissions that have not been implemented, which means that the total floorspace on the site has never exceeded the 520,000 square feet originally approved in 1986, on which the strategic highways infrastructure contribution was based.
- 3.3 Pre-application advice
P16/V0819/PEJ - Regeneration of site Advice sought on quantum and type of development proposed and the supporting documents needed for the application – Advice provided on the principle of development, the landscape impact, the amount of protected trees to be lost to accommodate the proposal and on highway safety impacts.

It was also confirmed at the pre-application stage that, as this proposal does not exceed the 520,000 square feet limit set out in the Section 106 agreement, OCC Highways are unable to request further contributions to strategic highways improvements.

4. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA)

- 4.1 This proposal was screened under reference P16/V1417/SCR prior to the submission of an application and the council confirmed in writing on 23/06/2016 that an EIA was not required for the proposal.
- 4.2 Given the amendments made to the application, the applicant requested a second screening opinion in November 2016 (Reference P16/V2789/SCR). Again, the council concluded an EIA was not required for this proposal.

5. MAIN ISSUES

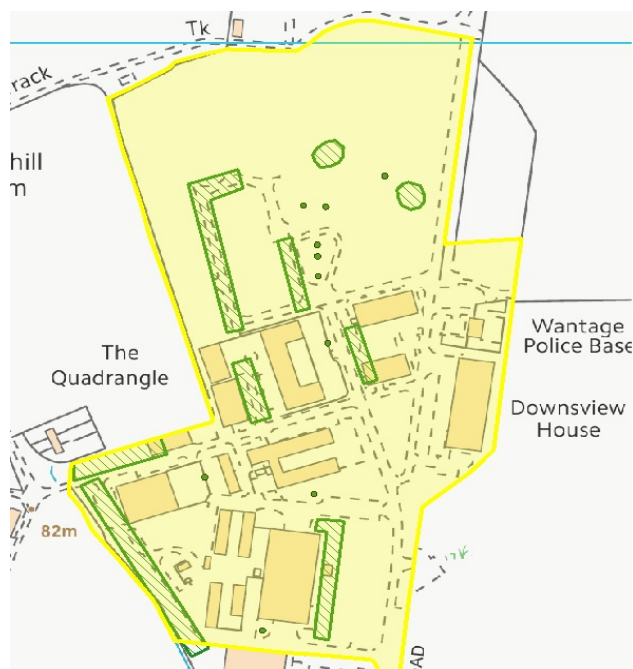
Current Employment, Retail and Leisure Policy

- 5.1 Policy E4 of the Vale of White Horse Local Plan is most relevant to the assessment of the principle of this proposal as it states, *“New business development in Grove will be permitted at Grove Technology Park...for B1 and B2 uses. Development for B8 use...will only be permitted on up to 1.6 hectares of the site.”* Also relevant is Policy E13, which makes allowances for ancillary facilities on the key employment sites of the Vale (of which this is one). This is subject to the proposal being small-scale and designed to provide for site works, the use being ancillary to the overall business use of the park and the use not affecting the vitality or viability of any town centre.
- 5.2 The proposals here would accord with the requirements of Policy E4. The Grove Business Park employment allocation is being carried forward into the emerging Local Plan. Although the majority of the proposal is at outline stage, there is no intention for the B8 element to exceed 1.6 hectares and this can be controlled by condition.
- 5.3 The ancillary facilities accord with Policy E13 in principle whilst condition 20 of the consent will restrict the size of these new facilities to 2,500 square metres in total, around 6% of the total new floorspace proposed.
- 5.4 Overall, officers are satisfied the principle of this proposal can be accepted and should be supported. The NPPF states that one of the key principles for the planning system is to proactively drive and support sustainable economic development and that significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth.
- 5.5 This proposal would regenerate and grow an existing allocated business park, securing existing employment and creating new jobs. This would clearly be compatible with the large-scale housing growth proposed in the current and emerging Local Plans for Grove and

Wantage. In consultation, the council's Economic Development team have confirmed they have received over 40 enquiries in the last year for the type of accommodation proposed here, whilst Incubator units are in demand throughout Oxfordshire. They conclude, "*Grove Business Park is an attractive out of town location, situated near to the market town of Wantage and the village of Grove, and is ideal for start-up to growing businesses.*"

Trees

- 5.6 Given the lengthy history of the site, which was previously part of Grove Airfield during World War II, there is a range of buildings on the site. The Design & Access Statement confirms there are 28 buildings/structures on the site consisting of single storey hangars dating from the airfield use, larger brick and concrete buildings reflecting a subsequent use as a scientific research centre and more modern steel-framed portal buildings suitable for B1/B8 uses.
- 5.7 The site itself has a rural, open character and benefits from a comprehensive level of tree cover. The site plan below denotes both the group and individual Tree Preservation Orders on the site.



- 5.8 There is general acceptance that the development of this site will involve the removal of some of the protected trees. This can only be accepted if appropriate mitigation is provided. The amount of tree loss and the quality of the mitigation planting has been the subject of much of the discussions between officers and applicant on this proposal.
- 5.9 The current proposals (full and indicative) will result in the loss of over 100 trees and impact on the longevity of several others. There are several areas where the tree loss will be particularly visually significant. The first of these is an avenue of Horse Chestnuts (the larger "L")

shaped grouping in the northwestern corner of the plan). Officers accept that these trees are difficult to retain given their central location within the northern undeveloped portion of the site, which is the logical place for new buildings. It is also the case that the “avenue” is not wide enough to be incorporated into the masterplan for the site and once buildings are erected to east and west, their visual amenity will be reduced. Nonetheless, these trees are visible from a considerable distance to the west. Therefore, the need for new planting along this western boundary is essential to mitigate the loss. This is where the indicative masterplan, in officers’ opinion, is unacceptable. Building 44 in particular would require the removal of a large portion of the “avenue” and project so close to the western boundary of the site that there would be no opportunity to plant trees that would offer the same amenity value as those lost.

- 5.10 Turning to the incubator building, for which full consent is sought, this also requires the removal of a large number of mature, protected trees. The plans submitted show that 28 trees will be lost in this part of the site, whilst of the nine retained, two prominent Hornbeam are likely to be adversely affected by the proposed SuDS drain. Officers consider the SuDS strategy for this part of the site should be re-designed to preserve these trees.
- 5.11 Again, officers consider the extensive tree removal to accommodate the Incubator building can only be agreed if a landscaping scheme that provides appropriate new planting is secured as part of any permission. The landscaping proposals submitted to date are not acceptable in terms of the range of species. However, officers are satisfied that there remains potential for an acceptable landscaping scheme. This will need to be consistent with a site-wide landscaping masterplan that will be secured by condition.
- 5.12 The proposed site layout does retain the central area of trees immediately north of the existing buildings at the end of the current access drive. These trees will form part of an area of open space between the Incubator building and Building 44. This is obviously welcome and will provide a high level of visual amenity within the site. However, unlike other trees, they offer limited value outside the site.
- 5.13 There is also a proposal to remove some of the trees along the southwestern boundary (the long thin grouping on the plan). This is another avenue of Horse Chestnuts and again the indicative site plan shows insufficient space retained between Building 32 and the site boundary to allow for meaningful replacement planting.
- 5.14 The indicative masterplan shows a number of areas that officers consider unacceptable. A mature Lime is shown to be lost outside Building 14 to accommodate the indicative position of a tennis court/MUGA. This is entirely avoidable and a reserved matters application will need to reposition this court further east to retain the

Lime. Building 36 is an indicative addition to the site that would cause the unnecessary loss of a group of Norway Maple right next to the main access road. This will harm the visual quality of the site from the access road and from Grove Airfield to the east. Officers consider Building 36 to be an unacceptable element of the indicative masterplan that will need removing or relocating at detailed stage. Finally, a new car park to the south of Unit 11 will cause harm to an adjacent Willow if appropriate construction methods are not used.

- 5.15 Officers have given careful consideration as to whether the sheer amount of tree removal and the harm caused to the character and visual amenity of the site would warrant a refusal of planning permission. On balance, the conclusion is that it would not. This is largely due to the fact that full consent is only sought for the Incubator building (No.45). Whilst this element of the proposal does lead to noticeable levels of tree loss, officers must weigh this against the obvious employment benefits that lead to the clear support for this building from the council's Economic Development team and East Challow Parish Council and the fact that this is an allocated employment site in both the current and emerging Local Plans. Furthermore, the plans submitted show the potential for a landscaping scheme that could, when combined with an alternative drainage strategy, mitigate most of the harm. Therefore, officers do not object to the detailed element of the scheme on tree loss grounds.
- 5.16 However, the outline elements of the scheme, as denoted by the indicative layout, would result in an overall loss of protected trees that could not be adequately mitigated. As such, an informative will be placed on the outline element of the planning permission to confirm that the indicative layout will need amending to receive council support at reserved matters stage. Officers are mindful that the final size of each building will be driven by prospective tenants and so officers are satisfied that the potential remains for the final detailed layout to address the concerns raised above.

Landscape Impact

- 5.17 During the assessment of the application, the applicant has provided photomontages to show the visibility of the site in long distance views around the area. This reflects the requirements of Policy NE9 of the Vale Local Plan that seeks to protect the long, open, views that characterise the Lowland Vale in which this site sits. The photomontages clearly show the value of the existing tree planting on site and the above section talks about tree loss and replacement in detail. The council's landscape architect has corroborated the consultation response of the forestry officer in respect of the lack of space provided at the boundaries of the site for replacement and new planting. Providing high quality boundary planting will be important in maintaining the low-key impact the Park currently has on the landscape. Of course, in these same views, the Grove Airfield development will have a much larger impact in the longer term.

- 5.18 The Design and Access Statement at Appendix B provides a Height Parameter Plan. This proposes to keep the vast majority of the buildings at a height consistent with the existing buildings on site and the boundary planting. Officers are satisfied this is a sensible approach that can be reasonably conditioned as part of the outline consent.
- 5.19 The council's Landscape Architect also shares the Forestry Officer's concerns regarding the proposed landscaping scheme for the detailed aspect of the scheme – the Incubator Building. As outlined above, officers consider a condition is necessary to secure a better quality landscaping scheme to address these concerns. With the above conditions in place, officers are satisfied that the landscape impact of this scheme is acceptable.

Design and Layout

- 5.20 Given that the majority of the layout is indicative, officers have little opportunity to comment on this aspect of the scheme. However, there are a few aspects of the layout that cause concern. Firstly, Principle DG95 of the Design Guide recommends servicing and parking should be located at the rear of perimeter blocks. The indicative layout does not make much allowance for this and officers would expect this to be explored in more detail at reserved matters stage. Certainly, where larger parking areas are required, as is the case here, soft landscaping will be important to reduce the urban appearance of the site.
- 5.21 The council's urban design officer has highlighted concerns over the bulk and massing over some of the larger buildings. This can be reduced by breaking up the main façade of each building into its component parts (base/middle/roof) and introducing vertical elements to reduce the horizontal emphasis, as required by Principle DG102 of the Design Guide. Officers are satisfied that the incubator building achieves this, and it will be for detailed proposals for the larger buildings in the later phases to show similar adherence to the Design Guide.
- 5.22 Officers consider there is an opportunity for the final layout to incorporate the necessary SuDS features that are currently rather side-lined to the edge of the site. Whilst acknowledging the need for attenuation basins at the low points of the site, they could be incorporated into the green corridor along Downsview Road to provide ecological benefits and improve the appearance of the street scene.
- 5.23 Overall, officers are satisfied that there is potential for a high quality design and layout on this site and this proposal represents a solid starting point. However, it will be for the detailed proposals, designed to meet the requirements of future tenants, to carry this through to completion.

Traffic, parking & highway safety

- 5.24 One local objector has raised concern about the impact of this proposal on the traffic levels along Downsview Road, which is the only route into the site. Oxfordshire County Council as Highways Authority were initially concerned about congestion at the Mably Way/Downsview Road/Denchworth Road roundabout.
- 5.25 The application is supported by a Transport Assessment (TA) that assesses the likely traffic impact on local roads from this proposal when it is built out, with the “horizon” year for the assessment being 2021. As noted by the Highways Authority, the TA demonstrates that this development would lead to the roundabout operating above the 85% capacity threshold on the Denchworth Road arm that is ordinarily a trigger point requiring mitigation to ease congestion.
- 5.26 However, the applicant argues that the 85% threshold is simply, *“the point at which free flowing traffic starts to become more congested, although this does not mean that the junction is at capacity. In theory, for a junction to operate at capacity [it] would need to reach or exceed 100%.”* The applicant argues that the more relevant consideration is the increase in queuing/delay on the southern arm of the junction. The applicant has submitted a response that argues these delays will vary quite significantly in the morning and afternoon peaks and that it is will not be consistently the case that queuing at the junction will cause unacceptable delays for motorists.
- 5.27 It is also the case that the greatest delays come when the modelling work assumes developments such as Grove Airfield come forward in the same timeframe as this development (up to 2021). Crucially, mitigation to the roundabout has been agreed as part of the Grove Airfield application. The County Council have acknowledged this point and conclude, *“It is apparent from the further submitted data that the Grove Road/Mably Way Roundabout would operate marginally above the 0.85% threshold with development at the horizon year of 2021, which on balance would be acceptable. It is noted that when/if the Grove Airfield and Crab Hill committed developments are introduced, the roundabout in question, at the same horizon year, would not be able to accommodate the additional development traffic associated with these schemes, therefore mitigation, through these developments, would be required in terms of modifications to the roundabout, which has previously been agreed.”*
- 5.28 The NPPF is clear that proposals for development should only be resisted when the cumulative impact on traffic is severe. Whilst this development, if built in totality, would push the congestion levels at this roundabout to slightly above normally accepted limits, this is not considered severe harm on which a refusal of planning permission could be justified. Furthermore, adjacent committed developments/allocations will eventually deliver mitigation to this roundabout that will resolve the issue.

- 5.29 It should be noted that the Highways Authority have no objections over traffic generation on any local roads.
- 5.30 In terms of parking, County Council standards require 1 space/30 square metres of B1 floorspace and 1 space/200 square metres of B8 floorspace. The indicative masterplan shows that this level of parking will be achieved. Cycle parking will be required for each unit and can be covered by condition at the detailed stage for each building.
- 5.31 Initially, the Highways Authority requested a financial contribution to a new bus service to serve the site. In response, the applicant has proposed a shuttlebus service that would link Wantage and Grove to the application site. This would operate 7-10am and 4-7pm. The County Council consider this a viable alternative that will be needed until such time as the bus services associated with the Grove Airfield and Crab Hill developments become live. Officers are satisfied that the shuttlebus can be secured through a Grampian condition on the outline consent. The Incubator building will come forward first but would not justify a shuttlebus in itself.
- 5.32 The County Council have also been keen to explore the potential to improve foot and cycle links from Wantage/Grove into the site, which is currently quite poorly connected for all but the motorist. It is not possible for the applicant to provide a dedicated foot/cycle way along Downsview Road as it is not in their control. However, a condition requiring a scheme of pedestrian/cycle access improvements for the site itself is appropriate and will be attached to the outline consent. This will also cover the potential to link into the Grove Airfield site to the east to encourage new residents to walk to the Park.
- 5.33 Overall, the “full” aspect of this scheme, the Incubator block, will have a limited impact on highway safety and can be accepted. However, once the proposal in the outline scheme are built out in full, the impacts on highway safety become more acute and the need for cycle parking, the shuttlebus service and improved pedestrian/cycle links will become paramount. The conditions recommended at the start of the report have been designed to reflect when this mitigation becomes necessary.
- 5.34 In terms of financial contributions, as outlined in Section 3, the County Council are unable to require contributions to strategic road improvements as the 1986 legal agreement remains in force in relation to the proposed provision of B use class accommodation. Whilst the ancillary accommodation in the A3, D1 and D2 use classes would not be covered by this existing agreement, officers are satisfied they will not have such an impact as to warrant further financial contributions. However, they have requested the typical contribution to cover the cost of monitoring a Travel Plan that will, in itself, be secured by condition.

Flood Risk and Drainage

- 5.35 The application is supported by a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) that confirms the site falls entirely within Flood Zone 1, the area at the least risk of flooding. Therefore, the most likely risk of flooding from this development is surface water and ground water flooding. Surface water currently discharges into Woodhill Brook through a ditch along the southwestern boundary. The site benefits from its own private sewage treatment facility that is not part of Thames Water's assets.
- 5.36 The FRA confirms that a SuDS compatible approach will be taken to the draining of surface water from the extended site. This include the provision of swales, porous surfacing, attenuation ponds, an attenuation tank below ground and areas of soft landscaping. This will allow surface water to be discharged into the existing drainage network at a controlled rate in line with industry standards.
- 5.37 The council's drainage engineer and the County Council as Lead Local Flood Authority, has confirmed no objections to the proposed drainage strategy, subject to further details being secured by condition.
- 5.38 In terms of foul drainage, the applicant proposes to re-use and upgrade the existing private system, which means Thames Water has no interest in the proposals. Nonetheless, officers consider the typical Grampian condition is necessary to secure details of the foul drainage improvement to ensure a practicable solution is being proposed. Subject to these standard conditions, there are no objections to this proposal relating to flood risk and drainage.

Biodiversity

- 5.39 Ecological surveys have been submitted in support of the application that show there are no significant constraints that would impact the outline proposals. The only potential constraint is the removal of trees that could support roosting bats. Further surveys will be required at the detailed stage to address this point and propose a mitigation strategy if required.
- 5.40 Generally, the site is characterised by widespread and common habitats and these proposals would not cause a significant loss to biodiversity. In line with the NPPF, the proposal will need to demonstrate an overall biodiversity gain and so a biodiversity enhancement strategy will be required by condition.

Noise

- 5.41 Given the isolated nature of the site as it currently sits, there are no concerns that the proposals will cause disturbance that would affect neighbouring amenity. However, as noted by the council's environmental health officer, there is potential for future conflict once Grove Airfield is built out. Given the office/storage use proposed, this

is most likely going to be limited to plant noise. Details of any plant equipment will be needed at the detailed stage.

Contaminated Land

- 5.42 Given the previous uses on the site, there is potential for the areas of new development to be contaminated. The application is supported by a Phase One Environmental Assessment has identified the potential for contamination hotspots to be present on site. In consultation, the council's contaminated land officer has identified the need for further investigations that can be secured through normal conditions attached to the consent.

Sustainability

- 5.43 The application is accompanied by a BREEAM Pre-assessment, Sustainable Construction Checklist and Energy Assessment. This confirms that the new buildings, including the Incubator block, will achieve an "excellent" BREEAM rating that can be secured by condition.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 This application has been assessed in light of its merits, in light of the Inspectors Interim Findings into the emerging Local Plan 2031, the policies of the current and emerging Local Plan and the NPPF.
- 6.2 Officers consider that the scheme would provide an economic and social role through the provision of new employment opportunities and increased investment in the local economy. The provision of new jobs is considered extremely desirable in this location given the scale of proposed housing growth at Grove and Wantage. Both the current and emerging Local Plan confirm this site is a protected Employment site and that the provision of additional B1 and B8 accommodation will be supported. This is consistent with the NPPF.
- 6.3 In terms of the environmental role, officers are concerned about the scale of tree removal that would be necessary to achieve the indicative layout. This would be unacceptable at detailed stage but officers are satisfied that the concerns outlined in this report can be addressed. Subject to these points, officers are satisfied that the proposal will provide a high quality extension to an important employment site in the district.
- 6.4 Following the submission of amended plans and further justification, the proposed application does not attract any technical objections.
- 6.5 Overall, in the planning balancing exercise, the benefits of this scheme are considered to significantly outweigh the limited environmental harm that will be caused, once a more acceptable layout is provided at the detailed stage. Accordingly, the application is recommended for approval.

The following planning policies have been taken into account:

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Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2011 policies;

- GS1 - Developments in Existing Settlements
- DC1 - Design
- DC3 - Design against crime
- DC5 - Access
- DC6 - Landscaping
- DC7 - Waste Collection and Recycling
- DC8 - The Provision of Infrastructure and Services
- DC9 - The Impact of Development on Neighbouring Uses
- DC12 - Water Quality and Resources
- DC13 - Flood Risk and Water Run-off
- DC14 - Flood Risk and Water Run-off
- E4 - Grove Technology Park
- E13 - Ancillary Uses on Key Employment Sites
- NE9 - The Lowland Vale

Vale of White Horse emerging Local Plan 2031 Part One policies;

- CP01 - Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
- CP06 - Meeting Business and Employment Needs
- CP15 - Spatial Strategy for South East Vale Sub-Area
- CP32 - Retail Development and other Main Town Centre Uses
- CP33 - Promoting Sustainable Transport and Accessibility
- CP35 - Promoting Public Transport, Cycling and Walking
- CP36 - Electronic communications
- CP37 - Design and Local Distinctiveness
- CP38 - Design Strategies for Strategic and Major Development Sites
- CP39 - The Historic Environment
- CP42 - Flood Risk
- CP43 - Natural Resources
- CP44 - Landscape
- CP45 - Green Infrastructure
- CP46 - Conservation and Improvement of Biodiversity
- CP47 - Delivery and Contingency

The following documents are also relevant to the assessment of this proposal:

GROVE TECHNOLOGY PARK SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE
2006

VALE OF WHITE HORSE DESIGN GUIDE 2015

NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK (NPPF)

PLANNING PRACTICE GUIDANCE
EQUALITY ACT 2010
SECTION 17 OF THE CRIME AND DISORDER ACT 1998
NATURAL ENVIRONMENT AND RURAL COMMUNITIES ACT 2006
THE CONSERVATION OF HABITATS AND SPECIES REGULATIONS 2010
LOCALISM ACT
HUMAN RIGHTS ACT 1998
EQUALITY ACT 2010 (SECTION 149)

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