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| APPLICATION NO. | P22/V0416/FUL |
| SITE | Land south of Curie Avenue and west of Eighth Street Harwell Campus Didcot, OX11 0DF |
| PARISH | EAST HENDRED |
| PROPOSAL | Erection of two employment buildings, with associated landscaping and car parking. (As amended by plans and documentation received 23 August 2022, 16 September 2022, 5 October and 20 October 2022). |
| WARD MEMBER(S) | Janet Shelley |
| APPLICANT | Harwell Science and Innovation |
| OFFICER | Sally Appleyard |

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that planning permission is granted, subject to the following conditions:

Standard

1. Commencement of development within 3 years
2. Development in accordance with approved plans

Pre-commencement

3. Construction traffic management plan (CTMP)
4. Sustainable drainage scheme
5. Foul drainage scheme
6. Biodiversity offsetting
7. Biodiversity enhancement plan
8. Rare plant species mitigation strategy
9. Landscape scheme
10. Landscape management plan
11. Rooflights to prevent light spill
12. Community Employment Plan
13. Tree protection implementation

Pre-occupation

14. Demolish/vacate buildings on Innovation Quarter
15. SUDs compliance report
16. Car parking in accordance with plan
17. Cycle parking in accordance with plan
18. EV charging points
19. Public art

Compliance

20. Materials
21. Ecological Mitigation
22. Travel Plan
23. External Lighting

Informatives

- 1. Biodiversity offsetting**
- 2. Thames Water**

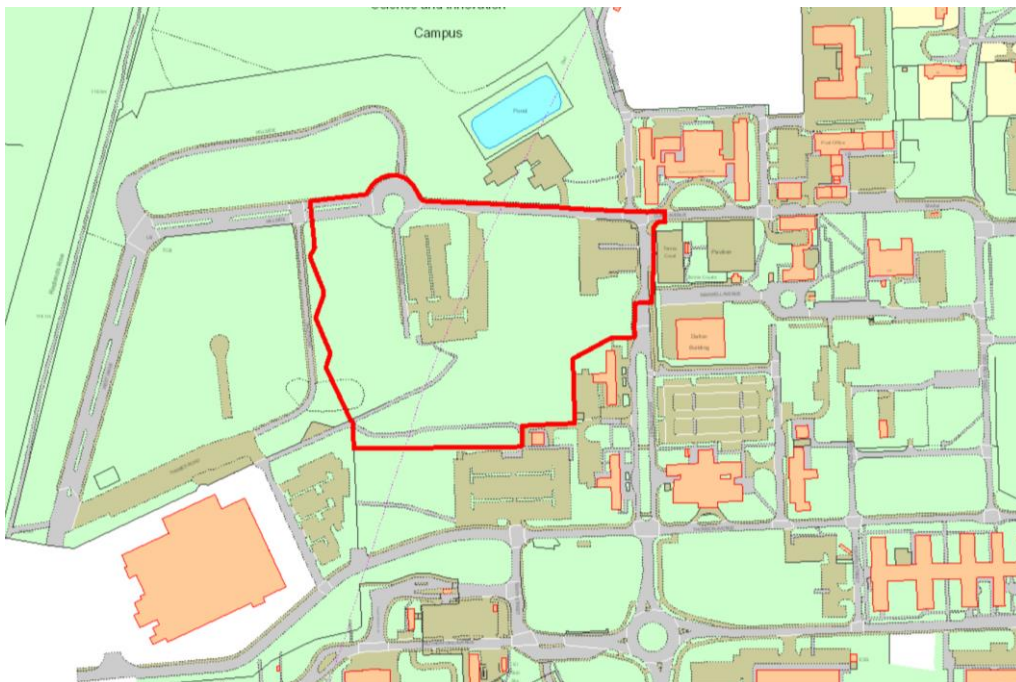
1.0 INTRODUCTION AND PROPOSAL

1.1 The application is referred to planning committee as East Hendred Parish Council objects.

1.2 The application site is located along the north-western edge of Harwell Campus. The site extends to approximately 3.44 hectares and currently comprises two hard surfaced car parks and access roads, with areas of woodland, scrub and amenity grassland. Existing campus buildings are located to the east, south and south-west of the site. The campus is situated within the North Wessex Downs AONB.

1.3 Harwell Campus is allocated in the development plan for employment generating purposes. It is already home to many scientific, research and development and high technology firms and part of the campus (including the site for this proposal) is designated as an Enterprise Zone.

1.4 A site location plan is provided below:



1.5 As originally submitted, the application sought planning permission for up to 15,329sqm of flexible floorspace across Use Classes B2 and E(g) on a site area of 7.5 hectares. This was split across a detailed element for 7,164sqm in two buildings and an outline element for up to 8,165sqm. The application has been subject to amendments, which includes the omission of the outline element to address issues and matters relating to highway impacts.

- 1.6 As amended, the application therefore now solely seeks full planning permission for the erection two employment buildings with 7,164 sqm of flexible employment floorspace across Use Classes B2 (General Industry) and E(g) (office, research, and development and light industrial).
- 1.7 The latest site layout plans and elevations are **attached** at Appendix 1. All other plans and technical documents are available to view online on the council's website at www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk.

2.0 **SUMMARY OF CONSULTATIONS & REPRESENTATIONS**

- 2.1 A summary of the latest responses received from consultees and third parties to the application is below. Full responses received can be viewed online at www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk

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| <p>East Hendred Parish Council</p> | <p><u>Second consultation</u> Maintain objection – amendments do not address previous concerns raised in detail</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proposal would adversely affect the woodland landscape character of the largest area of Mixed Deciduous Woodland on the north-western boundary of the campus. • Contrary to Policy CP15b which sets out that no development will be permitted within structural areas of open space and perimeter landscaping. • Contrary to Policies CP43, CP44, CP45 and CP46 of the LPP1 • Large scale development within the AONB • Loss of 100 trees out of 135 (75%). The proposal will significantly affect the current tree canopy on the site • The proposals do not provide a biodiversity net gain of +10%. The proposal does not comply with Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021. <p><u>First Consultation</u> Objection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contrary to CP15b which requires a campus wide masterplan and environmental Impact Assessment to assess the cumulative effects of the proposed development of the site on the AONB, open space, trees, ecology, landscape, travel etc, prior to the granting of planning permission on individual sites • Structural landscaping across the whole site needs to be identified before permission is granted on individual sites. • This application site is identified as a Structural Landscape Site in the 2015 Harwell Campus Masterplan Figure 7, Landscape Site Considerations |
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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The detailed application Tree Report is described as woodland, with over 250 trees. It removes c.100 trees, and 5 Groups of trees, leaving a small group of 9 rowan trees next to a service yard near the northern boundary, and 2 small groups of c.20 trees on the southern boundary. • The outline application Tree Report, covering the Campus western boundary and public footpath, does not identify the trees or tree groups to be removed, but seeks a volume of floor space to be approved without a Tree Report identifying the impact on some 150 trees within the outline application boundary. This is contrary to UK planning advice in the submitted Tree Report which requires existing trees to be protected from development. • In the past, Harwell Campus has carried out consultation with the Parish Councils within the Campus, East Hendred, Harwell and Chilton Parish. The Campus has not consulted the Parish Councils prior to submitting this application. • A 5% reduction in travel by car in the Travel Plan is not consistent with the Oxfordshire County Council target of a 25% reduction within circa 5 years. • New bus stops should be required for this development. It is on the existing campus bus routes, but a long way from any bus stops in either direction. The closest stops are 400-500m away and the maximum recommended distance (from the application travel plan) for bus stops is 400m. • The cycle parking is two tier which Harwell Bike Users Group recommend against as it is difficult to use for a lot of people. • There is no mention of any other facilities for cyclists. Many cyclists look for showers, changing and locker facilities if they are commuting in. Ideally in a development like this which may be let to many small businesses, a central hub of facilities for cyclists (and runners etc) should be provided rather than leaving it to each business to provide something. • There appears to be no provision for electric bike charging and only a vague statement that some car parking spaces will have EV charging. |
| <p>Harwell Parish Council</p> | <p><u>Second Consultation</u> No objection. Sustainable materials should be used where possible.</p> <p><u>First consultation</u></p> |

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| | <p>Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cumulative effect on traffic in the area and the impact on Rowstock and the A4185 • Contributions towards improving route 544 towards wantage • Improvements to cycling connections • Better active travel connections should be provided • Inadequate EV charging points • Mature trees to be retained as much as possible • Consideration given to a grey water system |
| <p>Local Residents / employees</p> | <p><u>Second consultation</u> No further comments received.</p> <p><u>First consultation</u> One letter of representation received raising concerns of lack of parking spaces.</p> |
| <p>National Highways</p> | <p><u>Second consultation</u> No objection, subject to condition:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construction Environmental Management Plan <p><u>First consultation</u> Holding objection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No assessment has been performed of the impact on the Strategic Road Network (SRN) • Use of Didcot Paramics Model to test the impacts of the development on both local and strategic road networks is required. National highways to be involved in the development of the modelling assessment scoping • It is not clear from the Transport Assessment (TA) that the Tech Edge development constitutes part of the expected net additional jobs identified in CP15b or whether this is in addition to the expected growth • Concern that traffic survey data may not be representative. A representative baseline will need to be determined • Conflicting values with applying growth rates • Clarification regarding committed development • Clarification regarding traffic flows • Full interpreted collision listing should be provided • Discrepancy within TA and planning statement regarding no. of disabled spaces and cycle spaces • Confirmation of route choice and junctions utilised required, to determine if the Milton interchange will need to be included in the SRN impact assessment |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A need for a cumulative construction traffic impact assessment |
| OCC – Transport | <p><u>Second consultation</u> No objection, subject to conditions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demolish current buildings identified for decommissioning to off-set trip generation • Construction Traffic Management Plan • Car and Cycle parking in accordance with plans • Travel Plan Implementation & Monitoring <p><u>First consultation</u> No response</p> |
| Countryside officer | <p><u>Second consultation</u> No objection, subject to conditions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biodiversity offsetting • Biodiversity Enhancement Plan • Rare Plant Species Mitigation strategy • Ecological Mitigation <p><u>First consultation</u> Holding objection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Essential to control external lighting levels and ensure that boundaries remain dark corridors. This may need to be agreed with an illuminance/light spill parameter plans for the outline site. Submitted information insufficient • Not clear which trees on site have bat roosting potential. Additional info required, which will need to be compared against the proposals for tree removal. Additional surveys may be required. • Further consideration of impact on rare plants required. Rare plant impact assessment and mitigation strategies to be submitted. • Justification of impacts on important ecological receptors under CP46 • BNG to be amended, further info required |
| Landscape Architect | <p><u>Second consultation</u> No objection, subject to conditions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stepped access to be amended to a ramped access • Rooflights to prevent light spill • Landscaping scheme <p><u>First consultation</u> Holding objection</p> |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Height parameter is too open with regards to plant. Plant/solar panels should sit below the assessed parameter height • Concerned about potential light pollution from roof lights and light spill in AONB • In the southwestern corner, a ramped access into the green corridor is preferred to steps. • Proposed access within root protection areas of retained trees. Consider moving this eastwards out of RPZ • Size of planting stock |
| <p>Forestry officer</p> | <p><u>Second consultation</u> No objection, subject to conditions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landscape scheme • Landscape Management Plan <p><u>First consultation</u> Objection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No detailed tree planting strategy has been provided demonstrating the proposed redevelopment of the site could accommodate the state 256 replacement trees. To provide any significant mitigation large canopied long lived tree species will be required. For this to be achieved sufficient space and suitable growing conditions must be provided. • The tree species listed fails to provide sufficient range of large canopied tree species that would achieve sufficient mitigation. • A detailed tree management strategy is needed |
| <p>Drainage Engineer</p> | <p><u>Second consultation</u> No objection, subject to conditions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainable drainage scheme • SUDs compliance report • Foul drainage scheme <p><u>First Consultation</u> Holding objection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disconnect between the landscape strategy and drainage strategy • Space available for greater use of surface features • Drainage plan to be amended to clarify what is intended for the roof area of buildings • Confirmation of sufficient capacity into existing private lagoon to accept the proposed flow rate and volume |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Calculations should be revised to assess FEH rainfall parameters and correct CV values |
| OCC LLFA | <p><u>Second consultation</u> No objection, subject to conditions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Surface water drainage scheme Record of installed SuDs and site wide drainage scheme <p><u>First consultation</u> No response</p> |
| Environment Agency | <p><u>Second consultation</u> No further comments. Standard advice provided on Groundwater protection and potential pollution</p> <p><u>First consultation</u> No comment. Standard advice provided on Groundwater protection and potential pollution</p> |
| Thames Water | <p><u>Second consultation</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Waste comments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Foul water – no objection Surface water – no objection Water comments – no objection, subject to informative <p><u>First consultation</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Waste comments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No objection to surface water drainage Unable to determine the Foul water infrastructure needs. Condition recommended. Water comments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No objection, subject to informative Supplementary comments. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Waste: If drainage is to be connected into public sewers, a drainage strategy should be provided with details of points of connection and anticipated sizes of proposed sewer connections. If the drainage strategy is not acceptable, an impact study will need to be undertaken. |
| Air Quality | <p><u>Second consultation</u> No objection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Further details required on EV charging proposals to ensure they are compliant with the levels in the VOWH Air Quality developers Guidance <p><u>First consultation</u></p> |

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| | <p>No objection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further details required on EV charging proposals to ensure they are compliant with the levels in the VOWH Air Quality developers Guidance |
| Contaminated Land | <p><u>Second consultation</u> No objection</p> <p><u>First Consultation</u> Holding objection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No appropriate contamination assessment has been submitted • Contaminated land preliminary risk assessment required |
| Env Protection Team | <p><u>Second consultation</u> No objection</p> <p><u>First consultation</u> No objection</p> |
| Crime Prevention Officer | <p><u>Second consultation</u> No objections. Advises applicant to commit to achieving the police recommended Park Mark standard on all parking areas.</p> <p><u>First consultation</u> No objections. Advises applicant to commit to achieving the police recommended Park Mark standard on all parking areas.</p> |
| OCC – Archaeology | <p><u>Second consultation</u> No objection</p> <p><u>First consultation</u> No response</p> |
| Waste management officer | <p><u>Second consultation</u> No comments</p> <p><u>First consultation</u> No comments</p> |
| Natural England | <p><u>Second consultation</u> No objection</p> <p><u>First consultation</u> No response</p> |
| Arts officer | No response |

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| Economic Development | No response |
| Equalities officer | No response |
| North Wessex Downs AONB | No response |

3.0 **RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

3.1 [P18/V2806/FUL](#) - Approved (06/06/2019)

Creation of hard standing adjacent to building with associated landscaping. (As amended by further details submitted on 10 January 2019. Amended plans and further information submitted on 18 April 2019. Amended Plans submitted on 28 May 2019 and 4 June 2019)

[P06/V1046](#) - Approved (10/08/2006)

Erection of sections of new security fence forming new eastern entrance and reception building. Erection of new gate, associated road rearrangements and car parking.

3.2 **Pre-application History**

[P21/V3104/PEJ](#) - Advice provided (14/12/2021)

Hybrid planning application comprising a total of 15,000 sqm. Tech Edge 1 and 2 to be submitted in detail and Tech Edge 3 and 4 in outline. Also includes associated car parking and green infrastructure.

3.3 **Screening Opinion requests**

None

4.0 **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

4.1 As the site is in a sensitive area (the AONB) and the site exceeds 0.5ha, a screening opinion has been issued in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (and as amended in 2018). The proposal is not considered EIA development.

5.0 **MAIN ISSUES**

The relevant planning considerations are as follows:

- **Principle of development**
- **AONB and visual impact**
- **Design and Layout**
- **Landscaping and trees**
- **Biodiversity**
- **Flood Risk and Drainage**
- **Car Parking, Traffic and Highway safety**
- **Contamination**
- **Air Quality**

- **Archaeology**
- **Public Art**
- **Community Employment Plan**
- **Financial contributions**

5.1 Principle of development

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 provides that the local planning authority shall have regard to the provisions of the development plan, so far as material to the application, and to any other material considerations. The development plan for this proposal currently comprises the adopted Local Plan 2031 Part 1 (the LPP1) and the Local Plan 2031 Part 2 (the LPP2).

5.2 The site is situated within Harwell Campus, a strategic employment site, which is safeguarded for employment use in line with Policies CP6 and CP29 of the LPP1. The campus is allocated for employment development by Policy CP15 of LPP1, which is complemented by Policy CP15b of LPP2. The policy takes a permissive stance to new commercial development at the campus.

5.3 East Hendred parish council have raised concerns that the proposal does not comply with Policy CP15b of the LPP2. CP15b states the council's intention to produce a comprehensive development framework for the Campus, to be published as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), and this should include no development permitted within structural areas of open space and perimeter landscaping. It is acknowledged that there is no current SPD to guide development, nevertheless, the application needs to be assessed on its merits in the absence of any such document or comprehensive development framework. The proposal is therefore assessed against the requirements of the development plan when taken as a whole.

5.4 Overall, the principle of the proposal is considered acceptable.

5.5 AONB and Visual impact

The site lies within the North Wessex Downs Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 places a statutory duty on the local planning authority to have regard to the purpose of conserving or enhancing the natural beauty of an AONB.

5.6 Policy CP44 of the LPP1 sets out that high priority will be given to conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty of the North Wessex Downs AONB and planning decisions should have regard to its setting. The NPPF seeks to enhance the natural and local environment by protecting and enhancing these valued landscapes (paragraph 174) and confirms great weight should be given to conserving the landscape and scenic beauty of such areas (paragraph 176).

5.7 It is considered that the rural character and amenity of existing views and the natural beauty of the AONB landscape would all be conserved. Building 1 will

have a maximum height of approximately 14.6 metres and Building 2 will have a maximum height of approximately 12.6 metres. These are considered to be acceptable heights for this area of the Harwell Campus site and are set amongst existing buildings and in the context of a developed site. As such, it is considered that the visual impact of the proposed buildings on the character of the area and the wider AONB landscape would not be harmful and would conserve the natural beauty of the AONB.

- 5.8 The parish council raise concern that the proposal could adversely affect the woodland landscape character of the largest area of Mixed Deciduous Woodland on the north-western boundary of the campus. Whilst the application site is located on the edge of the campus, it is not considered to result in the loss of the perimeter landscaping surrounding the campus.
- 5.9 The landscape architect has confirmed that the main landscape concerns for this site related to the outline element which has since been omitted from the application. The landscape architect has no landscape objections to the detailed element to which this amended proposal relates. The landscape architect however has raised concern regarding the proposed rooflights and the impact this could have on the AONB due to light spill. This can be mitigated by using glass with a < 0.3 visible light transmission to minimise light spill. This can be secured through a planning condition.
- 5.10 The proposed external lighting is considered acceptable and has been designed to prevent light spill and therefore preserves the special qualities of the North Wessex Downs AONB including dark skies and tranquillity. The landscape officer has raised no objections to the proposed lighting strategy.
- 5.11 The proposed development is therefore considered acceptable in terms of the landscape and visual impacts and is considered to conserve the natural beauty of the AONB. The proposal complies with policy CP44 of the LPP1, and to paragraphs 174 and 176 of the NPPF.
- 5.12 **Design and layout**
Core Policy 37 of the LPP1 requires new development to be of a high-quality design that is visually attractive and the scale, height, massing and details are appropriate for the site and surrounding area. Core Policy 38 of the LPP1 sets out the requirement for Masterplans and Design and Access Statements to accompany strategic and major development proposals. The Council's Joint Design Guide provides further guidance on how to achieve high quality, well-designed commercial and employment areas, and states that the layout of new employment areas should take a landscape and biodiversity-led approach.
- 5.13 The buildings are considered to sit comfortably within the site, with parking located around the perimeter of the buildings and extensive landscaping around the periphery of the site to visually soften the development and integrate the development into its surroundings.
- 5.14 Building 1 has a contemporary appearance with a 'gull-wing' roof form with a central valley gutter. The external wall treatment comprises a simple palette of

two types of complementary cladding: zinc standing seam and textured finish fibre cement board cladding, with natural timber cladding arranged at angle above each window opening. This is constructed as a rainscreen system, with the various envelope materials fixed to a consistent insulated backing panel.

- 5.15 Building 2 will have more conventional metal profiled insulated hip roof with valley and parapet gutters to roof perimeters, largely concealed by the parapet. The external wall treatment consists of two types of fibre cement board cladding, a smooth and textured finish, with natural timber cladding at high level which frames the building. This is constructed as a rainscreen system in the same way as Building 1. These have been composed in contrasting colours with the timber cladding proposed to each corner of the building and at higher level to create visual interest. A projecting entrance canopy with a green roof is proposed to each entrance, consisting of metal cladding to the outside face and timber cladding to the inside.
- 5.16 The landscape architect has raised concerns on the layout regarding the footpath to the south linking into the Nature Trail area as this contains steps rather than a ramp to aid access for those less ambulant. It is acknowledged that level changes and existing tree constraints limit the ability for a ramped access to be provided here, but there is a levelled access onto the Nature Trail to the east of the site. Therefore, on balance, a stepped access in this location is considered acceptable and does not conflict with the Equality Act 2010. A link to the site to the south of the site has also been added which improves connectivity of these buildings within the wider campus.
- 5.17 The crime prevention design adviser has raised no objection, but has made suggestions to improve security and surveillance of the parking areas and recommends a condition for Park Mark accreditation. The campus already has security patrols in place, and this is considered sufficient on what is a site management issue. Car park areas are overlooked and have been designed to reduce the likelihood and fear of crime, in accordance with Policy CP37 of the LPP1. As such, a condition requiring Park Mark accreditation, which is a voluntary scheme, is not considered to meet the six tests as set out in paragraph 56 of the NPPF.
- 5.18 The design of all the elements of the proposal are considered to make a positive contribution to its surroundings, with attractive contemporary design, form, scale, materials and colour, together with the landscape treatment and the relationship of the building within its environment.
- 5.19 *Climate change*
Policy CP40 of the LPP1 seeks to encourage developers to incorporate climate change adaptation and design measures to combat the effects of changing weather patterns in all new development. The Design and Access Statement sets out the sustainability measures that have been incorporated within the design. This includes the use of passive solar design to offset heating requirements and optimising natural daylight to reduce the need for artificial lighting, the use of solar shading devices, and the use of some green roofs. These design measures are all considered acceptable.

- 5.20 Overall the proposed development is acceptable in terms of the design and layout. The proposal is therefore considered compliant with policies CP37, CP38 and CP40 of the LPP1 and the council's Joint Design Guide.
- 5.21 **Landscaping and trees**
Policy CP44 of the LPP1 seeks to ensure that key features, such as trees and hedgerows, that contribute to the nature and quality of the landscape will be protected from harmful development and where possible enhanced.
- 5.22 The proposal will result in the loss of 101 trees, including one Category A tree, 15 Category B trees, 62 Category C trees and 23 Category U trees. One Category B Group and four Category C Groups are also proposed to be removed. A total of 34 trees are to be retained. The extent of tree removal required to accommodate the two buildings and associated infrastructure is considerable, however the site layout in the landscape master plan (drawing JSL3389_101D) demonstrates sufficient mitigation planting is possible.
- 5.23 Several elements of the landscaping shown on the Landscape Masterplan drawing need to be improved, such as the introduction of conifers in multiple locations around the site, rather than just down the eastern side of the site, plus an increased range of tree species. This can be appropriately dealt with by condition.
- 5.24 In order for the proposed tree planting to provide lasting mitigation for the trees lost, long term maintenance will be essential. A landscape management plan can address this, which can be secured by condition. Protection of trees to be retained during construction and implementation of the landscaping scheme can also be appropriately secured by condition.
- 5.25 Overall, whilst the proposal involves extensive tree loss, it is considered that this can be suitably mitigated through new tree planting in combination with a soft landscaping scheme. The proposal is therefore considered compliant with policy CP44 of the LPP1.
- 5.26 **Biodiversity**
East Hendred Parish Council have referred to the Environment Act 2021 that requires a 10% net gain to be provided. However this part of the Act is not yet mandatory, and therefore the application is to be assessed against Policy CP46 of the LPP1 which actively seeks net gains but seeks to avoid net losses. Policy CP46 is wholly consistent with paragraphs 174, 179 and 180 of the NPPF.
- 5.27 The biodiversity metric assessment has concluded that the development will result in a net loss of biodiversity (9.23 units). Policy CP46 sets out that where development results in the loss, deterioration or harm to habitats or species of importance to biodiversity, these will not be permitted unless measures can be provided (and secured through planning conditions) that would compensate for the adverse effects likely to result from the development. In this case, this will require offsetting to achieve compliance with Policy CP46, which is acceptable and can be secured by condition.

5.28 *Protected species*

Site surveys have concluded that none of the trees onsite support roosting bats, but reaffirm that the site has value to commuting and foraging bats. The submitted details also indicate that the proposed lighting scheme can likely avoid significant light spill to offsite habitats to the north, and landscaped areas to the south. Further detail of biodiversity enhancements for protected species are required, and can be secured by condition.

5.29 *Rare plant species*

The countryside officer has raised concerns about the impact on rare and priority species within the site. Whilst the supporting documentation indicates that the rare and priority species within three small areas of the site are being retained in-situ, this is not shown on the plans, and instead indicate that two of these areas are to be lost because of the development. Further details are required as to how impacted plants will be translocated/propagated to retained areas of landscaping and retained on site. The countryside officer has recommended that this be provided within a mitigation strategy, and this can be secured by condition.

5.30 The location of seed establishment needs to be identified in landscaping plans if onsite, or offsite clearly identified on land which is under the control of the applicant and not going to be lost in the future. Further details of this can be secured through the above mentioned mitigation strategy and also through the landscaping condition.

5.31 Overall, with the imposition of conditions requiring a biodiversity offsetting contribution, biodiversity enhancements, a rare plant species mitigation strategy and compliance with the ecological mitigation details submitted, the proposal is considered compliant with Policy CP46 of the LPP1.

5.32 **Flood Risk and drainage**

Policy CP42 of the LPP1 seeks to ensure that development provides appropriate measures for the management of surface water as an essential element of reducing future flood risk to both the site and its surroundings.

5.33 The site is located within Flood Zone 1 which is the most appropriate zone for this type of development in fluvial flooding terms. The drainage engineer and LLFA raise no objection in principle, although had some concerns with drainage design elements that will need to be amended to ensure the proposal achieve local drainage standards. These matters can be appropriately dealt with by conditions requiring a detailed sustainable drainage scheme, a SUDS compliance report, and a detailed foul drainage scheme.

5.34 Thames Water have raised no objections to the scheme.

5.35 With the imposition of planning conditions requiring surface and foul water drainage details to be agreed and implemented prior to occupation of the buildings, the scheme can comply with Policy CP42 of the LPP1.

5.36 **Traffic, parking and highway safety**

Policy CP33 of the LPP1 actively seeks to ensure that the impacts of new development on the strategic and local road network are minimised, to ensure that developments are designed in a way to promote sustainable transport access and to promote and support improvements to the network that increase safety and improve air quality.

5.37 Policy CP35 of the LPP1 promotes public transport, cycling and walking and together with policy DP17 of the LPP2 requires proposals for major developments to be supported by a Transport Assessment (TA) in accordance with Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) guidance. Policy DP16 of the LPP2 requires evidence to demonstrate that acceptable off-site improvements to highway infrastructure can be secured where these are not adequate to service the development.

5.38 National Highways and OCC as Highway Authority originally objected to the proposal. Analysis carried out in relation to other recent planning applications on the campus has indicated capacity constraints at the A34 Chilton Interchange where potential queuing onto the A34 mainline has been identified which could result in unacceptable impacts on highway safety.

5.39 To address this, the outline aspect has been omitted from the scheme, and to offset the impact of vehicle movements associated with Tech Edge 1 and 2, it is proposed to decommission existing employment floorspace elsewhere in the campus on the Innovation Quarter (IQ) site) which is in the applicant's control (The location of these buildings are shown on the location plan **attached** at Appendix 1). The existing floorspace on the IQ site totals some 6,610sqm and the application proposals are some 7,164sqm, the proposals representing an uplift of 554sqm and approximately an increase of 19 combined traffic two-way movements in the AM and PM peaks, which is negligible. Therefore, the proposal is considered reasonable in transport impact terms, but to ensure that the offset is achieved, it is necessary for the buildings on IQ site to be taken out of use, and this can be appropriately secured by condition.

5.40 Both OCC and National Highways accept this approach and have since removed their objections to the scheme. The proposal is not considered to add any significant additional traffic onto the highway network and therefore the proposal is not considered to unreasonably impact on congestion or highway safety. Details of construction traffic management can be secured by condition.

5.41 The proposed car parking and cycle parking provision are considered acceptable and complies with OCC's newly adopted parking standards. It is considered reasonable and necessary to secure these by conditions to ensure they are available for use at the point of occupation.

5.42 With the imposition of planning conditions the scheme can be made compliant with Policies CP33, CP35 and CP37 of the LPP1, Policies DP16 and DP17 of the LPP2 and the NPPF.

5.43 **Contamination**

Policy DP27 of the LPP2 sets out measures to ensure land affected by contamination is appropriately remediated and mitigated. The submitted Land Quality Assessment and Remediation Report Report satisfactorily addresses the requirements for submission of a Phase 1 contaminated land preliminary risk assessment. No potential sources for land contamination have been identified that could present a risk to the development. It is not considered that any further contaminated land assessments are necessary.

5.44 **Air Quality**

Policy DP26 of the LPP2 seeks to ensure all new development adequately considers air quality. The proposal involves the provision of 20 electric vehicle charging bays, and the submitted Travel Plan sets out ways in which sustainable methods of transport will be promoted. These measures aim to reduce car driver trips, which minimise any impacts associated with air quality.

5.45 **Archaeology**

Policy DP39 of the LPP2 sets out the Council's approach to the conservation and enhancement of Scheduled Monuments, nationally important archaeological remains and other non-designated archaeological sites. There is no Scheduled Monument on site and the settings of Scheduled Monuments are not affected. The area of the proposed development has been subject to successive phases of previous development since the establishment of the former airbase. This will have caused extensive truncation. Previous archaeological investigations conducted within the immediate vicinity of the application area have also recorded no archaeological remains to be present. As such no archaeological investigation is required and there are no archaeological constraints to this application.

5.46 **Public Art**

Policy DP20 of the LPP2 seeks all proposals for major development to provide public art. A condition is attached to secure public art provision on site.

5.47 **Community Employment Plan (CEP)**

Policy DP11 of the LPP2 requires all new development proposals to demonstrate how opportunities for local employment, apprenticeships and training can be created and seek to maximise the opportunities for sourcing local produce, suppliers, and services, during both construction and operation. A CEP can be secured by a condition.

5.48 **Financial Contributions**

This council's CIL and the adopted Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document do not expect employment development in this location to provide financial contributions towards infrastructure improvements. OCC however has requested a financial contribution towards public transport services to encourage sustainable modes of travel to and from the campus. This has been secured through a unilateral undertaking.

5.49 **Pre-commencement conditions**

In accordance with S100ZA(6) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (a), any pre-commencement conditions have been agreed with the applicant.

6.0 **CONCLUSION**

6.1 The principle of new commercial development at Harwell Campus is supported by the provisions of the Vale of White Local Plan 2031. The proposal is not considered to be harmful to the landscape character of the area, and the natural beauty of the North Wessex Downs AONB is at least conserved. There are no unreasonable impacts for highway safety, flood risk or to ecology and biodiversity. Subject to the recommended conditions, the application accords with local and national planning policy and should be approved.

The following planning policies, guidance and legislation have been taken into account:

Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 part 1 policies:

- CP1 - Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
- CP6 - Meeting Business and Employment Needs
- CP15 - Spatial Strategy for South East Vale Sub-Area
- CP29 - Change of Use of Existing Employment Land and Premises
- CP33 - Promoting Sustainable Transport and Accessibility
- CP35 - Promoting Public Transport, Cycling and Walking
- CP37 - Design and Local Distinctiveness
- CP38 - Design Strategies for Strategic and Major Development Sites
- CP40 - Sustainable Design and Construction
- CP42 - Flood Risk
- CP44 - Landscape
- CP46 - Conservation and Improvement of Biodiversity

Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 part 2 policies:

- CP15B - Harwell Campus Comprehensive Development Framework
- DP11 - Community Employment Plans
- DP16 - Access
- DP20 - Public Art
- DP21 - External Lighting
- DP23 - Impact of Development on Amenity
- DP24 - Effect of Neighbouring or Previous Uses on New Developments
- DP26 - Air Quality
- DP27 - Land Affected by Contamination
- DP39 - Archaeology and Scheduled Monuments

Neighbourhood Plans

East Hendred – East Hendred do not currently have a neighbourhood plan

Harwell – Harwell do not currently have a neighbourhood plan

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD)

- Joint Design Guide

- Developer Contributions SPD

Other material documents/considerations

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
- Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)

Other Relevant Legislation Due regard has been had to the following legislation;

- Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act) 1990
- Community & Infrastructure Levy Legislation
- Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- Obligations under Section 149 of the Equalities Act 2010
- Provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998
- Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006
- The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010
- Localism Act (including New Homes Bonus)
- Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000
- North Wessex Downs AONB Management Plan (2014 – 2019)
- Oxfordshire Local Transport Plan
- Human Rights Act 1998

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