

APPLICATION NO.	P20/S1179/FUL
APPLICATION TYPE	FULL APPLICATION
REGISTERED	31.3.2020
PARISH	WALLINGFORD
WARD MEMBER(S)	Sue Roberts George Levy
APPLICANT	Wallingford Investment LLP
SITE	Land South of Hithercroft Road Wallingford, OX10 9TA
PROPOSAL	Erection of industrial / distribution units (Class B1(c), B2, and B8) including access and servicing arrangements, car parking, landscaping and associated works. (Contaminated land report received 5 May 2020, additional information regarding Highways received 26 May 2020, amended plans & additional information received 3 June 2020, additional information received 29 June 2020, Transport Technical Note Received 8 July & 4 August 2020) (Amended plans received 9 July 2020)
OFFICER	Tracy Smith

1.0 INTRODUCTION AND PROPOSAL

- 1.1 This application is referred to Planning Committee because the recommendation for planning permission conflicts with Wallingford Town Council’s views.
- 1.2 The application site is shown on the attached Site Plan (**Appendix 1**). The application site comprises approximately 3.11 hectares and is located at the junction of Hithercroft Road and Bosley Way (A4130). It is a greenfield site which is located directly adjacent and west of the existing Hithercroft Industrial Estate. Originally low-grade agricultural land, the site has been isolated since the construction of the bypass.
- 1.3 The site is bound by Bradford’s Brook to the south and by Hithercroft Road to the north, with Wallingford Sports Park beyond.
- 1.4 The site is wholly within Flood Zone 1 and is not the subject of any designations (i.e. heritage assets, TPOs or AQMA).
- 1.5 In 2014 full planning permission was granted for the construction of new high bay warehouse distribution unit (11,100m²) with second floor office, and trade showroom accommodation (2,800m²) together with a two storey Headquarters office building (1,620m²) all accessed from a new access road off Hithercroft Road. In addition, the scheme provided approximately 900m² for small development of B1 light industrial/research and starter units accessed from Lester Way.
- 1.6 The site plan for the 2014 application together with the officer’s delegated report and decision are contained in **Appendix 2**. All pre-commencement conditions were

discharged during 2017 and 2018 however the permission was not implemented and lapsed.

- 1.7 The 2014 application was found acceptable against the relevant policies of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan and the South Oxfordshire Core Strategy. As these policies remain unchanged, the permission is considered to be a significant material consideration in the determination of this application.
- 1.8 Comparisons are drawn between the 2014 permission and this application throughout this report.

2.0 THE PROPOSAL

- 2.1 Full planning permission is sought for the erection of industrial / distribution units (Class B1(c), B2, and B8) including access and servicing arrangements, car parking, landscaping and associated works. A total of 14,332 square metres (GEA) will be provided which would be split across several terraces and a larger building comprising two units. A total of 12 individual units would be provided. The B1(c) office floorspace would be wholly ancillary to the operation of the B2/B8 uses rather than the scheme being a potential office development.
- 2.2 The terrace units (units 110-150 and 210-250) would have a ridge height of 11.45 metres. The proposed building which would be sited parallel with Bosley Way (A4130) would have a ridge height of 14.35 metres. The buildings would be constructed of cladding (different colour greys to be used to assist with the articulation of the buildings). The proposed elevations are contained in **Appendix 3** and for comparison the approved elevations are provided in **Appendix 4**.
- 2.3 Access to the site (all vehicles as well as pedestrians and cyclists) would be via Hithercroft Way with pedestrian and cycle access also available from the adjacent Industrial Estate off Lester Way. A total of 70 cycle parking spaces will be provided throughout the site in 7 no. shelters and 5 no. Sheffield stands.
- 2.4 The development proposals have been the subject of a BREEAM pre-assessment and will achieve a BREEAM 'Excellent' rating. The proposed development is exemplar with regards to carbon dioxide emission reductions. The development is expected to reduce its CO2 emissions by 60%, with the larger Unit 300 being carbon negative in comparison to the carbon dioxide emissions included in the current Building Regulations. The proposals are predicted to achieve 62% of the site's energy demand through the incorporation of Low and Zero Carbon (LZC) energy generation technologies.
- 2.5 The proposed development's energy strategy includes for the integration of renewable technologies in the form of photovoltaic (PV) arrays (some 1100sqm on the roof of building 310 and 320 – see Energy Statement sections 3.3 and 5) and Air Source Heat Pumps (ASHP) to generate at least 20% of the site's energy demand.
- 2.6 The application has been submitted with the following documents:
- Design and Access Statement, prepared by UMC Architects;
 - Illustrative Masterplan, prepared by UMC Architects;
 - Landscape Masterplan, prepared by Encon;
 - Transport Assessment, prepared by Mode Transport Planning;
 - Framework Travel Plan, prepared by Mode Transport Planning;
 - Flood Risk and Drainage Assessment, prepared by Fairhurst;Quod | Equation,
 - Ecological Assessment, prepared by Ecology Solutions;

- Tree Survey and Report, prepared by Encon;
 - Noise Technical Note, prepared by AAC;
 - Air Quality Assessment, prepared by AAC; and
 - Energy Strategy and BREEAM Pre-Assessment prepared by MBA.
- 2.7 During the course of the application amended plans and additional information has been provided in response to representations received by consultees. These comprised:
- Phase 1 Desk Study Contaminated Land Report received 5 May 2020
 - Road Safety Audit (RSA 1); Designers Response to RSA 1; and Tracking Plan which shows that a vehicle can manoeuvre into the site – received 26 May 2020
 - Proposed site plan dwg no. 19183 P0002 Rev E and Landscaping scheme dwg no. A4380-05B – both received on 9 July 2020
 - Transport Technical Note – Sensitivity Assessment Rev D – received 4 August 2020.
- 2.8 As mentioned above, the proposed office (B1(c)) floorspace would be ancillary to the main light industrial/warehouse use. The applicant confirmed this and stated that as such it was not reasonable to measure the entire development as office and suggested sensitivity testing for the purposes of considering transport impacts of the scheme. Testing was undertaken based on 15%, 20% and 30% of floorspace being in office use.
- 2.9 Following a meeting between the council's Forestry and Landscape Officers and the applicants the landscaping scheme was amended on 9 July as follows:
- Omission of full site perimeter fencing previously shown along red-line boundary.
 - Fenceline to northern boundary indicated to follow the rear of the proposed hedgerow and public art space.
 - Electrical transformer adjacent to the substation has been moved adjacent to the other transformer. This increases the landscaping area adjacent Unit 150.
 - Cycle shelter to rear of Unit 150 moved to the south of the Unit. This frees up the site frontage along Hithercroft Road.
 - EVCP spaces allocated to each Unit rather than in one run.
 - Parking spaces and bin store to Unit 100 /200 western yard moved in slightly to increase landscaping). This resulted in a loss of 1 no. car parking space though this has been re-introduced in front of Unit 250
 - Footpath and parking to the front of Unit 250 reconfigured to accommodate relocated cycle shelter and introduce more landscaping.
 - Parking and access around Unit 310 entrance reconfigured, to enable re-location of parking allowing the two triangular areas to the rear of Unit 200 to be allocated as landscaping and an area within the wedge to be landscaped.
 - Unit 310 cycle storage now indicated together with landscaping to the rear.
 - Cycle shelter to south of Unit 320 moved across to increase landscaping.
 - Unit 320 bin store relocated, and parking along eastern boundary updated (as per Tender)
- 2.10 Overall, as a result of discussions between officers the applicants the amount of soft landscaping has increased on the site and 100 additional new trees proposed within the site.

3.0 SUMMARY OF CONSULTATIONS & REPRESENTATIONS

3.1 Consultee comments are provided below. For full comments please see the Council's website.

3.2 Wallingford Town Council - Objection

19 May 2020: 'WTC supports potential development of the site in this application for the use outlined by the applicant, being the provision of employment. However there are a number of concerns that WTC has with regards the current proposed development leading to this objection.

With amendments by the applicant we would hope that this project can be altered so as to mitigate our concerns and remove our objection WTC is concerned that the current application would be an overdevelopment of the site which would build large industrial buildings right up to the sites boundary with Calvin Thomas way. This will drastically and detrimentally effect the visual amenity of the area to those passing and entering the town and would also be visible from the from the North Wessex AONB. This is particularly relevant to the two southern units [310 and 320]. They present 120 yards of uninterrupted 50 foot high blank wall, just 22 yards away from the southbound carriageway. With no tree screening We would like to see a reduction of development on boundary of the site as well as an increase in the margin between the buildings on the site and its boundary with additional screening. WTC is concerned as to the suitability of the two indicated positions showing Potential Totem Signage. This is on the edge of Wallingford and faces out over open countryside, the visual impact would be negative to the area.

WTC is concerned that the site access provisions, in line with the comments by OCC, and believes that they are inadequate and potentially unsafe for the type and volume of potential traffic so close to the roundabout and in the vicinity of the entrance to the sports park.

WTC is concerned that regarding the entrance into the site via Lester Way which is cycle and pedestrian only.

The traffic on this road is very industrial and would like to point out that this road is not adopted, it has poor footpaths and no street lighting. This leads us to be concerned about the safety of cyclists and walkers using this access.

Wallingford has a problem with the capacity of both clean water supply and foul water drainage. WTC cannot support the development until such me as Thames Water are confident that the needs of the new development are met without compromising existing users of the network.

WTC is concerned regarding the impact that this development could have on flooding in the area through the increase in impermeable surfaces and would like to see more evidence that this has been addressed Bradfords Brook already floods both upstream and downstream of the site. We are also concerned about the potential for the run off of surface pollution into Bradford's Brooke.'

July 2020: 'Members of our planning committee discussed this amended application last night and concluded that they could see very little difference to the original application. Members still consider it to be an overdevelopment of the site as it has not decreased in size and that it will have an impact on an area of natural beauty. Members also believed the Highways Officer's (OCC) comments to be accurate and noted that Thames Water had in their last response concluded as follows Thames Water will aim to provide customers with a minimum pressure of 10m head (approx. 1 bar) and a flow rate of 9 litres/minute at the point where it leaves Thames Waters pipes. The developer should take account of this minimum pressure in the design of the proposed development which is a cause of concern for Members. Members of Wallingford Town Council's planning committee resolved to object to this amended application with the following comments: We retain our original objection on

overdevelopment, impact on AONB, air quality concerns, Highways concerns, impact on trees, lack of cycle parking and that the protection of Bradford Brook and surface water should be a consideration.’

The application was considered again at a committee meeting on 7 September 2020 with the benefit of a draft report from the officer. The Town Council confirmed by email on 8 September:

‘Our main concerns are still overdevelopment of the site, there is no renewable energy, concerns over water drainage, the buildings will contribute to noise pollution due to sound reflection and lighting will have an impact on an area of natural beauty. Our response of the 19th May 2020 fully reflects our objections may objections more fully.’

I note that the Town Council did not object to the 2014 application.

- 3.3 **Brightwell-cum-Sotwell Parish Council** – Support subject to condition
April 2020: ‘The parish council is happy to support this application and welcomes the environmental measures that are in place on the application. The Council would like to ask that any night or security lighting be on a timer or sensor so as not to effect Brightwell Cum Sotwell's dark skies.’

- 3.4 **Countryside Officer** – No objection subject to conditions
May 2020: ‘This application is supported by an ecological appraisal. A previous development, ecologically similar to this application, was approved on site under P14/S2633/FUL. This development was approved subject to condition 5, securing the delivery of a biodiversity offsetting scheme to compensate for the habitat loss on site. This condition was discharged under P18/S1387/DIS. As such, the matter of habitat loss and compliance with Policy CSB1 of the SOCS has been addressed for this site in terms of avoiding a net loss of biodiversity. Recommendations are made in the supporting ecological appraisal to minimise the impacts of development on species which may be on site. It is noted that, in the southern corner of the site, adjacent to Bradford’s Brook, car parking spaces encroach on the 10-metre easement from the watercourse. The parking spaces shown in this area should be relocated to the north outside of the easement area. Additional landscaping can be provided to enhance and bolster this buffer. Subject to this minor amendment being made, I would likely not object to the application subject to conditions.’

July 2020: ‘Amended plans have been submitted which show that parking spaces have been removed from the 10-metre easement of development to Bradford’s Brook. This amendment has responded to my previous comments.

I recommend that details of external lighting are submitted for approval prior to being installed on site. These details should seek to keep boundaries of the site dark and not illuminate sensitive habitats. Guidance on this matter is provided from The Institute of Lighting Professionals and the Bat Conservation Trust.’

Accordingly, subject to conditions, the Countryside Officer no longer objects to the proposed development.

- 3.5 **Drainage** - No objection subject to a condition.
- 3.6 **Forestry Officer** – No objection subject to condition

May 2020: ‘The proposed development of the site could be achieved without causing harm to the tree stock if the proposed tree protection measures are put in place prior to any other works starting on site.

Considering the size and scale of the buildings and the two totem signs the existing vegetation along the northern and western boundaries will offer limited screening and softening of the buildings from wider views or the adjacent highways.

As the buildings have been positioned very close to the western site boundary the amount of space the proposal allows for an additional significant tree planting is very limited. The submitted landscaping plan shows no new planting along the western elevation at all.

The arboricultural report records the shelterbelt (G7) as being around 7m tall. Most of the trees within G7 will not grow much taller than they are at present. Unit 310 and 320 will be 14m tall so the existing planting would do little to screen such a building.

If the scale of the buildings is acceptable then a greater amount of space is needed to secure a far more comprehensive tree planting scheme along the western and northern boundaries. Space needs to be provided for long lived large canopied trees to be planted behind the shelterbelts. (Oaks, London Plane, Lime, Beech, Willow etc etc.)’

Following the receipt of revised plans on 9 July which included additional tree planting, the Forestry Officer confirmed that the objections raised had been addressed.

3.7 **Landscape Architect** - No objection subject to conditions

June 2020 holding objection on the following grounds:

- the layout of the proposed development fails to provide a sufficient landscape buffer on the boundary with the A4130, instead relies heavily on the landscaping on the highway verge. The absence of any on site green infrastructure to soften the interface with the western edge of the site and Wallingford with the A4130, open countryside and the AONB beyond is not considered acceptable. Green infrastructure is lacking on other boundaries too.
- Where planting is proposed the space provided is insufficient to implement, allow for on-going maintenance and/or will hinder the growth of the planted trees.
- Neither the proposed totem park signage nor building mounted signage is appropriate given the sensitive location of the site.
- The absence of soft landscaping proposed within the site area is not Design Guide compliant.
- The areas of wildlife meadows which are predominantly thin strips 1 to 2m wide with a central fence which are not practical to maintain.
- There is no proposed planting with exception the limited ornamental shrub planting to break down the mass of build form. There are only trees proposed on the northern and eastern boundary but not internal planting to break down the mass of the build form.
- With regards to the building materials, white often stands out visually in the landscape and it would be better to use a less prominent colour at the root line of the proposed buildings.

Following the receipt of revised plans on 9 July, the Landscape Architect confirmed:

‘No objection. The scheme has been revised to address the majority of my issues including the removal of totems, adjustment of the fencing line and removal of double fencing along the site boundary line to free up space for planting.

The internal space has been reordered to allow additional planting including trees within the courtyards and also along the eastern access road. The proposed location of trees has been adjusted to respond to potential conflict with services and off-site buildings. The variety of planting stock and sizes has been adjusted to give a range of canopy heights at year one.'

- 3.8 **Air Quality** – No objections subject to conditions.
- 3.9 **Contaminated Land** – No objection subject to conditions.
Following the submission of the Phase 1 Desk Study Land Contamination Statement which was omitted from the application submissions in error, no objection is raised as no potential sources for land contamination have been identified.
- 3.10 **Env. Protection Team** (re noise/dust/lighting) – no objections subject to conditions.
- 3.11 **Oxfordshire County Council Single Response** - no objections subject to conditions and S106 agreement

Strategic: The proposal is for employment and it is understood that this is in line with the submitted local plan and the submitted neighbourhood plan.

Lead Local Flood Authority: Defer to District Council for comment.

Transport:

6 May - objection in relation to point of access and insufficient information relating to Road Safety Audit (RSA) Stage 1, swept-path drawings and worst-case scenario traffic impact analysis.

12 June – in response to the submitted RSA – lack of coverage in relation to bus stop details, the hazard of Advance Directional Signage and barrier present, details of only the footway to bus and insufficient information and tracking details flawed. The applicant confirmed that the office floorspace was wholly ancillary to the warehousing/light industrial, sensitivity testing appropriate for determining the correct impact of the proposed development in terms of a worst-case scenario.

9 July – following a series of sensitivity tests relating to the amount of office floorspace as part of the development(which creates higher levels of trip generation in peak hours than industrial floorspace), results based on 15% of the floorspace being in office use, and in comparison to the lapsed permission, trip generation figures were comparable. The TIA also shows spare capacities in all cases on the arms of the Hithercroft Roundabout. The impact is, therefore considered acceptable subject to conditions and a S106 agreement to secure public transport services and travel plan monitoring as well as a S278 agreement for off-site works.

28 July – sensitivity testing was undertaken based on 20% office accommodation. No objection subject to conditions, and S106 and S278 agreements

24 September - sensitivity testing was undertaken based on 30% office accommodation. No objection subject to conditions, and S106 and S278 agreements.

Archaeology – have confirmed:

'...there are no archaeological constraints to this development.

A programme of archaeological mitigation was undertaken as part of the earlier planning application which has fully investigated the site and no further archaeological work is required.'

3.12 **Urban Design Officer** - Support

May 2020: Observed that the fundamental design principles of the scheme have not changed significantly since the approved scheme in 2014. The only key development has been the breaking up and distribution of built form in terms of the arrangement of units across the site; this is typical to achieve viability and a range of units to market based on the nature of their use and occupation. The schemes design response to the site's opportunities and constraints is consistent and robust.

No key concerns were raised but a number of observations were raised:

- Green or seeded roofs suggested
- Totem signage not appropriate and conflicts with Design Guide point 9.13
- Parking arrangement at southern edge would be within the 10m easement of Bradford Brook

June 2020: Based on the revised site plan submitted (19183_P0002D) – support.

July 2020: Based on site plan (rev E) and Landscape Scheme A4380-05B – support.

3.13 **Economic Development** – Support

3.14 **Environment Agency** – Awaited

The consultation response is awaited and expected shortly. I note that for application P14/S2633/FUL on the site no objection was raised, and I have no evidence to suggest that this stance will change. Also, I note that in respect of the mixed use housing and employment development that was proposed to the south of the application site (P18/S2506 refers), the EA raised no objection following receipt of nature conservation details.

A verbal update will be provided to the Planning Committee.

3.15 **Thames Water Development Control** – Final response awaited.

5 May 2020: Existing foul water network infrastructure unable to accommodate the needs of this development proposal. Conditions recommended to ensure upgrades are undertaken and implemented prior to occupation. No objections to surface water as not proposed to be discharged to the public network.

28 May 2020: No objections in respect of water supply. The developer should take account of minimum pressure provided to customers in the design of the proposed development.

In relation to Thames Water's suggested conditions in the light of foul water capacity concerns in the absence of new infrastructure, the applicant has confirmed that they have been in further discussions with them.

The applicant requested agreement to allow a limited discharge such that all units could be able to be built in one phase until the time when they had carried out their assessment. Thames Water is understood to have confirmed that a value of 0.5 L/s which could be utilised without concerns being triggered.

The applicant is in the process of designing different pumps and storage tanks in order to operate at reduced discharge off site in the short term should their assessment and infrastructure not be in place by the time the site would be ready for tenants when they were referred to the major projects team at Thames Water for further discussions.

After review and discussion, the Thames Water Major Projects Construction Division responded as per their e mail of 15th June, stating 'The good news is that we do not require you to limit flows. If your proposed pump rate is 5l/s, then it can remain at such.'

Thames Water then followed up noting suggested timescales for the development in their email of 15th June.

I have been in discussion with Thames Water who have not disputed these facts and are providing me with an updated consultation response. However, at the time of writing my report this has not been received and so the committee will be updated.

3.16 **South Oxfordshire District of CPRE** – no objection.

No objection to the principle of the employment development on this site. It is consistent with the developing Wallingford Neighbourhood Plan and the draft local plan. In addition, the mix of small and large units on the site is welcomed.

Concerns expressed in relation to the lack of screening and tree planting around the site as well as the totem park signage and building park signage.

Pleased the scheme is aiming for BREEAM Excellent but more could be done in respect of the health and well-being and biodiversity categories. Solar panels welcomed on units 300 but there should be car charging points included also.

Flooding concerns based on high water tables and the site being adjacent to Bradford Brook. Cumulative effects from development nearby to be considered also.

3.17 **Neighbours** - no objection.

One neighbour on the adjoining Industrial Estate expresses concern in relation to the pedestrian/cycle provision linking with Lester Way. The use might be considerable given Lidl on the estate. Lester Way and Lupton Road are not adopted, have no street lighting, no pedestrian crossings and used by a considerable number of vehicles day and night.

4.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

4.1 [P19/S2609/PEJ](#) - Other Outcome (17/10/2019)

Erection of industrial / distribution units (Class B1 / B2 / B8) including access, servicing arrangements, car parking, landscaping, and associated works

[P18/S1387/DIS](#) - Approved (01/06/2018)

Discharge of condition 5 - biodiversity offsetting and condition 8 - surface water drainage works on application ref. P14/S2633/FUL

New 11,100m sq (B8) warehouse distribution unit with offices and trade showroom and detached 1620m sq (B1) headquarters offices. 214 car parking spaces accessed from the new service road off Hithercroft Road. 900m sq (B1) light industrial/research and development starter units accessed from Lester Way.(As clarified by additional

Flood Risk Assessment (15 Jan 2015) and Air Quality Assessment (Dec 2014) Adenda and Biodiversity Accounting and Offsetting Land Report and access as amended by drawing no x213558- 200-P1 and as further clarified by additional drainage information received on 18 March 2015 and archaeological report from Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd dated June 2014).

[P18/S1670/DIS](#) - Approved (01/06/2018)

Discharge of conditions 5 - Biodiversity Offsetting Scheme and 9 - Impact studies of the existing water supply infrastructure on application ref. P14/S2633/FUL

New 11,100m sq (B8) warehouse distribution unit with offices and trade showroom and detached 1620m sq (B1) headquarters offices. 214 car parking spaces accessed from the new service road off Hithercroft Road. 900m sq (B1) light industrial/research and development starter units accessed from Lester Way. (As clarified by additional Flood Risk Assessment (15 Jan 2015) and Air Quality Assessment (Dec 2014) Adenda and Biodiversity Accounting and Offsetting Land Report and access as amended by drawing no x213558-200-P1 and as further clarified by additional drainage information received on 18 March 2015 and archaeological report from Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd dated June 2014).

[P18/S0453/FUL](#) - Approved (26/04/2018)

Variation of condition 5 (Biodiversity) of Planning Permission P14/S2633/FUL.

(New 11,100m sq (B8) warehouse distribution unit with offices and trade showroom and detached 1620m sq (B1) headquarters offices. 214 car parking spaces accessed from the new service road off Hithercroft Road. 900m sq (B1) light industrial/research and development starter units accessed from Lester Way).

[P17/S3650/FUL](#) - Approved (23/02/2018)

Construction of a new industrial unit for storage and distribution purposes (Use Class B8). (As amplified by Air Quality Assessment received 31st January 2018).

[P17/S2401/FUL](#) - Approved (27/10/2017)

Variation of condition 5 (Biodiversity) of planning permission P14/S2633/FUL

(New 11,100m sq (B8) warehouse distribution unit with offices and trade showroom and detached 1620m sq (B1) headquarters offices. 214 car parking spaces accessed from the new service road off Hithercroft Road. 900m sq (B1) light industrial/research and development starter units accessed from Lester Way.(As clarified by additional Flood Risk Assessment (15 Jan 2015) and Air Quality Assessment (Dec 2014) Adenda and Biodiversity Accounting and Offsetting Land Report and access as amended by drawing no x213558- 200-P1 and as further clarified by additional drainage information received on 18 March 2015 and archaeological report from Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd dated June 2014).

[P17/S2272/NM](#) - Approved (06/10/2017)

Non-material amendment to P14/S2633/FUL to:

1. Raising of site level by approximately 775mm (see drawing SK708)
2. Lifting top of main warehouse ridge by 190mm (from 16,000mm to 16,190mm - see drawing SK708).
3. Reducing number of 'Saw tooth' roofs from 6 to 3 (with reduced lengths also - see drawing SK702).
4. Introduction of double storey glazed elements onto the South, West and North Elevations (see drawings SK701

and SK 702).

5. Introduction of translucent cladding elements onto the warehouse walls on the North and South Elevations (see drawing SK 702).

6. Adjustment of location of Unit B Office Block (see drawing SK-101).

7. Inclusion of Sprinkler tank (see drawing SK101).

8. Amendment of site layout to provide car parking spaces for each unit in the following numbers (see drawing SK101);

Unit A - Warehouse - 69 to 71

Unit B - Office Block - 118 to 157

Unit C - B1 Units - 31 to 30

9. Change of delivery doors from 6 to 10 (see drawing SK702)

(New 11,100m sq (B8) warehouse distribution unit with offices and trade showroom and detached 1620m sq (B1) headquarters offices. 214 car parking spaces accessed from the new service road off Hithercroft Road. 900m sq (B1) light industrial/research and development starter units accessed from Lester Way).

[P17/S2381/NM](#) - Approved (27/07/2017)

Non-material amendment to application ref. P14/S2633/FUL - condition 4 - reduction in BREEAM level required from Excellent to Good.

New 11,100m sq (B8) warehouse distribution unit with offices and trade showroom and detached 1620m sq (B1) headquarters offices. 214 car parking spaces accessed from the new service road off Hithercroft Road. 900m sq (B1) light industrial/research and development starter units accessed from Lester Way. (As clarified by additional Flood Risk Assessment (15 Jan 2015) and Air Quality Assessment (Dec 2014) Adenda and Biodiversity Accounting and Offsetting Land Report and access as amended by drawing no x213558- 200-P1 and as further clarified by additional drainage information received on 18 March 2015 and archaeological report from Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd dated June 2014).

[P14/S2633/FUL](#) - Approved (05/06/2015)

New 11,100m sq (B8) warehouse distribution unit with offices and trade showroom and detached 1620m sq (B1) headquarters offices. 214 car parking spaces accessed from the new service road off Hithercroft Road. 900m sq (B1) light industrial/research and development starter units accessed from Lester Way. (As clarified by additional Flood Risk Assessment (15 Jan 2015) and Air Quality Assessment (Dec 2014) Adenda and Biodiversity Accounting and Offsetting Land Report and access as amended by drawing no x213558- 200-P1 and as further clarified by additional drainage information received on 18 March 2015 and archaeological report from Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd dated June 2014).

4.2 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

The proposal constitutes Schedule 2 (category 10(b) urban development projects) and exceeds the indicative threshold criteria (0.5ha). However, the site is not within a sensitive area. A screening opinion has been undertaken which considers that having regard to the characteristics of the development, it is not considered that there is potential for significant environmental effects. The cumulative impact has also been assessed taking into account other development proposals in the area. The application has been supported by sufficient documents for these aspects of the scheme to be considered in full. Thus, it is considered an Environmental Statement is

not required for this proposal. This recommendation holds when considering the impact of this development cumulatively with the permitted sites in the area.

5.0 POLICY & GUIDANCE

5.1 South Oxfordshire Core Strategy 2012 (SOCS) Policies

CS1 - Presumption in favour of sustainable development
CSS1 - The Overall Strategy
CSM1 - Transport
CSM2 - Transport Assessments and Travel Plans
CSEM1 - Supporting a successful economy
CSEM2 - The amount and distribution of employment
CSWAL1 - The Strategy for Wallingford
CSEN1 – Landscape
CSQ2 - Sustainable design and construction
CSG1 - Green infrastructure
CSB1 - Conservation and improvement of biodiversity
CSI1 - Infrastructure provision

5.2 South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011 (SOLP 2011) saved policies:

C4 - Landscape setting of settlements
C9 - Loss of landscape features
T1 - Safe, convenient and adequate highway network for all users
T2 - Unloading, turning and parking for all highway users
C6 - Maintain & enhance biodiversity
E5 - Business, industrial, warehousing and storage proposals
EP1 - Adverse affect on people and environment
EP2 - Adverse affect by noise or vibration
EP3 - Adverse affect by external lighting
EP6 - Sustainable drainage
EP7 - Impact on ground water resources
EP8 - Contaminated land
G2 - Protect district from adverse development
D12 – Public Art Contribution

5.3 Emerging South Oxfordshire Local Plan

The emerging South Oxfordshire Local Plan (eSOLP) 2011-2034 was submitted for examination at the end of March 2019. The examination hearings were completed on 7th August 2020 and the council is in receipt of the Inspector's preliminary conclusions. The eSOLP is expected to be adopted by December 2020 as directed by the Secretary of State. The following policies are of most relevance to this application:

Policy STRAT 1 - The Overall Strategy
Policy STRAT 2 - South Oxfordshire Housing and Employment Requirements
Policy STRAT 4 - Strategic Development
Policy WAL1 - The Strategy for Wallingford
Policy EMP1 - The Amount and Distribution of New B-class Employment Land
Policy EMP2 - Range, Size and Mix of Employment Premises
Policy EMP7 - New Employment Land at Wallingford
Policy EMP10: Community Employment Plans
Policy TRANS2 - Promoting Sustainable Transport and Accessibility
Policy TRANS4 - Transport Assessments, Transport Statements and Travel Plans
Policy TRANS5 - Consideration of Development Proposals
Policy ENV1 - Landscape and Countryside
Policy ENV5 - Green Infrastructure in New Developments

Policy DES1 - Delivering High Quality Development
Policy DES2 - Enhancing Local Character
Policy DES3 - Design and Access Statements

Limited to moderate weight can be applied to the eSOLP. Full weight will be afforded on adoption.

5.4 **Neighbourhood Plan**

The emerging Wallingford Neighbourhood Plan (eWNP) has been the subject of public consultation which ended on 11 August 2020. The eWNP will be the subject of an examination shortly. Limited weight can be attached to the plan at this stage for the purposes of decision-taking.

The following policies to be most relevant in the determination of this application:

Policy WS1: The Local Strategy for Wallingford
Policy WS4: Development within the Built-up Area

Policy HD1: Design

Policy HD2 – Sustainable design

Policy EV1 – New green spaces and green corridor

Policy MC1 – Transport Statement and Travel Plan Statement

Policy MC2 – Access to Public Transport

Policy MC3 – Promotion of Cycling

Policy MC4 – Safe Travel

MC7 – Electric charging for residents, employees and visitors

Section 6.3 of the WNP refers to the allocation of employment land and the application site and its previous permission is mentioned in paragraph 6.6.3.

Paragraph 6.4.2 states:

‘Proposals for the development of Site C must have regard to the visual impacts of development, especially the height, massing and form of buildings, when seen from both the Chilterns and the North Wessex Downs AONBs.’

5.5 **Supplementary Planning Guidance/Documents**

South Oxfordshire Design Guide 2016 (SODG 2016)

Developers Contributions SPD

5.6 **National Planning Policy Framework and Planning Practice Guidance**

The NPPF, at paragraph 8, includes an economic objective in the definition of sustainable development, which is *“to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;”*

5.7 **Other Relevant Legislation**

Human Rights Act 1998

The provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998 have been taken into account in the processing of the application and the preparation of this report.

Equality Act 2010

In determining this planning application the Council has regard to its equalities obligations including its obligations under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010.

6.0 PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

6.1 The relevant planning considerations are the following:

- The principle of the development, including:
 - How the site fits with the Council's spatial strategy
- Matters of detail / technical issues, including:
 - Landscape impact and trees,
 - Ecology- Highway safety and traffic impact,
 - Air Quality, Environmental Protection and Contamination,
 - Flood risk and surface / foul drainage,
 - Sustainable Design
 - Public Art
- Material planning considerations

6.2 PRINCIPLE OF DEVELOPMENT

How the proposal fits with the Council's spatial strategy in respect of Employment

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires applications for planning permission to be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The development plan comprises the South Oxfordshire Core Strategy (SOCS) and the saved policies of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011 (SOLP). 7.3 The NPPF advises at Para 11 that decisions should apply the presumption in favour of sustainable development. In the case of determining planning applications, this means approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay. Para 12 of the NPPF clarifies that the presumption in favour of sustainable development does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making. Where a planning application conflicts with an up-to-date development plan (including any neighbourhood plans that form part of the development plan), permission should not usually be granted.

- 6.3 The spatial strategy in the SOCS seeks to focus development in locations which are, or can be, made accessible and is consistent with the core planning principle of the NPPF. This is particularly important given that South Oxfordshire is a predominantly rural district.
- 6.4 Policy CSS1 of the SOCS sets out the overall distribution strategy for the district. This strategy:
- (i) focuses major new development in Didcot;
 - (ii) supports the roles of Henley, Thame and Wallingford by regenerating town centres and providing new housing, services, employment and infrastructure;
 - (iii) supports larger villages as local service centres;
 - (iv) supports other villages by allowing for limited amounts of housing;
 - (v) outside of the above areas, any change needs to relate to very specific needs.
- 6.5 As mentioned above the application site has been identified for employment development since the 1980's with the publication of the Wallingford Local Plan.
- 6.6 Policy CSWAL1 (The Strategy for Wallingford) states that proposals for development in Wallingford should be consistent with the strategy which, in the case of this application, is to identify land for about 2 hectares of land for employment growth and support schemes which improve the stock of existing commercial buildings and the environment of existing employment areas. It was the intention that sites would be allocated in the Site Allocations DPD, however, this document was not progressed, instead the eSOLP

takes its place and specifically defers the allocation of employment sites to the Wallingford Neighbourhood Plan.

- 6.7 Draft Policy EMP1 of the eSOLP provide the policy support for the development of the application site for employment development, outlining that provide 3.1 hectares of employment development will be provided in Wallingford through sites to be identified in the neighbourhood plan. In turn, the site is proposed to be allocated in the eWNP 3.1ha and is known as Site C.
- 6.8 The application provides a mix of B2 light industrial and B8 warehousing uses, with ancillary B1 office use. The units will be a mix of sizes. In this respect draft Policy EMP2 of the eSOLP states that proposals for employment use will provide a range premises sizes, including flexible business space to meet current and future requirements.
- 6.9 The adopted and emerging development plan clearly supports the principle of flexible Class B1c/B2 and B8 development on this site.

MATTERS OF DETAIL/TECHNICAL ISSUES

Landscape Impact and Trees

- 6.10 The proposed development would comprise 3 blocks of buildings. Two terraces on the northern part of the site and a larger building (310 and 320) on the southern part which would run parallel with A4130. Building 310/20 would have a ridge height of 14.35m, some 1.35 metres higher than that previously approved.
- 6.11 Views to the Chilterns AONB are clearly visible and the site is within the setting of both the Chilterns AONB and the North Wessex Downs AONB. Being geographically, at least, closely related to the built-up area of Wallingford, the site would be seen within the context of the existing and committed built development in landscape terms and would not on its own, or cumulatively result in a detrimental impact on the setting of either AONB. There is not considered to be harm to the setting of the AONBs.
- 6.12 The site is currently screened by the existing mature vegetation along the verge of the A4130. Glimpsed views into the site are possible. However, this landscaping belt is outside of the application site and on land not within the control of the applicant. The original scheme relied solely on this vegetation with very limited landscaping capable of being provided within the site and its ongoing future maintenance unlikely.
- 6.13 The amendments to the application, as set out above have resulted in considerably more landscaping to be provided along the sensitive western boundary as well as within the site itself 100 additional trees across the site.
- 6.14 The upper elevations of the proposed buildings would be visible from the A4130 however, the gaps between the buildings breaks up the appearance of the site from this viewpoint. In views along Hithercroft Road, the buildings would be visible but would be seen in the context of the wider Industrial Estate beyond.
- 6.15 The totem signage and building mounted park signage have now been omitted from the plans. However, separate advertisement consent would be needed for these in any event and it is noted from the plans that these could still be accommodated in the locations previously shown, albeit the surrounding areas are now proposed to be more heavily planted.

- 6.16 In the light of these changes the Landscape Architect and Forestry Officer have removed their objections to the application subject to conditions. The proposal thus accords with NPPF paragraphs 124, 127, 130 and 170 and Local Plan and Core Policies C4, D1, CSEN1, CSG1 and CSQ3.

Ecology

- 6.17 The application has been supported by an ecological appraisal which confirmed that the site has low ecological interest. However, Bradford's Brook which runs along the southern boundary of the site is of greater habitat interest. The landscape features along the Brook including trees are to be retained. Following comments received from the Countryside Officer, parking spaces which encroached on the 10-metre easement from the Brook, have been removed and additional landscaping proposed to enhance and bolster this buffer. In the light of the amendments, the Countryside Officer recommends two conditions, one securing external lighting details and another requiring the development to be undertaken strictly in accordance with the details contained in the Ecological Assessment Report.
- 6.18 The Countryside Officer notes that as part of the 2014 permission, a biodiversity offsetting scheme to compensate for habitat loss was approved and all payments made. No further action is required in respect of this particular aspect.
- 6.19 In the light of the above the proposed development would accord with policies CSB1 and CSG1 of the SOCS.

Highway Safety and traffic impact

- 6.20 The proposed development will be accessed off Hithercroft Road (including pedestrians and cyclists). The application was submitted with a Transport Assessment and a Travel Plan. Following comments from OCC Highways and Road Safety Audit (Stage 1) was submitted together with tracking plans.
- 6.21 As mentioned above the proposals would provide 70 no. cycle parking spaces in shelters and stands. This level of cycle parking exceeds the standards for the use classes proposed.
- 6.22 Notwithstanding the proposed office floorspace would function ancillary to the B2 and B8 uses, in the same buildings, concern was expressed by OCC Highways in respect of the amount of office floorspace given it would attract a greater trip generation in peak hours than the industrial/warehousing floorspace.
- 6.23 Consequently, in order to assist OCC Highways, the applicants provided a series of sensitivity analysis; based on 15%, 20% and 30% of the overall floorspace being in employment use. The junction modelling undertaken demonstrated that junctions are still forecast within the practical capacity within the sensitivity assessment, with minimal queuing and delays forecast across both junctions. The development can provide ancillary offices as part of the proposals without any detriment to the highway network and this is proposed to be conditioned.
- 6.24 The scheme will also provide pedestrian and cycle access between the site and the adjacent development on Lester Way. The 2014 application proposed dedicated vehicular access off Lester Way to serve the business start-up units proposed on the southern part of the site and would also provide pedestrian and cycle access to the whole site.

- 6.25 Lester Way has footways serving the development, at places on both sides of the frequently trafficked highway upon which vehicles also park. The road/footways are unlit. In response to concerns raised by the Town Council and an adjacent occupier, I sought the advice of OCC highways who acknowledged the private status of Lester Way and Lupton Road and the daytime draw that the direction of the Lidl store has to access Hithercroft Road. However, he considers that this private status is common to many industrial estates and those concerned about security due to the lack of street lighting may not be drawn in that direction in the evening especially in the winter.
- 6.26 If future occupiers feel unsafe using Lester Way, then an alternative route is available to walk and cycle using the main site entrance.
- 6.27 OCC highways consider Lester Way a secure enough option to recommend its retention as part of the proposals.
- 6.28 In response to a request for a pedestrian crossing on Lester Way, OCC Highways considered that in the in the context of such streets a pedestrian crossing is unnecessary here. However, an informal crossing is proposed close to the site entrance.
- 6.29 The route is considered acceptable for all forms of transport users and the increased footfall and traffic should improve security.
- 6.30 Following the submission of all the information, OCC Highways were able to confirm that their objections had been satisfactory addressed subject to conditions relating to the provision of the access and its specifications before any occupation of the development; provision of parking areas for cars, lorries and bicycles as well as associated turning areas before first occupation; the update to the framework travel plan within 3 months of occupation; no surface water to be discharged onto the highway; and details of a construction management plan and operations routing plan to be submitted before the commencement of development.
- 6.31 S106 contributions are required in respect of public transport and a travel plan as well as a S278 agreement to secure off-site works comprising: a bell-mouth and an informal pedestrian crossing. These and additional features as shown on Drawing WAL-LE-GEN-XX-DR-CE-100-S5-A1.
- 6.32 Accordingly, the proposed development would accord with policies CSM1, CMS2 of the SOCS and policies T1 and T2 of the SOLP.

Air Quality, Environmental Protection and Contamination

- 6.33 It is recognised by the SOCS that Wallingford has an issue with air quality, it is mentioned in criterion (v) of policy CSWAL1. The Air Quality team advise that best practice is required and as such conditions in relation to securing electric vehicle charging points; sustainable travel packs to be prepared and provided for all business operating from the site; and secure cycle parking. A condition was proposed in respect of gas boilers, however this condition has been found to fail the necessary conditions tests at appeals and is addressed in building regulations.
- 6.34 The Noise Assessment submitted with the application confirmed that due to the distance of residential properties from the site (more than 500m), noise from construction will not be significant to cause noise disturbance. Conditions are proposed

in respect of hours of operation and the hours of operation of machinery and equipment.

- 6.35 I note the latest comments by the Town Council that the development would increase noise pollution due to sound reflection. However, the scheme has been designed to protect the surrounding area from noise generated by traffic using the A4130.
- 6.36 Dust created in association with construction is noted and can be controlled via conditions associated with construction management.
- 6.37 External lighting information is provided in section 7.5 of the Design and Access Statement and is considered in the Ecological Assessment. Given the location of the site adjacent to the countryside and AONBs beyond, wildlife and residents there is risk of light pollution. More detailed information is needed via condition to build upon that already provided and will include the requirement that ensuring the main angle beam is not directed towards any receptors, limited visibility of light sources and limiting lux levels. Such information will ensure any lighting does not detrimentally impact on the wider countryside as well as wildlife and ecology hereabouts.
- 6.38 The Phase 1 Desk Study in respect of land contamination identifies no potential sources for land contamination that could present a risk to the proposed development.
- 6.39 In the light of the above and subject to conditions being imposed the proposed development would accord with policies G2, EP1 and EP2 of the SOLP as well as paragraphs 8, 108, 110, 111, 150, 170, 180 and 181 of the NPPF.

Flood risk and surface/foul drainage

- 6.40 The site is located within flood zone 1 based on EA mapping but would fall within 20 metres of the Bradford Brook which is identified as a main river by the EA. At the time of preparing this report for the Town Council, the EA have no commented (due to being omitted from the original consultation process in error). However, it is known that in respect of the previous permission no objection was raised on flood grounds, nor was any objection raised in respect of the previous application for development south of the Brook (P18/S2506/O refers).
- 6.41 Neither County nor District Drainage Officers object to the development subject to conditions including the submission of a surface water drainage scheme and its approval before development commences.
- 6.42 The conditions suggested by Thames Water would effectively delay development until the necessary infrastructure is in place. The applicant is in on-going dialogue with Thame Water in respect of the foul water network, and by condition the building will not be occupied until approved details have been completed.

Sustainable Design

- 6.43 Policy CSQ2 of the SOCS requires that the proposed development meets a target of 20% of the site's energy demand through the incorporation of Low and Zero Carbon (LZC) energy generation technologies. The proposed development will exceed this by 42% - the predicted amount is 62%. In addition, the buildings would be compliant with BREEAM 'excellent' ensuring that it would have high sustainability credentials. An area of 1,190sqm of solar panels are proposed on the roof of building 310/320 together with air source heat pumps. The detailed design of these are to the subject of a planning

condition. This status is an improvement on “Good” which was permitted in 2017 as a non-material amendment to the 2017 permission and this is welcomed.

Public Art

- 6.44 Hithercroft Road provides an important gateway into Wallingford. The proposals allow for the provision of public art to along the northern edge of the site fronting Hithercroft Road. The provision of public art in this location, in accordance with policy D12 would contribute to the gateway identity of this part of Wallingford giving it a more distinctive feel and appearance. It will also create an important feature associated with the site and an identity which future employees could take pride in. In accordance with policy D12 the council will be seeking a contribution of up to £150,000 as well as a condition to secure its provision.

Material planning considerations

Previous planning permission

- 6.45 As outlined above full planning permission was granted for employment development on this site in June 2015 with conditions subsequently discharged in 2017 and 2018. Whilst building A was 1.35 metres lower than proposed building 310/320, as the approved site plan shows it took up much of the western flank of the whole site from Hithercroft Road to the Brook and comprised 11,100sqm. The layout of the proposed development breaks the built form up considerably in contrast to the previously approved scheme and allowed high level views through the northern part of the site.
- 6.46 The landscaping scheme approved for the 2014 permission was not as extensive as proposed for this current application despite the bulk and massing being considerable along this sensitive edge of Wallingford. There was reliance on the landscaping on the verge of the A4130 rather than provision within the site.
- 6.47 The 2014 application was determined against the adopted policies of both the SOLP and the SOCS, both of which remain relevant for the purposes of determining this current application.
- 6.48 The NPPF was updated in 2018 (and more recently in 2019), however, guidance in respect of employment development and support for economic development in appropriate locations remains unchanged.

7.0 INFRASTRUCTURE REQUIREMENTS

- 7.1 If the application were to be approved infrastructure requirements as identified in the consultation responses and in accordance with relevant policies would need to be secured through a legal agreement under S106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended), in accordance with the Council's Planning Obligations SPD. The S106 would need to secure the following:
Public transport services and infrastructure: £44,445
Travel Plan Monitoring: £2,040
Public art: up to £150,000
S106 Monitoring fee: £264

All contributions will be index linked.

- 7.2 The heads of terms have been agreed by the applicant.

- 7.3 In the absence of a completed S106 legal agreement, the application fails to secure affordable housing and infrastructure necessary to off-set the impacts of the development. As such, in the event the committee decides not to accept my recommendation and refuse planning permission, the absence of a completed legal agreement should be a refusal reason.

8.0 CONCLUSION

- 8.1 The application site has been the subject of planning permission in 2014 for a B8 distribution warehouse, detached headquarters offices, together with some B1 light industrial starter units. The application site is identified for B class employment development in the emerging WNP where it is proposed to be allocated for 3.1ha, known as Site C and for B class uses, which this development would comprise.
- 8.2 Development comprising a substantial building whose bulk and massing was significantly greater than the proposed buildings was approved in 2014, with conditions discharged in 2017 and 2018. Its ridge height was some 1.35 metres lower than that currently proposed, however this would not be discernible when the overall scale of the building is considered covering much of the site in close proximity to the A4130. Moreover, landscaping along the boundary has improved in relation to the previous scheme.
- 8.3 The application will deliver employment floorspace for the town generating a significant number of jobs during the construction phase as well as some 300 jobs at operational stage. In turn this will have wider economic and social benefits for the town.
- 8.4 The development, subject to conditions, will not result in undue environmental harm. The buildings would make efficient use of land, not result in any landscape or ecological harms and its BREEAM 'excellent' standard aids in mitigating and adapting to climate change.

9.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 9.1 **To authorise the head of planning to grant planning permission subject to:**

a) The prior completion of a Section 106 agreement with the County Council and District Council to secure financial contributions as listed above; and

b) the following schedule of conditions:

- 1: Commencement 3 yrs - Full Planning Permission**
- 2: Approved plans**
- 3: Levels (details required)**
- 4: Sample materials required (walls and roof)**
- 5: Construction Traffic Management including Routing Plan (details required)**
- 6: Construction Method Statement**
- 7: Surface Water drainage works – details required**
- 8: New vehicular access**
- 9: Pre-commencement Public Art**
- 10: Parking (cars, lorries and bicycles) & Manoeuvring Areas Retained**
- 11: Solar panels, air source heat pumps details required**
- 12: Turning and parking (including bicycle) provision pre-commencement**
- 13: Travel Plan**
- 14: Landscape Management Plan – pre-first occupation**
- 15: Landscape Implementation – pre-first occupation**
- 16: Ecological assessment compliance**

- 17: BREEAM Excellent**
- 18: External lighting first occupation – pre-first occupation**
- 19: Electric Vehicle charging points – locations - pre-first occupation**
- 20: No Surface Water Drainage to Highway**
- 21: Foul drainage – pre-first occupation**
- 22: Energy Strategy compliance**
- 23: Office ancillary to main use only**
- 24: Hours of operation**
- 25: Restricted hours of operation of machinery**

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