
APPLICATION NO.	P21/S1257/FUL
APPLICATION TYPE	FULL APPLICATION
REGISTERED	6.4.2021
PARISH	CULHAM
WARD MEMBER(S)	Sam Casey-Rerhaye
APPLICANT	United Kingdom Atomic Energy
SITE	Land west of Main Avenue, Culham Science Centre, Clifton Hampden, OX14 3DB
PROPOSAL	Erection of an employment building and associated multi-storey car park.
	As amended and amplified by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written Scheme of Investigation and Archaeological Evaluation dated June 2021 • Archaeological Evaluation dated September 2021 and additional ecological information submitted 7 September 2021 • Amended by drawings and tree information received 5 November 2021 • Additional Addendum Transport Assessment dated 24 November 2021 • Revised parking provision and tree, drainage and ecological information received 28 February 2022 • Addendum transport statement dated 31 March 2022 and Master Plan January 2022 and construction traffic management plan received 4 April 2022 • Amended Arboricultural Method Statement received 11 April 2022)
OFFICER	Paul Bowers

1.0 INTRODUCTION AND PROPOSAL

1.1 This report sets out the officer's recommendation that the application should be granted, subject to the signing of a S106 agreement.

1.2 Culham Science Centre (CSC) is situated approximately 2.75 miles to the east of Abingdon, 4.5 miles north of Didcot and 5.5 miles south of Oxford.

1.3 The CSC now forms a key part of Science Vale and the Oxfordshire Knowledge Spine and is one of the largest employment centres in the County (covering approximately 80 hectares). Employment levels at CSC have been stable and in excess of 2,000 for many years and, in recent years, with a growing community of commercial science and technology enterprises and the broadening of the UKAEA's portfolio, have started to rise.

1.4 The application site contains a roughly rectangular shaped site area along the western flank of the CSC. It is to the south of an existing development which comprises the Oxfordshire Advanced Skills building which has recently gained permission for an extension extending southward.

A plan identifying the site can be found at **Appendix 1**.

- 1.5 The application seeks full planning permission for the erection of a four storey research and development building and a separate multi storey car park.

The research and development building will accommodate an office space and a research/engineering hall aimed at supporting companies developing products and technologies relevant to the emerging Culham fusion technology cluster.

- 1.6 In response to concerns expressed by the Culham Parish Council the number of car parking spaces serving the Research and Development Building has been significantly reduced by 61, from 292 to 231 spaces.

The multi-storey car park will provide a total of 265 spaces, which includes the 231 spaces for the Research and Development Building and an additional 34 spaces which are being relocated from Main Avenue, which will be allocated to existing buildings and constitutes a reduction of 13 on street parking spaces, from 47 to 34.

- 1.7 The application has been amended and amplified by additional and revised information submitted during the course of the application. Most notably this has involved a reduction in the number of parking spaces by 61 with the revised total of 231 spaces now proposed. In addition the applicant has also supported their application with a copy of the Culham Science Centre masterplan indicating the proposed growth and longer term vision for the site in line with the requirements of Policy STRAT8 of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan.

- 1.8 Reduced copies of the plans accompanying the application are attached as **Appendix 2** to this report. All the plans and representations can be viewed on the council's website www.southoxon.gov.uk under the planning application reference number.

2.0 **SUMMARY OF CONSULTATIONS & REPRESENTATIONS**

2.1 **Culham Parish Council** –

As originally submitted -

Object to the development for the following reasons;

- Noise and disturbance of the car traffic generated.
- Concern about the amount of parking being provided.

Consulted on Amendments – 05/11/21, 28/02/22 and 31/04/22 – No comments received.

Clifton Hampden Parish Council (Adjoining parish)

No response received to original submission or following amendments.

Countryside Officer –

Original submission – Holding objection – Additional Information required.

Response to additional Information submitted 07/09/21 – No objection subject to conditions relating to lighting, implementation of mitigation measures, evidence of biodiversity offsetting and faunal enhancements

Response to 28/02/22 Amendments - No objection subject to conditions relating to lighting, implementation of mitigation measures, evidence of biodiversity offsetting and faunal enhancements

SODC Drainage –

Consulted on original submission - No objection subject to condition.

SODC Building Control Manager/ Energy Assessment –

Consulted on original submission – No objection.

SODC Didcot Garden Towns Team –

Consulted on the original submission – Support the application.

Forestry Officer –

Original submission – Concern over the extent of works within root protection areas.

Response to 05/11/21 Amended tree information – No objection subject to tree protection and landscaping conditions.

Response to 28/02.22 Amended Plans - No objection subject to tree protection and landscaping conditions.

Oxfordshire County Council Single Response –

Highways –

Consulted on original submission, 24/11/21 amendment, 28/02/22 and 31/03/22 amendments. – Comments provided on receipt of the latest amendment - No objection subject to conditions and a completed section 106 agreement.

Archaeology –

Comments on the original submission – Objection.

Comments on the additional archaeological information submitted 06/21 – Further information required.

Comments on the additional archaeological information 07/09/21 – No objection.

Drainage –

Comment on the original submission - No objection subject to condition.

Thames Water Development Control –

Consulted on original submission - No objection subject to conditions.

3.0 **RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

- 3.1 [P20/S3588/PEJ](#) - EIA not required on 09/10/2020
EIA Screening Opinion

4.0 **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 4.1 EIA Not required.

5.0 **POLICY & GUIDANCE**

5.1 **Development Plan Policies**

South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035 (SOLP) Policies:

DES1 - Delivering High Quality Development

DES10 - Carbon Reduction

DES2 - Enhancing Local Character

DES3 - Design and Access Statements

DES4 - Masterplans for Allocated Sites and Major Development

DES5 - Outdoor Amenity Space

DES6 - Residential Amenity

ENV6 - Historic Environment

ENV9 - Archaeology and Scheduled Monuments

ENV1 - Landscape and Countryside

ENV12 - Pollution - Impact of Development on Human Health, the Natural Environment and/or Local Amenity (Potential Sources of Pollution)

ENV3 - Biodiversity

EP4 – Flood risk

INF4 – Water resources

STRAT1 - The Overall Strategy

STRAT8 - Culham Science Centre

TRANS5 - Consideration of Development Proposals

5.2 **Neighbourhood Plan**

The Neighbourhood Plan area was formally designated on 18 September 2020. The Parish Council has started the process of gathering evidence and engaging with the local community. This is to give the plan a direction and draft policies that will form the neighbourhood plan in due course. At this stage the plan has no weight in the determination of planning applications.

5.3 **Supplementary Planning Guidance/Documents**

South Oxfordshire Design Guide 2016 (SODG 2016)

Developer Contributions SPD

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

5.5 **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 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.

Development which is not in accordance with an up-to-date development plan should be refused unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

In the case of this application South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035 (SOLP) comprises the development plan and the policies within it must be assessed in relation to the material considerations relevant to this proposal.

6.2 The main planning considerations to consider in relation to this development are as follows:

- **The principle of development.**
- **Impact on the character of the area and the wider landscape.**
- **Impact on highway safety and parking.**
- **Impact on drainage.**
- **Impact on archaeology.**
- **Impact on trees.**
- **Impact on ecology.**

- **Carbon reduction.**
- **Water Resources.**

6.3 The principle of development

Policy STRAT8 of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan relates specially to Culham Science Centre.

This policy states that proposals for the redevelopment and intensification of the Culham Science Centre will be supported where it does not have an unacceptable visual impact particularly on the character and appearance of the surrounding countryside and the registered parkland associated with Nuneham House.

In combination with the adjacent strategic allocation (set out in Policy STRAT9) the site will deliver at least a net increase in employment land of 7.3 hectares. The exact siting and phasing of the employment development must be agreed through the master planning and subsequent planning application process including addressing any heritage assets and their setting.

The policy goes on to say that site will deliver a net increase in employment land, a net gain in biodiversity and confirms that the site is now removed from the Oxford Green Belt.

As part of the supporting information with this application a Masterplan for the site has been submitted. This helps to explain this current planning application in the context of the wider site and longer-term plans for the area.

Therefore the principle of development on this site is considered acceptable and line with Policy STRAT9 of the adopted Local Plan.

6.4 Impact on the character of the area and the wider landscape

SOLP Policy ENV1 relates to landscape and countryside. The policy seeks to protect South Oxfordshire's landscape, countryside and rural areas from harmful development and states that development will only be permitted where it protects and where possible enhances features that contribute to the nature and quality of South Oxfordshire's landscape with particular emphasis on things like trees, habitats, landscapes, waterscapes, cultural heritage, topographical features, areas of cultural and historic value and important views.

- 6.4i The policy goes on to states that development which supports economic growth in rural areas will be supported provided it conserves and enhances the landscape, countryside and rural areas.
- 6.5 In considering this issue Policies DES1 and DES2 are also relevant in my view which seeks high quality development and enhancement of local character.
- 6.6 I am satisfied that scale of the building at some 17 metres high and its subservient associated multi storey garage at 17 metres high makes an efficient use of the site and its height and bulk falls within the accepted limits of the existing and recently permitted and existing buildings that exist further north of the site along this western flank of the CSC.

- 6.7 The position of the building on western flank of the site between the established core complex of buildings and the Culham No. 1 site to the west reduces the wider landscape impact to an acceptable degree in my view.
- 6.8 Overall, I am satisfied that the wider landscape impacts and the design and appearance of the building on the context of the rest of the site are in line with policies STRAT8, ENV1, DES1 and DES2 of SOLP.

6.9 Impact on highway safety and parking

With respect to highway safety matters the advice from Central Government set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is as follows:

Development should only be prevented or refused on transport grounds where the residual cumulative impacts of the development are severe.

The term severe is locally interpreted as situations, which have a high impact, likely to result in loss of life, or a higher possibility of occurrence with a lower impact.

Policy TRANS5 of SOLP seeks to ensure that development does not harm highway safety and provides for sufficient parking and turning areas.

- 6.10 Highway impacts of the development run to the heart of this application and the key related issues are as follows:

- Access to the proposed development is from the existing main access to Culham Science Centre (CSC).
- The applicant proposes a reduced total of 231 car parking spaces, this accords with current standards..
- A total of 70 cycle stands are proposed, this is in excess of the relevant standards and is considered acceptable.
- The proposed development will result in additional trips onto the highway network.
- The requested junction capacity assessments show that the local highway network will operate within capacity following the delivery of HIF1 improvements, with the exception of the Golden Balls roundabout and some of the junctions within Abingdon. These junctions will continue to operate over operational capacity in the base scenarios, however the proposed development has demonstrated it will have limited impact on these junctions.
- The Clifton Hampden signals, Clifton Hampden Bridge signals and the A415 / Tollgate Road, Culham River Crossing and Abingdon Road / Appleford Road will all operate within capacity with the proposed development following the delivery of HIF1 improvements.
- To mitigate the impact of the proposed development, prior to delivery of HIF1, OCC has agreed, in accordance with the three S106 tests, a mitigation package that will encourage active and sustainable travel to CSC ahead of the private car. The required mitigation measures are summarised in the table below.

- 6.11 The development proposal proposes the erection of a 9,870sqm Research and Development Building and associated multi storey car park at CSC, Oxfordshire. This proposal is to consist of 6,248sqm of office space with a 3,442sqm rig hall. The proposed development is in the western area of the CSC campus.

Car parking for staff using the Research and Development Building is to be provided in an adjacent multi-storey car park. A service yard is also provided for access to the rig hall.

- 6.12 Access to the proposed development is from the main access to CSC. This existing access arrangement includes two exit lanes on the minor (site access) arm to facilitate traffic movements to and from the site. The A415 is de-restricted along the frontage of the site. The appropriate Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) sightlines of 4.5 metres x 215 metres are available in each direction at the junction that serves CSC.

- 6.13 *Public transport –*

CSC is located approximately 4k to the south east of Abingdon. The site access is located approximately 1km from Culham Railway Station. Culham Station is operated by Great Western Railway (GWR). Facilities include seating, sheltered waiting facilities and real time information. From Culham Station services operate to Oxford, Reading, Didcot Parkway and Banbury.

The nearest bus stop is located at the Conference Centre approximate 50m from the site. A second bus stop is located, approximately 280 from the CSC gate, on the A415. Both bus stops are served by the 45 and 95 bus services. The site access is located within the recommend walking distance of the CSC gate.

- 6.14 The OAS Phase 2 development (application reference P17/S4193/FUL) contributed £250,000 for bus service improvement and that a total of 131 peak hour trips were expected to be generated from the site. The transport submission for this application estimates that a total of 140 trips over the same period is expected, triggering the requirement for a similar contribution to be sought from this CSC development proposal.

- 6.15 Taking into consideration that four years have passed since the 2017 planning permission was granted, and other recent permitted development proposals at CSC have also contributed towards enhancing the public transport services further in the area, a financial contribution is required for this development proposal.

- 6.16 The contribution of £303,050.87 (index linked) will be put towards the improvement of the local bus services that serve Culham Science Centre, including but not limited to improved services to Cowley, Berinsfield, Abingdon and Didcot.

- 6.17 *Car Parking –*

The submitted Transport Statement (dated February 21) included proposals for a total of 292 on-site car parking spaces. Following several discussions with council officers, the applicant has reduced the number of parking spaces by 61 spaces. The revised total is now 231 spaces. This is confirmed in paragraph 4.11 of the recently submitted updated transport submission, dated March 2022.

- 6.18 Based on the proposed floor area (6,428sqm) for the office element, applying the existing car parking standard for such a land use is 1 space per 30sqm, which for this development proposal equates to 214 spaces.

For the rig hall element of the development proposal, this has a proposed floor area of 3,442sqm. When applying the of existing car parking standard of warehouse development of 1 space per 200sqm this equates to 17 spaces.

When both land uses are considered together, the overall total of car parking proposed of 231 to serve this development proposal accords with current car parking standards and is considered acceptable.

6.19 The proposed 231 spaces includes:

- 12 (5%) spaces for disabled badge holders,
- 12 (5%) for car sharers and
- 23 (10%) with electric charging points.

6.20 It is important to note that the proposed multi-storey car park will have a total of 265 spaces. This will consist of the 231 spaces associated with this Research and Development Building proposal. The other 34 spaces shown, are not additional parking provisions, they are actually existing spaces that are being relocated from within the campus as part the long-term strategy of the CSC to reduce on-site car parking provisions.

The provision of the multi storey car park forms part of the long term masterplan for the site in which car parking 'hubs' are provided on the edge of the site.

6.21 The applicant does not appear to have provided plans to show the layout proposed Multi Storey car park nor the dimensions of the proposed parking spaces. Due to this missing information, it is recommended that a pre-commencement planning condition is imposed providing the layout and details of the Multi Storey car park (including dimensions of parking spaces).

6.22 *Cycle parking –*

The applicant proposes a total of 70 covered, cycle stands to be provided on Main Avenue adjacent to the building. Changing facilities with lockers and showers within the proposed building are also to be provided.

The existing cycle parking standards for office and warehouse buildings are as follows:

- Office: 1 stand per 150 sqm for staff and 1 stand per 150 sqm for visitors
- B8 Warehousing: 1 stand per 500 sqm for staff and 1 stand per 1,000 sqm for visitors

Based on the above standards this would equate to a total of 66 cycle parking spaces (56 for the office element and 10 for the rig hall element). The proposed 70 cycle stands are in excess of the relevant standards and are considered acceptable.

6.23 Having reviewed the submitted plans, it is unclear where the proposed cycle parking is to be located. It is recommended a condition is imposed seeking approval on the location of such facilities and the form of the cycle parking provisions to be provided.

6.24 *Travel Plan –*

The submitted Travel Plan does not meet OCC's criteria in several areas and is required to be updated. This issue can be addressed by a pre-occupation planning condition being imposed for the submission of an updated seeking its approval from the Local Planning Authority.

6.25 *Proposed trip generation –*

The applicant has used three methods to calculate the expected trip generation for the proposed development. Following discussions with OCC, it has been agreed that the applicant would use trip rates from the TRICS database with peak spreading data from CSC, as the most appropriate method for calculating the expected trip generation. The other methods that were discussed have been used as part of a sensitivity test of the development proposal and are shown below.

6.26 The expected trip generation for the development proposal is based on TRICS data and then applying the peak hour split from surveys at CSC. Council officers have carried out a review of TRICS and have assessed the applicant's data acceptable. The applicant has then applied the peak hour split use from site traffic surveys undertaken in 2019 as follows:

- 7-8AM 42.7%
- 8-9AM 41.8%
- 9-10AM 15.5%
- 3-4PM 23.5%
- 4-5PM 53.1%
- 5-6PM 23.4%

6.27 This trip generation concludes that the proposed development would generate:

- 140 vehicle trips (119 in + 21 out) during the AM peak hour 8-9AM; and
- 71 vehicle trips (12 in and 59 out) during the PM peak hour 5:00 to 6:00 PM.
- 1,088 vehicle trips (567 in and 521 out) during the PM peak hour 5:00AM to 9:00 PM.

6.28 The applicant has also carried out requested sensitivity tests for the trips rates which were based on first principles based on the on the total number of proposed parking spaces and TRICS database for the AM and PM peak hours. Both methods resulted in AM and PM trip rates that were broadly similar to the trips rates outlined above and are considered acceptable

6.29 *Highway impact –*

The impact of the proposed development has been assessed for the following junctions:

- Site Access / A415
- Clifton Hampden signals (A415 / Oxford Road / High Street / Watery Lane)
- Clifton Hampden Bridge signals
- Berinsfield roundabout (A4074 / A415 / Wimplestraw Rd)
- Golden Balls roundabout (A4074 / B4015 / Oxford Rd)
- A415 / Tollgate Road, Culham River Crossing and Abingdon Road / Appleford Road
- A415 Bridge Street / High Street / Stert Street, Abingdon
- Ock Street / Stratton Way, Abingdon
- A415 Marcham Road / A415 Ock Street / B4017 / Spring Road, Abingdon
- Marcham Road / Colwell Drive
- Marcham Road / Nuffield Way.

6.30 The extent of the study area was agreed with OCC to ensure the impact of the proposed development was assessed robustly.

Baseline traffic data and details of committed development was provided by OCC as part scoping exercise with the applicant.

The assessment years, as agreed with OCC, are as follows:

- Baseline / existing conditions (2021)
- Pre-HIF delivery (which is programmed for end of 2024) and estimated occupation of the proposed development (2023/24).
- After HIF is open for public use (2024 “with HIF”)
- End of Local Plan period (2035, or 2034 allowing for all planned development)

6.31 The applicant has used postcode data from existing employees at CSC in 2021 to establish a distribution model, to assign the proposed development trips onto the local highway network during the AM and PM peak hours, 8-9am and 5-6pm. This is acceptable to the OCC. Overall the results show that the distribution of the proposed development traffic is 51.8% travelling to / from the east and 48.2% to /from the west.

6.32 The applicant has also been required by OCC to model a number of junctions, including the Clifton Hampden signals, Clifton Hampden Bridge signals and the A415 / Tollgate Road, Culham River Crossing and Abingdon Road / Appleford Road, to determine the existing capacity on the local highway network during the application year (2021) and assess the highway impacts of the development proposals in the anticipated opening year (2024), both pre and post HIF, and the plus 10-year horizon year (2034). The results of the capacity assessments undertaken are shown in Table 6.13 of the Addendum Transport Assessment document.

6.33 The results show that the junctions will operate within capacity following the HIF1 improvements, with the exception of the Golden Balls roundabout and some of the junctions within Abingdon. The Golden Balls roundabout and some of the Abingdon junctions operate over operational capacity in the base scenarios and that the proposed development will have very limited impact on these junctions.

The Clifton Hampden signals, Clifton Hampden Bridge signals and the A415 / Tollgate Road, Culham River Crossing and Abingdon Road / Appleford Road will all operate within capacity with the proposed development following the HIF1 improvements.

6.34 *Mitigation measures –*

The proposed development will result in additional vehicle movements on the local highway network during the AM and PM peak hours. To mitigate this impact prior to the delivery of HIF1OCC has agreed, in accordance with the 3 S106 tests, the following mitigation package to encourage active and sustainable travel ahead of the private car:

- A contribution of £325,000 (index linked December 2021) to improve the existing footway on the south side of the A415 to a 3m shared footway/cycleway facility within the existing public highway, from the CSC site entrance towards the train station (approximately 900m). These specific pedestrian and cycle improvements are proposed to promote active travel, in the local area, including for journeys to and from CSC.
- A contribution of £100,000 (index linked December 2021) towards enhancing the existing Tollgate / Abingdon Road signalised junction by providing an integral pedestrian and cycling crossing facility to promote active travel in the local area, including journeys to and from CSC.
- A contribution of £303,050.87 (index linked December 2020) towards improvements of the local bus services to Culham Science Centre, including but not limited to improved services to Cowley, Berinsfield, Abingdon and Didcot.

- The sum of £2,379 (index linked December 2020) for Monitoring of the Travel Plan.
- Developer is to transfer land to OCC free of charge to assist with the delivery of the HIF1 Clifton Roundabout Bypass Scheme. The timing of land transfer and extent of land is currently being prepared and will form part of a legal agreement to accompany this development proposal if planning permission is granted by the Local Planning Authority.

6.35 Highway impacts summary –

The proposed development for a Research and Development Building and rig hall will result in additional trips onto the highway network.

The County Council find the proposed mitigation measures in terms of the Section 106 contributions and the proposed conditions are acceptable to mitigate the proposed impact prior to delivery of HIF1.

Following several discussions with council officers, the applicant has reduced the number of parking spaces by 61 spaces with the revised total of 231 spaces now proposed. This accords with current car parking standards and is considered acceptable.

On this basis the local highway authority has no objection to this proposal and your officers are satisfied that the development will comply with Policy TRANS5 of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan.

6.36 **Impact on drainage.**

Policy INF4 states that all development proposals must demonstrate that there is or will be adequate water supply, surface water, foul drainage and sewerage treatment capacity to serve the whole development.

Policy EP4 relates to flood risk and states that the risk and impact of flooding will be minimised through:

- i) directing new development to areas with the lowest probability of flooding;
- ii) ensuring that all new development addresses the effective management of all sources of flood risk;
- iii) ensuring that development does not increase the risk of flooding elsewhere; and
- iv) ensuring wider environmental benefits of development in relation to flood risk.

6.37 Oxfordshire County Council are the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) and their drainage specialists have considered the development in this context.

They have confirmed that they do not object to the development but have requested a planning condition that requires information to be submitted at a detailed design stage to enable the county as LLFA to carry out a full technical assessment.

This information will have to include details such as permeability testing, details of future maintenance of all of the SuDs features and measures to mitigate the risk of surface water run off polluting waters.

Such a condition is proposed as part of this recommendation and in conjunction and compliance with this condition the development will accord with policies in for an EP4 of the South Oxfordshire local plan.

6.38 Archaeology

Policy ENV9 of SOLP relates specifically to archaeology. It states that development must protect the site and setting of Scheduled Monuments or nationally important designated or undesignated archaeological remains

- 6.39 A report for the archaeological evaluation was requested by Oxfordshire County Council and has been submitted with this planning application (Cotswold Archaeology AN0362_3.1, dated September 2021).

The evaluation has shown that no significant archaeological remains survive on this site. There are therefore no archaeological constraints to this proposal.

The development does not therefore come into conflict with Policy ENV9 of SOLP.

6.40 Impact on trees

Policy ENV1 of SOLP South Oxfordshire's landscape, countryside and rural areas will be protected against harmful development. Development will only be permitted where it protects and, where possible enhances, features that contribute to the nature and quality of South Oxfordshire's landscapes, in particular trees (including individual trees, groups of trees and woodlands), hedgerows and field boundaries;

- 6.41 The proposal requires the removal of 1 individual tree (T33) and 1 group of trees (G40). The proposed planting shown on the submitted planting plan will satisfactorily mitigate the loss of the trees shown to be removed.

The application has been amended from its original form to address the specific concerns raised by your Tree Officer concerning works within root protection areas (RPAs) of trees shown to be retained and that the hard surfacing within RPAs shown at Table 3 of the Arboricultural Impact Assessment, exceeds the recommended 20% for several of the trees.

The Tree Officer is now happy with the development in its current form. This is subject to conditions relating to tree protection during construction and a landscaping condition to secure adequate species and numbers of planting.

In conjunction with these conditions the proposal will accord with Policy ENV1 SOLP.

6.42 Impact on ecology

Policy ENV3 of SOLP relates to biodiversity. The policy seeks to ensure that development will conserve, restore and enhance biodiversity and that development would provide a net gain in biodiversity where possible. The policy also requires applications to be supported by evidence to demonstrate a biodiversity net gain.

It goes on to state that in the absence of alternative sites or layouts, development proposals must include adequate mitigation measures to achieve a net gain of biodiversity. Where harm cannot be prevented or adequately mitigated, appropriate compensation measures will be sought, as a last resort, through planning conditions or

planning obligations (depending on the circumstances of each application) to offset the loss by contributing to appropriate biodiversity projects to achieve an overall net gain for biodiversity.

- 6.43 The councils ecologist has considered the development in detail. The development would result in a net loss of biodiversity, calculated as being 1.18 units.

However, in line with Policy ENV3 your officers are satisfied that this matter can be addressed through a planning condition requiring a biodiversity offsetting certificate. Such a condition is proposed as part of this recommendation thereby ensuring a net gain in biodiversity in line with the requirements of the policy.

6.44 **Carbon reduction**

Policy DES10 requires that non-residential development to meet BREEAM excellent standard and if the proposal was in excess of 1000 square metres achieve at least a 40% reduction in carbon emissions compared with a code 2013 Building Regulations compliant base and that this reduction is to be secured through renewable energy and other low carbon technologies.

- 6.45 The energy statement submitted demonstrates that the design for the new building will achieve at least a 40% reduction in carbon emissions compared with a code 2013 Building Regulations compliant base case.

Conditions are therefore proposed that requires the development to be built in accordance with the details set out in the energy statement and also demonstrated that the building as achieved BREEAM Excellent standard before it is occupied. In conjunction with these conditions the proposal will accord with Policy DES10.

6.46 **Water resources**

Policy INF4 states that all development proposals must demonstrate that there is or will be adequate water supply.

Thames Water have commented on the development. They have been unable to determine the wastewater infrastructure needs of this application and an inability of the existing water network infrastructure to accommodate the needs of this development proposal.

They have proposed two planning conditions which will require the applicant to secure that adequate capacity exists for the new building before it is occupied and if it doesn't that improvement to the network are made before the building can be occupied.

By complying with the conditions, the development will then accord with Policy INF4 of SOLP.

7.0 **CONCLUSION**

- 7.1 The building will be seen in the context of the wider Culham Science Centre site and the larger buildings beyond and the comparable buildings to the north.

It provides for employment opportunities and accords with the wider objectives of the strategic policy for the Culham Science Centre site.

The highway related impacts of the development are mitigated to an acceptable degree through the proposed conditions and the contributions toward public transport, highway

improvements, a pedestrian and cycle crossing and transfer of land to OCC to assist with the delivery of HIF secured through a Section 106 agreement.

Parking provision will be provided on site at an acceptable level in line with the requirements of the development.

Ecological net gain can be secured through the attached conditions.

Overall and in conjunction with the attached conditions the proposal accords with the development plan.

8.0 **RECOMMENDATION**

8.1 **That planning permission is granted subject to the following conditions and signing of a S106 agreement.**

Standard conditions -

1. Commencement three years - Full Planning Permission
2. Approved plans *

Prior to the relevant part of construction conditions –

3. Schedule of Materials
4. Landscaping Scheme (trees and shrubs only)
5. Ecology – Evidence of biodiversity offsetting
6. Ecology – Faunal biodiversity enhancements
7. Surface water drainage
8. Plan of car parking provision (specified number of spaces)
9. Water supply details
10. Water network improvements

Prior to occupation conditions –

11. Cycle parking facilities
12. Green travel plans
13. Travel plans
14. Energy Statement verification

Compliance conditions -

15. Construction traffic management plan – as approved
16. BREEAM Standard
17. Tree protection (implementation as approved)
18. Wildlife protection (mitigation as approved)
19. External lighting

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