



**Report to:** Joint Development Control Committee 27<sup>th</sup> October 2021

**Lead Officer:** Joint Director of Planning and Economic Development

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## **Milton Parish**

### **20/03523/ful and 20/03524/ful**

### **St John's Innovation Park, Cambridge**

1. Proposal: Erection of a 5 storey building and a 6 storey building for commercial / business purposes, erection of a transport hub, gymnasium, surface parking, landscaping and associated infrastructure including demolition of the existing building (St John's House) and associated structures.
2. Applicant: The Master, Fellows and Scholars of the College of St John the Evangelist in the University of Cambridge
3. Key material considerations:

Principle of Development  
Air Quality  
Biodiversity  
Character and Appearance  
Flood Risk and Drainage

Land Contamination  
Landscaping/Trees  
Layout and Movement  
Sustainable Construction/Carbon Reduction  
Transport and Highways  
Other Matters  
Planning Obligations  
The Planning Balance

4. Is it a Departure Application? No
5. Decision due by: 14<sup>th</sup> December 2020
6. Application brought to Committee because:

Major development in North East Cambridge Area Action Plan area

7. Presenting officer: Mike Huntington

### **Executive Summary**

8. The site is located within an area of land identified as part of the emerging North East Cambridge Area Action Plan (NECAAP). The NECAAP does not yet have sufficient weight to be considered a significant material consideration in the determination of this application. The NPPF, the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2018 and the Cambridge City Council Local Plan 2018 therefore form the basis of the determination of this application.
9. The proposal is for additional employment floorspace in an area identified for employment growth in South Cambridgeshire. The principle of development is therefore supported.
10. The proposed development will provide BREEAM Excellent certified buildings with a low embodied carbon design and with an all-electric approach to energy use that will achieve significant carbon reductions once operational.
11. The design and appearance of the buildings are considered appropriate in the site's context and respects its urban setting within a business park. Furthermore, the scale and massing of the buildings will not cause visual harm to the wider landscape.
12. The proposed development will not increase on site car parking and will promote sustainable forms of travel to and from the site. This includes

mitigation through internal infrastructure improvements and a financial contribution towards strategic transport infrastructure in north east Cambridge.

## **Recommendation**

13. Approval, subject to the conditions set out in appendix 1 and 2 of the report, and completion of a s106 agreement to secure appropriate transport and highways mitigation measures.

## **Relevant planning history**

14. 16/0215/FUL and S/0343/16/FL. These applications sought full planning permission for the demolition of existing structures and the proposed development of a new B1 office and research building with associated structures, including new substation and bin stores, ancillary plant, cycle stores and hard and soft landscaping. This is the site located immediately to the south of this site. These applications were granted planning permission in November 2016.
15. 20/02336/SCRE This was a request for an EIA Screening Opinion for the proposed demolition of existing office building St Johns House, associated structures, and erection of 2 Class B1 office buildings and a transport hub, new landscaping, parking, and associated infrastructure.

## **Planning policies, Guidance and Other material considerations**

### **Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended)**

16. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that applications are determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
17. The development plan for the site is the Cambridge Local Plan 2018 and the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2018.

### **Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 (as amended)**

18. The Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 (as amended) (the CIL Regulations) generally set out regulations relating to the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). Part 11 refers specifically to planning obligations (including those in Section 106 Agreements) and is relevant to the consideration of these Applications and will influence the final content of a Section 106 Agreement, in the event that planning permission is granted.

19. CIL Regulation 122 imposes limitations on the use of planning obligations. It states (where there is no CIL charging regime), a planning obligation may only constitute a reason for granting planning permission for the development if the obligation is:
- (a) necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms,
  - (b) directly related to the development, and
  - (c) fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.

### **Equalities Act 2010**

20. The Application has been assessed against the relevant sections of the Equalities Act 2010. It is not considered that the applications discriminate against people with protected characteristics (age, gender reassignment, being married or in a civil partnership, being pregnant or on maternity leave, disability, race including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation) specified in this Act.

### **Use Classes Order Change**

21. From 1st September 2020 the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2020 (2020 No. 757) came into force.
22. Three new use classes have been created by this change: Class E (Commercial, business and service), Class F.1 (Learning and non-residential institutions) and F.2 (Local community).
23. Class E creates a new commercial, business and service use class which subsumes retail (A1), financial and professional services (A2), restaurants and cafes (A3) and business (B1a/b/c) use classes. Uses such as gyms, nurseries/creches and health centres (previously in use classes D1 Non-residential institutions and D2 Assembly and leisure) and other uses which are suitable for a town centre area are also included in Class E. Since 1st September 2020 planning permission is not required for changes between these, what were until recently, different kinds of uses. This is because they are now grouped into the same use class and therefore such changes will not now constitute development.
24. For example, a retail shop can change to a restaurant, or an office building could change to a retail supermarket without needing planning permission for a change of use (providing there are no restrictive covenants, conditions or section 106 obligations restricting the existing use).

25. Uses which can have potential amenity impacts on neighbouring properties will become sui generis and any material change of use will require planning permission. This includes uses such as pubs/bars, takeaways, cinemas, concert, dance, and bingo halls.
26. For any planning applications submitted before 1 September 2020, the Use Classes in effect when the application was submitted will be used to determine the application.
27. The application therefore still describes the proposed buildings as Use Class B1 buildings.

### **National Guidance**

National Planning Policy Framework 2021 (NPPF)

National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

National Design Guide 2019

### **South Cambridgeshire Local Plan (SCLP) 2018**

S/1 Vision

S/2 Objectives of the Local Plan

S/3 Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

SS/4 Cambridge Northern Fringe East and Cambridge North railway station

S/5 Provision of Jobs and Homes

S/6 The Development Strategy to 2031

S/7 Development Frameworks

CC/1 Mitigation and Adaptation to Climate Change

CC/3 Renewable and Low Carbon Energy in New Developments

CC/4 Sustainable Design and Construction

CC/6 Construction Methods

CC/7 Water Quality

CC/8 Sustainable Drainage Systems

CC/9 Managing Floor Risk

HQ/1 Design Principles

NH/2 Protecting and Enhancing Landscape Character

NH/4 Biodiversity

NH/8: Mitigating the Impact of Development In and Adjoining the Green Belt

E/10 Shared Social Spaces in Employment Areas

SC/9 Lighting proposals

SC/10 Noise Pollution

SC/11 Contaminated Land

SC/12 Air Quality

SC/14 Odour and Other Fugitive Emissions to Air

TI/2 Planning for Sustainable Travel  
TI/3 Parking Provision  
TI/8 Infrastructure and New Development  
TI/10 Broadband

28. As noted above, only the access to the site is within the boundary of Cambridge City Council, and therefore there are only certain policies in the Local Plan for the City that are considered relevant although policies are listed below which provide additional context.

### **Cambridge City Council Local Plan 2018**

5: Strategic transport infrastructure  
8: Setting of the City  
14: Areas of Major Change and Opportunity Areas – general principles  
15: Cambridge Northern Fringe East and new railway station Area of Major Change  
28: Carbon reduction, community energy networks, sustainable design and construction, and water use  
31: Integrated water management and the water cycle  
32: Flood risk  
33: Contaminated land  
34: Light pollution control  
35: Protection of human health and quality of life from noise and vibration  
36: Air quality, odour and dust  
55: Responding to context  
56: Creating successful places  
57: Designing new buildings  
59: Designing landscape and the public realm  
65: Visual pollution  
71: Trees  
80: Supporting sustainable access to development  
81: Mitigating the transport impact of development  
82: Parking management  
85: Infrastructure delivery, planning obligations and the Community Infrastructure Levy

### **Cambridge and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Core Strategy 2011**

CS31 Waste-Water Treatment Works Safeguarding Areas

## **Draft North East Cambridge Area Action Plan (NECAAP)**

### **Greater Cambridge Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD)**

Sustainable Design and Construction – Adopted January 2020

Cambridgeshire Flood and Water – Adopted November 2016

District Design Guide – Adopted March 2010

Landscape in New Developments – Adopted March 2010

Biodiversity – Adopted July 2009

Trees and Development Sites – Adopted January 2009

### **Greater Cambridge Local Plan**

29. Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council are working together to create a joint Local Plan for the two areas. This is the first time that there will be a joint Local Plan, and it will ensure that there is a consistent approach to planning and building across both areas over the next 20 years. The 'First Proposals' for the Plan were published in August for consideration by both Councils.

### **Environmental Impact Assessment Screening**

30. A formal Request for a Screening Opinion was sent to both South Cambridgeshire District Council and Cambridge City Council on the 27<sup>th</sup> April 2020 given that the planning application site straddles both administrative boundaries. Most of the site area falls within South Cambridgeshire where the main area of redevelopment will take place. The two access points onto Cowley Road fall within the City Council's administrative boundary. In a response dated the 1<sup>st</sup> July 2020, Greater Cambridge Planning responded to confirm that an Environmental Assessment was not required.

### **Consultation**

#### **Milton Parish Council**

31. Neutral, remain concerned over the heights of the proposed buildings.

#### **Air quality**

32. No objection, subject to planning condition requiring a low emission strategy.

#### **Archaeology**

33. No objection and does not think that an archaeological works condition would be necessary.

### **Cambridge Airport**

34. No objection

### **CamCycle**

35. Objection, comments summarised below.
36. The cycleways are very narrow, especially at each of the driveways where they narrow further at the worst point, where there are conflicts and changes in level.
37. They are repeatedly interrupted by driveways, giving priority to drivers and abandoning people cycling where they need help and legibility the most.
38. They have improper use of tactile paving at each junction and driveway: there should not be tactile paving in the cycleway at each such vehicular cross-over — that kind of tactile paving only belongs on footways.
39. There is also a pedestrian crossing where the tactile paving is improperly in the middle of the cycleway: this constitutes a slip hazard and is also a poor treatment for pedestrians who are expected to stand on a cycleway while waiting to cross the road.
40. The cycleway will be full of poles and other street furniture due to its location squeezed up against the carriageway instead of being properly separated by a buffer zone.
41. Internal cycle parking for cargo bikes should be better designed.
42. Not in favour of two tier cycle parking, but if it is to be used then the applicant should use 'gas assisted' lifting struts. Such assistance makes a big difference in the usability of two-tier cycle parking.
43. Recommends that the applicant contacts Camcycle in order to ensure the further revised details of the cycling infrastructure and facilities are suitable for use.
44. Officer comment – amendments have been made to address these concerns.

### **Contaminated land**

45. No objection, subject to planning condition

### **Design Out Crime Officer**

46. Supportive

### **Drainage**

47. No objection subject to conditions

### **Ecology Officer**

48. No objection subject to conditions

### **Environment Agency**

49. No objection

### **Environmental Health**

50. No objection subject to planning conditions relating to noise and lighting

### **Fire and Rescue**

51. No objection, subject to planning condition requiring fire hydrants.

### **Highways County**

52. The materials proposed by the applicant on the land within the adopted public highway must comply with the Housing Estate Road Construction Specification.
53. Planning conditions will be required for a Traffic management plan and a Management and maintenance standards for highways within the site.

### **Highways England**

54. No objection

### **Landscape Officer**

55. No objection subject to conditions.
56. Previous concerns regarding vulnerable trees at the edges of the site have been resolved through the removal of the turning circle at Building 2 and the removal of parallel parking bays on the approach to Building 1.
57. The car park roof should be an intensive rather than an extensive green roof and thus allow a wider diversity of growing stock so that it reads as a landscape and not as a 'lawn' up high. There is scope for the area to contribute to the biodiversity gain in the area. This can be addressed by planning condition. Additional trees have been included at the woodland fringes of the site to improve the woodland offer along the edge of the A14.
58. The Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment approach and methodology is generally acceptable. Adjustments to Views 1, 2 and 3 have clarified what is 'behind' and what is 'in front' of the buildings. The narrative responding to City Council Policy 60 has been included and is acceptable.

59. It is considered that issues associated with cycle and pedestrian access are the remaining problem areas. The consultee team of Urban Design, Highways and Landscape have discussed at length some potential solutions which may help to resolve user hierarchy, dedicated space, and usability issues.
60. Officer comment – amendments have been made to address these concerns.

#### **LLFA**

61. No objection subject to conditions

#### **Sustainability Officer**

62. The applicant has provided a full and comprehensive energy and sustainability strategy for the proposed development and in general terms supports the proposals from a sustainable construction perspective. Suggests planning conditions requiring:
  - a) implementation of proposed Renewable Energy Strategy;
  - b) a BRE issued Design Stage Certificate demonstrating that BREEAM 'excellent' will be met; and
  - c) a BRE issued post Construction 4 Certificate indicating that the approved BREEAM rating has been met.

#### **Urban Design Officer**

63. Supports the conclusions of the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment.
64. Accepts the amendments that have been made on relation to the accessible parking.
65. Still has concerns over quality and functionality of the routes for cyclists and pedestrians, with route widths falling below best practice.
66. Cycle parking design has gone some way in addressing concerns, and the is now acceptable subject to condition to secure gas-assisted lifting of the 'Josta' two-level cycle parking design and the implementation of space identified for future expansion of cycle parking.
67. Elevations and materials issues have been resolved. Colours for key façade elements can be agreed through planning condition.
68. Until the quality of the access routes with regards to cyclists and pedestrians is resolved, then the scheme cannot be supported in urban design terms.
69. Officer comment – amendments have been made to address these concerns.

### **Transport Assessment**

70. No objection subject to an agreed mitigation package.

### **Tree Officer**

71. No objection subject to conditions.

### **Representations from members of the public**

72. 20 comments from interested parties, all concerned about the design of the cycling access and cycling infrastructure.
73. These comments can all be collated into concerns that the proposed cycleways fail to uphold the design principles of LTN 1/20, namely: safety, comfort, attractiveness, directness, and coherency. The cycleways and adjacent footways are narrow, repeatedly interrupted by driveways, have improper use of tactile paving, and are littered with street furniture. Their concerns also extend to policies HQ/1 and TI/2.

### **The site and its surroundings**

74. The site is situated in the north-western part of St John's Innovation Park (SJIP), which lies between Cowley Road and Milton Road and currently consists of office buildings and associated car parks. The proposed development site is surrounded by a mature edge landscape and bounded by the raised embankments of the A14 to the north and Milton Road to the west. Edinburgh House forms part of the southern application boundary with the existing Innovation Centre to the east. Beyond that, lies Cowley Road and the protected City Wildlife site hedgerow. The Jane Coston Cycle Bridge is located immediately to the north.
75. The site is approximately 2.65 hectares in area and is in the ownership of St John's College. The Vitrum building and its immediate curtilage in the north eastern corner of the Park falls outside the College's ownership.
76. The wider St John's Innovation Park is approximately 9.46 ha in size and forms a triangular shape adjacent to Milton Road on the A14.
77. The immediate surroundings of the site are formed by major road routes to the north and west with the other edges formed by existing office buildings and landscaping within the Innovation Park.
78. The site falls within the North East Cambridge Area of Major Change as defined by the Cambridge Local Plan (2018) and South Cambridge Local Plan (2018).

Most of the application site lies within South Cambridgeshire District Council's administrative boundary, but with the two sections of the vehicle access leading onto Cowley Road falling within Cambridge City's boundary.

79. Policy 15 of the City Local Plan, and Policy SS/4 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan, allocate the area for high quality mixed-use development, primarily for employment uses within use classes B1, B2 and B8, as well as a range of supporting commercial, retail, leisure and residential uses (subject to acceptable environmental conditions). The local plans do not specify the amount of development, site capacities, or timescales for development, deferring such matters to the preparation of the joint AAP, which is still in its early stages.

## **The proposal**

80. The proposed development includes the demolition of the existing St John's House office building to facilitate the erection of 2 new office buildings and a 'transport hub' around a new central square, and the modification and extension to existing accesses from Cowley Road. The application forms Phase 1 of a longer-term redevelopment of the wider SJIP.
81. Both South Cambridgeshire District Council and Cambridge City Council have identified the area known as North East Cambridge as a location for significant new development including taller buildings constructed at a higher density.
82. Consequently, this Phase 1 site together with the other phases included within the concept masterplan look to bring forward tall buildings within a landscaped setting. This is consistent with the broad aims of the emerging Area Action Plan.
83. The applicant is proposing 3 steps within this first phase of development. These 3 steps are -
84. Construction Step 1A –  
This is the construction of the first office buildings (termed Building 01, known as the Dirac Building) and the transport hub. Building 01 is proposed to be 6 storeys with a height of 27.2 metres. The gross internal area of the Building will be 10,513 square metres. The transport hub will be a 4 storey building with a height of 11 metres. The proposed transport hub will have a total gross internal area of 10,309 square metres and will provide parking for 309 vehicles. It will also have a gym, showers and changing rooms on the ground floor with an area of 385 square metres. St John's House will be retained while Building 01 and the transport hub are developed.

85. Construction Step 1B –  
This second sub-phase will see the demolition of St. John's House (3,350 square metres gross internal floorspace), and the creation of temporary landscaping on its footprint and environs.
86. Construction Step 1C –  
This final sub phase will see the construction of the second office building (Building 02). Building 02 will be a 5 storey building with a height of 23.3 metres. It will have a gross internal area of 9,912 square metres).
87. Both office buildings will include cycle parking in safe and secure locations. The applicant has amended the scheme to propose a total of 713 cycle parking spaces across the site. This is in excess of the current policy requirement.
88. There will be a mix of single and double stacked bikes together with room for 30 cargo bikes. An on-site cycle maintenance facility will be available during certain periods of the day to provide for maintenance and repairs during working hours. Demand for e-scooters is also likely to increase over time.
89. The applicant has suggested that the precise cycle and scooter parking layout is subject to a planning condition requiring the details to be approved and implemented before the first occupation of each building. It is considered that this is a reasonable suggestion.
90. The transport hub is designed to provide parking for 309 cars together with a gym/fitness studio and showering / changing facilities on the ground floor. The gym is for the use of tenants within the innovation park and will be controlled through a membership scheme with the gym available both before and after work to meet demand from employees.
91. As part of the drainage and biodiversity strategies, an extensive green roof is proposed for the top level of the transport hub. The green roof will accommodate a variety of species to increase biodiversity with a pre-grown matt being specified to ensure that the mixes are well established and become a biodiversity asset from day one. Additionally, the large extent of the green roof will also act as attenuation for rainwater.
92. The application has been amended during the course of the submission. This was to address comments received in relation to both applications. The submitted 'Detailed response to all consultee comments received' includes a summary of each of the comments received and the applicant's response.
93. In response to the consultations made, the applicant has made the following changes -

- a) Provided a Landscape and Visual Appraisal Addendum which specifically considers the proposals against Cambridge Local Plan Policy 60 and provides photowires for viewpoints 1, 3 and 5;
- b) Revised the cycle routes through the development to give priority to cyclists over car drivers and reducing the number of motor vehicle access points;
- c) Reduced the amount of surface parking including the removal of all of the proposed parking within the site accessed via the northern access and the parking along the western edge of the southern access with the latter enabling the trees in this location to be retained;
- d) Clarifying and increased the cycle parking provision within Buildings 01 and 02 to ensure that there is a minimum of 20% Sheffield stands in each, increased the space for cargo bikes, the same number of spaces in each building and the potential to provide further provision in Building 02 should the need arise;
- e) Revised the elevations of Buildings 01 and 02 to omit the mesh originally shown around the cycle stores and replacing it with glazing; bringing down to ground level the black painted glazing at the chamfered corners to help identify the cycle store entrances; and reducing the recess depth of the gym entrance screen and moving the entrance door more centrally within the screen to give it more visibility and greater prominence when approached from St Johns Square.

94. The initial amended submission was made up of:

- a. Revised plans
- b. Detailed response to all consultee comments received;
- c. Landscape and Visual Appraisal Addendum with Appendices 1-4;
- d. Phase 1 Design Note: Planning Comments Response (Landscape Consultation) from drainage consultants Ramboll; and
- e. Cycle Storage information from Cycle-Works.

95. Separately, a Transport Technical Note CCC001\_2 was submitted to the Local Highway Authority, and calculations requested by the Lead Local Flood Authority were also provided.

96. A note providing the requested clarification in relation to Habitats of Principal Importance and habitat target condition, and an updated biodiversity net gain calculation based on the revised landscaping plans was also provided.

97. More recent amendments were made to address issues relating to cycleway provision, after considering the comments of the Cambridge Cycling Campaign, the Urban Design Officer, and the Landscape Officer.

98. The most recent amendment also clarified some of the aspects of the sustainability elements of the proposal. These included:
- a. Energy strategy and climate change mitigation summary
  - b. Design note – SUDS design
  - c. Cycle parking layout cargo alternative design
99. The energy strategy and climate change mitigation strategy describes how the proposed all-electric energy strategy will be delivered through the use of air source heat pumps. The SUDS design note demonstrates how the use of SUDS can enable a BREEAM excellent accreditation, and the alternative bike parking layout show an increase in the amount of cargo bike and other bike spaces.

## **Planning Assessment**

### **Background**

100. Policy SS/4 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan sets out the proposed development approach for Cambridge Northern Fringe East and Cambridge North railway station. The policy advises that the amount of development, site capacity, time scales and phasing of development will be established through the preparation of an Area Action Plan (AAP) and that the final boundaries of land that the joint AAP will consider will be determined by the AAP.
101. The policy sets out criteria for development proposals including that they do not compromise opportunities for the redevelopment of the wider area. Paragraph 3.31 of the supporting text states; “planning applications submitted before the adoption of the AAP will be considered on their own merits and subject to ensuring that they would not prejudice the outcome of the AAP process and the achievement of the comprehensive vision for the area as a whole that will be established by the AAP.”
102. The application site is located within the North East Cambridge Area Action Plan (NECAAP) area. The NECAAP covers an area of 182ha and includes all of St John’s Innovation Park. A draft NECAAP (Regulation 18) was consulted on between 27 July 2020 and October 2020.
103. Land to the east of Milton Road lies within the AAP area and includes the Milton Wastewater Treatment Plant (WTP). Redevelopment of this land requires the relocation of the WTP, and the proposal has received significant Government Housing Infrastructure Funding. Relocation of the WTP will enable the comprehensive planning of the North East Cambridge Area, and Anglian Water

have commenced a Development Consent Order (DCO) process to enable the relocation to take place.

104. Work on the NECAAP is progressing to complete the Regulation 18 stage, to consider the responses received and prepare the Proposed Submission AAP. This is likely to be completed by the end of 2021. It is then proposed that both Councils would decide ahead of the DCO Examination to agree the AAP for Regulation 19 publication. Carrying out the consultation would be subject to the successful completion of the DCO process. This is because of the need at Examination to be able to demonstrate that the development proposed on the site could be delivered. It is anticipated that the AAP process would pause until the outcome of the DCO is known, which is likely to be Autumn 2023. This would mean the AAP is not submitted for examination until Spring 2024.
105. Paragraphs 48-50 of the NPPF set out the following points regarding the status of emerging plans with respect to decision making.
106. Local planning authorities may give weight to relevant policies in emerging plans according to the stage of preparation (the more advanced, the greater the weight), the extent to which there are unresolved objections to relevant policies, and the degree of consistency of the relevant policies in the emerging plan to the NPPF.
107. In the context of the presumption of sustainable development, arguments that an application is premature are unlikely to justify a refusal of planning permission other than in limited circumstances where both;
  - a) the development proposed is so substantial, or its cumulative effect would be so significant, that to grant planning permission would undermine the plan-making process by predetermining decisions about the scale, location or phasing of new development that are central to the emerging plan and;
  - b) the emerging plan is at an advanced stage but is not yet formally part of the development plan for the area.
108. Refusal of planning permission on grounds of prematurity will seldom be justified where a draft plan has yet to be submitted for examination; or – in the case of a neighbourhood plan – before the end of the local planning authority publicity period on the draft plan. Where planning permission is refused on grounds of prematurity, the local planning authority will need to indicate clearly how granting permission for the development concerned would prejudice the outcome of the plan-making process.
109. It is considered that the proposed development is not of a such significant scale which, if granted, would undermine the plan making process.

## **Principle**

110. One of the cornerstones of achieving sustainable development through the planning system is helping to building a strong, competitive economy. The NPPF (paragraph 80) recognises that –
- “planning decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity and allow each area to build on its strengths”.
111. Policy S/2 of the Local Plan sets out the vision for the growth within South Cambridgeshire which includes supporting its position as a world leader in research and technology-based industries.
112. Policy S/5 identifies an objectively assessed need for an additional 22,000 jobs over the plan period to 2031 to support the Cambridge Cluster. This equates to around 143,000 square metres of additional floorspace in the “B” use classes.
113. An Employment Land and Economic Development Study 2020 (ELEDs) led by GL Hearn jointly commissioned by South Cambridgeshire and Cambridge City Councils, has recently been published to support the emerging Greater Cambridge Local Plan. For the plan period to 2041, taking account of the committed land supply, it identifies an expected shortfall in B1a/b provision of 50,000-100,000 square metres and that this type of accommodation is lacking in the City and around North East Cambridge.
114. The application seeks permission for the demolition of the existing office building (St John’s House) and associated structures and the erection of 2 Class B1 buildings and a transport hub, new landscaping, parking, and associated infrastructure. Policy 15 of the City Local Plan, and Policy SS/4 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan, allocate the area for high quality mixed-use development, primarily for employment uses such as B1 and B2, as well as a range of supporting commercial, retail, leisure, and residential uses (subject to acceptable environmental conditions).
115. As such the principal of the development is considered to be in accordance with the NPPF and policy 15 of the Cambridge Local Plan and SS/4 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan.

## **Air Quality**

116. Policy SC/12 of the Local Plan is concerned with air quality impacts and explains that where development proposals would be subject to unacceptable

air quality standards or would have an unacceptable impact on air quality standards they will be refused.

117. The policy further identifies that Development will not be permitted where it would adversely affect air quality in an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA). The Council has declared an Air Quality Management Area due to exceedances of the annual mean NO<sub>2</sub> and 24-hour mean PM<sub>10</sub> NAQO along the A14 between Bar Hill and Milton, to the north west of the application site. The site is located outside the AQMA.
118. An Air Quality Impact Screening Assessment has been submitted in support of the application. The Greater Cambridge Sustainable Design and Construction SPD states that “Developers of all major planning applications should ... complete the air quality questions within the Sustainability Checklist. If one or more of these criteria are met a detailed Air Quality Assessment including dispersion modelling may be required.” Each of the air quality questions has been addressed. It is concluded that, as none of the criteria are met, a detailed Air Quality Assessment is not required to support this planning application.
119. The traffic generated by the development is not considered to be significant and will therefore not have a significant effect on air quality in the area. The qualitative assessment of dust due to construction and demolition activities found that the potential (pre-mitigation) impacts ranged from Low to Medium Risk. Of the twelve risk levels assigned to each activity/impact type combination, three of these are ‘Medium’, five ‘Low’ and, as ecological effects are not relevant for this development, four were not applicable. A table of dust mitigation measures considered appropriate for this site is presented, based on the estimated risk of dust impacts. Assuming that the effective mitigation measures are carried out, the residual effect will be ‘not significant’.
120. In line with policy SC/12 in aiming to improve air quality, the proposal will be required to submit a Low Emissions Strategy by planning condition (condition 11).
121. The proposed development is not considered to give rise to any significant air quality impacts. The proposal is therefore in accordance with the NPPF and policy SC/12.

### **Biodiversity**

122. National planning policies seek to ensure that biodiversity is conserved and enhanced. At a local level, planning policy NH/4 requires new development to maintain, enhance, restore, or add to biodiversity. Policy 15 states that that

proposals should protect the hedgerow on the east side of Cowley Road which is a City Wildlife Site.

123. The Site is not covered by any statutory or non-statutory wildlife site designation and is completely isolated from surrounding wildlife sites by existing urban infrastructure. Milton Road Hedgerows City Wildlife Site is located in close proximity to the Site, on the far east side of Cowley Road.
124. The submitted Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Protected Species Assessment concludes that this wildlife site is unlikely to be directly or indirectly impacted by development activity within the St John's Innovation Park site given the lack of direct habitat connectivity between the two areas.
125. The Site is dominated by artificial habitats of limited nature conservation value, notably buildings, hard standings, and amenity grassland. Habitats such as the pond, the semi-improved neutral grassland, the scattered trees, and the plantation woodland are of slightly elevated value in comparison, though they are not high value examples of these habitat types.
126. Overall, the Site is not considered to be of particularly high value to faunal species, although the plantation woodland and dense areas of introduced shrubs were of value to a small range of nesting bird species and small numbers of bats for foraging and commuting.
127. The submitted Phase 1 Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment Report demonstrates that the development can achieve a biodiversity net habitat gain on the Site through created habitats including the green roof, grassland, woodland, orchard, and rain gardens. The submitted Full Master Plan Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment Report demonstrates that a significant gain can be achieved across the wider site as part of subsequent phases.
128. The proposed biodiversity enhancement complies with the NPPF, policy NH/4 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan, and Policy 15 of the Cambridge City Council Local Plan.

### **Character and Appearance**

129. The NPPF identifies, as part of the "social" objective of sustainable development, to foster a well-designed and safe built environment. It also states that development which make efficient use of land should be supported taking the importance of securing well-designed, attractive, and healthy places into account (section 12).

130. Paragraph 130 of the NPPF states that decisions should ensure that developments are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, whilst not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities). It goes on to advise that development proposals should be visually attractive resulting from good architecture, layout, and effective landscaping.
131. This is supported by policy HQ/1 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan which requires new development to respond positively to its context to create distinctive, high quality, inclusive and safe places. New development should also be constructed in a sustainable manner using high quality materials with integrated landscaping and enhanced biodiversity.

### ***Elevations and materials***

132. Proposed facades, architectural language and materials are clearly explained in the Design and Access statement. The proposed built form was changed during the pre-application process, to help moderate the massing of the built form when viewed from outside the site.
133. The proposals will create a strong built form presence at the northern approach into the City, with chamfered facades and an offset grid of windows adding a more dynamic quality to the 'outer faces' of the buildings. These will layer with the retained existing mature vegetation and trees.
134. Within the site, a more consistent level between the two new office buildings will create a sense of composure around the new 'Square'. Roof terraces on the 'quieter' internal side of the site provide the potential for animated spaces at upper levels. The overall architectural language is responsive to energy performance and orientation, with curved spandrels and vertical fins providing relief and subtle variation.
135. Double height, ground floor chamfers help to announce the main entrances into the two new office buildings. Roof top plant will be visually contained at upper levels through a screen that continues the language of the two buildings. An extensive green roof on top of the transport hub responds to views from inside the site.
136. Assessment - Subject to appropriate planning conditions, the proposed elevations and materials are considered to comply with the NPPF and policies HQ/1 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2018.

### ***Scale and Massing***

137. The application is accompanied by a Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA), which identifies 17 public viewpoints, including both local and wider viewpoints. The massing of the proposal has been represented as photowires in 6 viewpoints that are contained within Appendix 5 of the LVA. The LVA indicates that the scheme will be at its most visible as you get close to the site, with the most open viewpoints identified as those from the immediate vicinity of the A14 and the cycle bridge.
138. The raised highway embankments along Milton Road and the A14 itself contain the more distant views to the north-west, with viewpoints from the east, generally filtered by intervening landscape. Viewpoint 11 and 14 photowire representations, show that while the very upper sections of proposed buildings 01 and 02 will be visible in the winter months, from an urban design perspective the forms are not considered to dominate the intervening landscape nor challenge the overall silhouette of the established trees.
139. The proposed massing as appreciated from the closest and most open A14 'gateway' views were key points of discussion at pre-application stage for urban design and landscape officers. Page 55 of the DAS illustrates how the massing evolved and was manipulated during pre-application discussions.
140. Viewpoint 1 provides a photowire representation of the massing. Whilst building 01 and building 02 will form prominent additions, the lower subservient form of the car park (travel hub) at the north western corner of the site, allows for the buildings to read as two distinct separate volumes. This moderates the mass of the buildings at this gateway location and allows for a layering of the buildings with the dense mature vegetation and existing tall trees in the foreground. The chamfered northern elevations to the buildings help to create interest to the overall building volume.
141. Assessment - Subject to conditions, the proposed scale and massing of the development is considered to comply with the NPPF and policies HQ/1 and HQ/2 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2018.

### **Flood Risk and Drainage**

142. Policy CC/7: Water Quality requires that in order to protect and enhance water quality, all development proposals must demonstrate that there are adequate water supply, sewerage, and land drainage systems. Policy CC/8 Sustainable Drainage Systems requires development proposals to incorporate appropriate sustainable surface water drainage systems (SuDS) appropriate to the nature of the site. Policy CC/9 Managing Flood Risk states that development will only be permitted where the sequential test and exception tests established by the

National Planning Policy Framework demonstrate the development is acceptable.

143. A flood risk assessment and sustainable drainage strategy has been submitted in support of the application. The site is located within flood zone 1 and is a “less vulnerable” use. Flood Zone 1 is land assessed as having a less than 1 in 1,000 annual probability of river or sea flooding (<0.1%). The development therefore meets national flood risk guidance regarding being an appropriate location for this type of development.
144. Risk from surface water flooding and artificial sources are also considered to be low. Groundwater levels have been recorded on site at a level of 1.0 metre below ground level and the submitted Flood Risk Assessment concludes that the risk from this source is medium. Waterproofing measures other than those implemented as standard practice are not though deemed necessary for inclusion within the building construction. It is recommended that ground floor levels are set so that should groundwater emerge in extreme conditions, water would not be able to enter directly into the building. This will be secured by planning condition (condition 3).
145. In accordance with CIRIA 753: The SuDS Manual guidance, infiltration to the ground was investigated. However, groundwater levels are too high to implement infiltration measures successfully and discharge to a watercourse is not feasible based on the site location. Following the SuDS hierarchy, controlled discharge to a sewer is therefore proposed.
146. The proposed surface and foul water drainage layout is shown on drawing 1620005574-RAM-XX-00-DR-C-100 P03 (Appendix 5 of the Phase 1 Drainage Strategy and SuDS Report) and includes on-site attenuation to limit surface discharge.
147. The Lead Local Flood Authority have no objection in principle to the proposed development. The applicant has demonstrated that surface water from the proposed development can be managed through using green roofs, rainwater harvesting, rain gardens, permeable paving, and below-ground attenuation and swales. Surface water will then discharge into the site-wide private surface water drains at greenfield rate (2 litres per second per hectare), which then outfalls into the Anglian Water sewer in Cowley Road.
148. The applicant has submitted Design Note 04 SuDS design. This clarifies the strategy for proposed water re-use. It describes the rainwater harvesting tanks in each building, with each tank having the ability to store 35 cubic metres of rainwater for reuse in each building. It also describes the living roofs proposal,

with green roofs and 650 square metres of rain gardens proposed to collect surface water run-off from the two commercial buildings.

149. The foul water drainage will be discharged to ground level via gravity where it will then connect to an external below ground gravity drainage network which will then discharge into the existing Anglian Water public sewer in Cowley Road.
150. In the event permission is granted and the developer submits their formal application to connect to public sewers, Anglian Water will then make the necessary plans to accommodate the flows from this development.
151. It is considered that the proposed surface water drainage strategy complies with the NPPF and policies CC7, CC/8 and CC/9 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan.

### **Land Contamination**

152. Policy SC/11 Contaminated Land requires that where development is proposed on contaminated land or land suspected of being impacted by contaminants, the Council will require developers to include an assessment of the extent of contamination and any possible risks. Proposals will only be permitted where land is, or can be made, suitable for the proposed use.
153. Policy 33 Contaminated land promotes development where there are no adverse health impact to future occupiers and surrounding occupiers. Where contamination is known to exist then the necessary assessments need to be undertaken.
154. The application is accompanied by a site investigation report. The anticipated level of risk at the site from contamination has been assessed to be low.
155. The Council's environmental health officer agrees with the report's recommendation that there is a very low risk of harm to human health from the land on the application site. As the site is not being developed for a sensitive end use, no contaminated land condition is required. However, to cover the potential for unforeseen contamination, an informative will be attached to address this issue.
156. It is considered that the proposal complies with the land contamination policies SC/11 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan and 33 of the Cambridge City Local Plan.

## **Landscaping/Trees**

157. Policy NH/8: 'Mitigating the Impact of Development in and adjoining the Green Belt' requires development on the edges of settlements which are surrounded by the Green Belt to include careful landscaping and design measures of a high quality.
158. Policy HQ/1 requires the provision of high quality landscaping and public spaces that integrate with its surroundings.
159. The landscaping proposals for the site largely retain the existing trees and planting along the site's Milton Road and A14 edges, as well as key areas of trees within the site. This will then be supplemented by a mix of formal and informal spaces to encourage different uses - a central landscape area which itself will be made up of different areas and landscaped links between buildings and reinforcement of the existing woodland belt along the northwest boundary.
160. It is considered that the proposed landscaping scheme, including the use of retained trees, complies with policies NH/8 and HQ/1 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan.

## **Layout and movement**

161. The layout and movement network has evolved significantly during pre-application discussions. Previous iterations of the layout had a one-way road that hugged the entire perimeter of the site, funnelled vehicle exit movements to the bottom of the A14 cycle bridge and led to a significant loss of existing trees and vegetation. This has been completely rethought.
162. The submitted approach proposes to modify and extend the existing routes into the site, providing one main motor vehicle access route to the new 'travel hub'. Vehicle movements for the 'travel hub' are taken off Cowley Road as soon as possible helping to reduce the vehicle pressure at the foot of the cycle bridge. This key design move has created an overall spatial structure that is informed by and works around key existing mature trees.
163. The Council's urban design officer is broadly supportive of the proposal layout but does not support some elements of the cycle route through the site. It is considered though that these are detailed issues that can be addressed by planning condition that will require the applicant to discuss the details with Camcycle.
164. Policy HQ/2 of the Local Plan encourages the provision of public art as a means of enhancing the quality of the development. Although the policy does

not make public art a mandatory requirement, other recent developments nearby within the Science Park include public art provision (eg: Plots1-21). The policy states this can be on site or through a financial contribution.

165. No public art strategy has been put forward by the applicant and it is considered that appropriate on-site public art provision can be secured by condition (condition 20).
166. Subject to conditions, the proposed layout and movement network is considered to comply with the NPPF and policies HQ/1 and HQ/2 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2018.

### **Sustainable Construction/Carbon Reduction**

167. The NPPF notes that the planning system should support the transition to a low carbon future and great weight should be given to outstanding or innovative designs which promote high levels of sustainability (paragraph 131).
168. Policy CC/1 requires new development to embed the principles of climate change mitigation and adaptation into the development. Policy CC/3 requires new major developments to reduce carbon emissions by a minimum of 10% through the use of on-site renewable energy. Policy 28 states that all development should take the available opportunities to integrate the principles of sustainable design and construction into the design of proposals.
169. Policy CC/4 requires proposals for non-residential development to achieve a minimum water efficiency standard of 2 BREEAM credits for water use. Policy 31 refers to the use of green or brown roofs to help integrated water management. The Sustainable Design and Construction SPD provides further guidance on implementation of relevant Local Plan policies regarding sustainable design.
170. The Energy and Sustainability Strategy outlines the five defined factors which form the basis of the sustainability framework, namely the people, the building, the social network, the natural environment, and the economic aspects. The Strategy follows a use less energy, then supply energy efficiently and then supply energy from renewable sources hierarchy.
171. The use less energy strategy has informed a façade design that introduces external shading via vertical fins. This will reduce the risk of overheating, whilst allowing daylight to penetrate and allow for passive solar heating in winter months.

172. Energy Reduction measures are anticipated to achieve up to a 27.0% reduction in CO2 emissions with Part L 2013 Carbon Factors and a 16.7% reduction in CO2 emissions SAP10 Carbon Factors.
173. The applicant has proposed an all-electric energy strategy to support and align with St John's College's Climate Crisis Commitments and Action Plan. Air Source Heat Pumps (ASHP) have been proposed as the most suitable, utilising the best low carbon technologies with the current methodology.
174. The air source heat pumps will feed a distribution of a low temperature hot water network for space heating, and a chilled water network for space cooling.
175. The all-electric strategy will result in an 11% reduction in CO2 emissions with Part L 2013 Carbon Factors, and a 37.8% reduction in CO2 emissions SAP10 Carbon Factors.
176. The total on site CO2 savings are therefore –
- 35.1% reduction in CO2 emissions with Part L 2013 Carbon Factors, and  
48.2% reduction in CO2 emissions SAP10 Carbon Factors
177. In terms of water consumption, the water saving measures to be included within the development will achieve a minimum 50% improvement over the BREEAM baseline building water consumption. This will achieve the maximum of 5 BREEAM Wat 01 credits which exceed the requirement of policy CC/4. This has been achieved by maximising the roof area available to the rainwater harvesting system.
178. The Council's sustainability officer is in support of the applicant's approach to sustainable construction subject to conditions. The proposal is therefore considered to comply with the NPPF and policies CC1, CC/3 and CC/4 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan and Policies 28 and 31 of the Cambridge City Council Local Plan.

### **Transport and Highways**

179. Policy TI/2 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan requires new development to reduce the need to travel particularly by car and promote sustainable forms of transport. The policy requires new development to demonstrate that it will mitigate the likely impacts (including cumulative impacts) particularly in areas where there are significant transport implications and that opportunities for sustainable travel are maximised.

180. North East Cambridge is one such location where there are significant issues regarding the capacity of the local highway network in the AM and PM peaks. Policy TI/3 sets out that on site car parking should be design-led and based on indicative ratios set out in Figure 11 of the Local Plan. Cycle parking requirements are applied as minimum standards.
181. Policy 80 of the Cambridge City Local Plan states that development will be supported where it demonstrates that prioritisation of access is by walking, cycling and public transport, and is accessible for all.
182. Policy 81 states that developments will only be permitted where they do not have an unacceptable transport impact.
183. The applicant has submitted a Transport Assessment and Workplace Travel Plan. These were produced before the Coronavirus pandemic and reflects the local transport network before this period. This has been assessed by the County Council's Transport Team.

### **Greater Cambridge Partnership**

184. The GCP aims to develop a sustainable transport network for Greater Cambridge that sets out to continue striving for improvements to public transport and active travel to make it easier to get into, out and around Cambridge.
185. Transport improvements prioritised by the GCP include the Cambridge to Waterbeach Greenway which goes past this site along Cowley Road.

### **North East Cambridge Transport Position Statement**

186. A Transport Position Statement (TPS) has been issued by the County Council regarding development in North East Cambridge. The County's approach is informed by the transport evidence base for the emerging NECAAP, including the A10 Study, which establishes that Milton Road is already at capacity.
187. The studies recommend the application of a vehicle trip budget in preference to providing additional highway capacity to accommodate new growth. The trip budget works by calculating the existing peak trips generated within the area and apportioning these to the individual sites.
188. The purpose of the TPS is to ensure that development proposals within north east Cambridge that come ahead of the NECAAP submission, do not prejudice or frustrate the delivery of the strategic transport solution or wider development aspirations of the NECAAP area.

189. Fundamentally, the Highways Authority will not consider future development proposals to be acceptable unless they (i) present proposals as part of a clear area-wide transport strategy, (ii) address cumulative impacts, and (iii) accord with the following key transport principles;
- a) Future growth will need to be delivered in a way that does not add additional car trips to the network;
  - b) Applications within the area must seek to reduce or at worst equal current peak hour vehicle trip generation and should include measures to further reduce this over time;
  - c) Applications in the area must have a significantly reduced parking allocation / ratio for employment and housing;
  - d) Each proposal within the AAP area should consider the impacts of cumulative development and provide effective mitigation.
  - e) Development within the NEC area is required to make financial contributions towards strategic infrastructure.
  - f) Proposed development must not lead to unacceptable air quality.
  - g) Developments should indicate how they will engage with and support the promotion of walking and cycling to and from key nodes – and within the area
  - h) Proposals will be expected to provide for future “area wide” travel planning initiatives as part of the AAP which would seek to ensure a coordinated approach to travel planning across the whole of the site, rather than rely solely on site specific travel plans.
190. The proposal meets with the general principles of the transport position statement and no objection has been raised by the Highway Authority in this regard. These matters are considered in more detail below.

### **Vehicular Access – Cowley Road**

191. The existing vehicular site accesses will be retained from Cowley Road and these will route to the rear of each of the two proposed office buildings, with the southern access road also providing the access to the Transport Hub building.
192. Earlier iterations of the design had a scheme that consisted of a one-way loop road around the site. This was considered unsatisfactory from a cyclist user perspective, particularly for cyclists coming from the Jane Coston cycle bridge, as the whole of the vehicular traffic movement from the site would come out on the northern access point close to the bridge landing point.
193. The northern access point will be used for a limited number of vehicles to access the northern building as well as to continue to access the existing ‘Vitrium’ building. The revised access plan has significantly reduced the

potential impact of motor vehicles on the ease of movement for cyclists and pedestrians in this part of the site.

194. Cowley Road then connects to the A1309 Milton Road at a signal-controlled cross-road junction, which is a key arterial route to the city centre (south) and the A14 and A10 (north).
195. The existing access roads into the site will be reduced in width to 5.0 metres (narrowing to 3.7 metres wide at the crossing point), running from Cowley Road to the rear of the two new buildings and to the Transport Hub.
196. Cowley Road itself will be reduced in width in two locations, to ease pedestrian and cyclists crossing from the eastern half of the road. This detail of this work will be subject to separate s278 agreement with the County Council.

### **Cycle and Pedestrian Access**

197. Cycle and pedestrian access will take the form of segregated cycle and pedestrian footpaths along both access roads. These will be 4.6 metres wide, segregated into a 2.8 metre wide cyclepath and a 1.8 metre wide footpath.
198. There will be one vehicular access point across this route. This should be designed as a 'Copenhagen' style route, with cyclists and pedestrians having priority at the junction. This level of detail will be the subject of a planning condition (condition 10).
199. Concern has been raised by CamCycle and the Urban Design Officer, as well as other members of the public, that the proposals do not meet the standards set out in the Governments Local Transport Note LTN 1/20, providing guidance for cycle infrastructure design.
200. LTN 1/20 has five core design principles. These are that cycle networks and routes are –
  - i) Coherent – routes that connect, simple to navigate and of consistently high quality.
  - ii) Direct – cycle routes should be at least as direct and preferably more direct than those available for private motor vehicles.
  - iii) Safe – and be perceived to be safe.
  - iv) Comfortable – good quality, well-maintained smooth surfaces with adequate width for the volume of users.
  - v) Attractive – the attractiveness of the route will affect whether people choose cycling as a means of transport.

201. In response to concerns laid out by CamCycle and others, the applicant has made the following amendments –
- i) Reducing the number of junction accesses close to Edinburgh House from 3 to 1, with a reorganisation of the car park in this area to facilitate this.
  - ii) the width of the southern access road narrows to 3.7 metres at the crossing point
  - iii) the width of the northern access road narrows to 4.5 metres after the last car parking access
  - iv) the width of the cycleway is maintained across the internal car parking access points
  - v) revisions to the junctions with Cowley Road, although it should be noted that the final details of these junctions will be expected to be approved through the s278 approval process.
202. It is considered that the proposals generally meet the design standards as set out in LTN 1/20. Cowley Road in particular, will be traffic calmed and the road narrowed to reduce its impact, and most of the motor vehicle traffic will access the site from the southernmost access point.
203. LTN 1/20 states that the desirable minimum width of a 2 way cycleway with a peak hour cycle flow of between 300 and 1000 cyclists should be 3 metres, with an absolute minimum of 2.5 metres. The applicant's proposals are for a cyclepath within the site that is 2.8 metres wide. If the peak hourly flow is less than 300 cyclists, then the absolute minimum width should be 2 metres. It is considered that a 2.8 metre wide cyclepath is an appropriate width for this location within the innovation park.
204. There are some areas within the scheme where more detailed design work will be required, particularly in addressing the issues of coherence and directness. These issues can be appropriately addressed through a suitably worded planning condition (condition 10) to address matters of detail.
205. To address this condition, the applicant will be expected to undertake further design work with organisations such as CamCycle to ensure that the detailed elements of the proposed cycle infrastructure within the site is fit for purpose. This includes, for example, ensuring that the cycle routes are flat, and that they have priority where they meet a road junction. This will be to ensure the as many people as reasonably practicable are enabled to use these cycle routes.

## Parking

206. South Cambridgeshire's indicative car parking standards are 1 space per 30 square metres of business space for buildings over 2,500 square metres. For comparison, the City Council's policy is for 1 space per 40 square metres, although the buildings and car parking are within South Cambridgeshire. The applicant is proposing car parking at 1 space per 45 square metres. This is a significant improvement on the local plan standards and a significant change from the existing parking ratio of 1 space per 13 square metres in this part of the Innovation Park. This shows that the applicant is committed to reducing private vehicle use and will target increased levels of sustainable travel.
207. Further development on St John's Innovation Park will be assessed at the appropriate time against the indicative concept plan set out in the Design and Access Statement submitted with this application. This is aligned with the aspirations of the NECAAP to increase the amount of employment space without increasing the number of car parking spaces.
208. The travel hub approach has followed that which has been advocated in Policy 22 and figure 40 of the draft NECAAP regulation 18 consultation of July 2018. The proposed travel hub is located where indicated in figure 40.
209. Following the development of Phase 1, the available car parking provision in the whole of the St John's Innovation Park will remain at the existing provision of 1,001 spaces. As trip attraction is directly related to car parking provision, the vehicular trip attraction in the peak hours will not increase. This allows the application to be supported in highway terms and accords with the CCC Transport Position Statement of February 2020 and their approach to planning applications along the A10 northern corridor.
210. A planning condition will ensure that a car parking management strategy is submitted and agreed with the Local Planning Authority. This strategy will address how car parking will be managed over the whole of the land within St John's Innovation Park owned by St John's College (condition 13).
211. Cycle parking has also been guided by the District Council's Local Plan. 655 spaces will be provided within the two buildings. In addition, there will be 58 spaces for short-stay cycle parking within the public realm. There are also areas set aside for cycle parking expansion if needed.
212. The applicant has also proposed that between 5 and 10% of the spaces could have provision for electric bike and scooter charging. They have also suggested however that as technology and opportunities for different types of bikes evolve then the precise cycle and scooter parking layout is subject to a

condition requiring the details to be approved and implemented before first occupation of each building (Condition 9). This is considered to be an acceptable approach.

213. Concern had been expressed that about the location of the cargo bike parking spaces, preventing ease of access to the standard bike spaces. This provision has now been increased and there are now 30 spaces proposed for cargo bikes. As stated above, the precise design of the cycle parking areas can be the subject of a planning condition. The condition will also include ensuring the at the two tier cycle parking design includes gas assisted technology to ensure ease of use.
214. A shuttle bus is in operation between St John's Innovation Park and Cambridge North Station, beginning operation in December 2019 and available to all occupiers. The services run at the peak times of 7am-10am in the morning starting at Cambridge North Station, and 4pm-7pm starting at S John's Innovation Centre. The shuttle can seat 16 passengers and runs every 6 minutes during its operating times.
215. The next phase of the shuttle service expansion will be to integrate with park and ride services, as a viable alternative to driving into the Innovation Park. Those using the service will be able to access an app, where it will let users know where the shuttle bus is, to calculate travel times. The shuttle bus allows for users to access sustainable modes of travel and provides a reliable alternative to personal vehicle use.

### **Workplace Travel Plan**

216. A Workplace Travel Plan (WTP) has been submitted with the application for approval. The WTP is focussed on employees who will be working at the site. The majority of the measures proposed within the plan are therefore intended to encourage employees to reduce their reliance on single occupancy private car travel.
217. The current mode of travel for daily staff to St John's Innovation Park is
- Walk 2%
  - Cycle 27%
  - Public transport 3%
  - Car driver 65%
  - Passenger 3%
218. The aspirational target of this WTP is to reduce the number of car drivers from 65% to 38% of staff driving to the site in a personal vehicle over a 5 year

period, in line with the level of car parking proposed on site (1,001 spaces), as agreed with CCC.

## **Trip Generation**

219. Following Phase 1 of the redevelopment, car parking provision on-site would remain at current levels (1,001 spaces). This has been accepted by officers at CCC and Highways England and aligns with the *CCC Transport Position Statement* (February 2020).
220. There are currently about 1700 staff employed on St Johns Innovation Park. With the development this will increase by about 900 staff, with a total of about 2600 employees on the Park on a typical day. To occupy the 1001 car parking spaces within the park, the car driver mode share would subsequently fall from 60% to 38% to fill the car parks on site.
221. The applicant details that the number of cyclists will increase by 171 to 294 arrivals in the AM peak, and 140 to 240 departures in the PM peak. The amount of public transport users will increase by 46 to 79 arrivals in the AM peak, and 37 to 65 departures in the PM peak.
222. Following completion of all subsequent phases of redevelopment at the Innovation Park, there would be a reduction in ratio of parking to floor area and an increase in the level of employment, and so accords with the *North East Cambridge Area Action Plan (NEC AAP) Transport Evidence Base* (20th September 2019) [page 75, Sec 6.2], which states the following: “*Car parking provision has a strong relationship with traffic generation and so parking standards have an important role to play in managing traffic levels associated with development*”. The evidence behind the NEC AAP is that an over-provision of free car parking exacerbates existing issues on the highway network; therefore, as no parking spaces are proposed over the existing level, there will be no increase in vehicle trips to the proposed development.
223. The full redevelopment is expected to be complete by 2042, with subsequent phases detailed in further planning applications and will accord with adopted policy at the time of submission. The level of car parking for the full development will not exceed 1,001 spaces through all phases, and if any spaces are available above this level during any construction phases they will be voided until removal. This will result in a car parking standard of 1 space per 71 square metres.

## Transport Mitigation

224. The NPPF states that LPAs should consider whether otherwise unacceptable development could be made acceptable through the use of conditions or planning obligations. Policy TI/8 of the Local Plan states that planning permission for new developments will only be supported where there are suitable arrangements for the improvement or provision and phasing of infrastructure, services, and facilities necessary to make the scheme acceptable in planning terms.
225. The mitigation for the St Johns Innovation Park application is focused on the need to provide the infrastructure to enable a mode switch from private car to cycling and public transport. The highway capacity has reached its maximum threshold and the area is dependent on significant internal, local, and strategic sustainable transport infrastructure.
226. The mitigation requirement from this development will be to (i) facilitate walking and cycling upgrades on Cowley Road, and (ii) facilitate the delivery of infrastructure in the vicinity of the site (including infrastructure schemes promoted by the Greater Cambridge Partnership, and Combined Authority).
227. The North East Cambridge Area Action Plan Transport Evidence Base report of 20 September 2019 sets out the package of transport infrastructure required to unlock growth in the area (tables 55 and 56). The committed GCP Chisholm Trail and Waterbeach to Cambridge High Quality Public Transport (HQPT) corridor form part of this package. There is a requirement for all developments within the area to contribute to the delivery of this package. This specific development will be required to:
- A) Directly deliver the Cowley Road works
  - B) Contribute to the area-wide Transport Package

### Cowley Road

228. The works on Cowley Road will need to be conditioned to be delivered before first occupation. This will require some flexibility to be built into the condition text to enable the drawings to be adjusted such that the works will tie into the Waterbeach Greenway works along Cowley Road. Works to be undertaken by the applicant, with the S278 to be agreed prior to occupation. CCC estimates that the above works would cost **£121,000**.

### Area-wide Sustainable Infrastructure Package

229. Informed by Table 55 of the North East Cambridge Area Action Plan Transport Evidence Base report, and the current cost estimates for the schemes (including the Chisholm Trail, HQPT and Milton Road works), a sum of £140M has been assumed as the package cost. Developers are required to meet the full cost of the internal measures, and 50% of the strategic measures. The public sector will meet 50% of the cost of the strategic measures. This means the total developer funding requirement for the area is £96m – to be shared by all developers in the area. All developments in the area will be required to make a strategic contribution to the area-wide sustainable transport package.

Funding assumptions are as follows:

230. The County Council have assumed the area-wide B1 growth quantum as an average of the scenarios modelled in the Transport Evidence Base of 407,000 sqm. Total B1 contribution = **£27m**: average contribution of £66,000 per 1000sqm of B1 development (£66,000 x 407).

231. For this application, a total sum of £821,000 has been assumed (£66,000 x 12.44). The cost of Cowley Road works has been assumed at £121,000.

232. The requirement is in accordance with the three CIL planning tests of being necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms, directly related to the development; and fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.

233. The requirement for this application is therefore as follows:

234. A contribution towards strategic infrastructure and any measures to enable mode shift from car to non-car in the surrounding area – such as the Waterbeach Greenway or the Chisholm Trail - of **£695,000**. This contribution will be split pro-rata between the two buildings.

235. Cowley Road works (a component part of Waterbeach Greenway) are conditioned for direct delivery by the developer – as S278: assumed value **£121,000**).

236. A Travel Plan will be required to be conditioned (Condition 12);

237. A contribution towards parking restrictions in the surrounding area should these be required of **£5,000**. This will include additional waiting restrictions in Milton should these be required.

238. Therefore, the total mitigation quantum for this development is **£821,000**

239. Subject to securing the transport mitigation measures by condition and planning obligations as set out above, the proposed development is considered to comply with policies TI/2 and TI/3 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan.

## **Planning balance and conclusion**

240. Planning decisions must be taken in accordance with the Development Plan unless there are material considerations that indicate otherwise (section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and section 38[6] of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004). The NPPF is a material consideration which must be taken into account where it is relevant to a planning application. This includes the presumption in favour of sustainable development found in paragraph 11 of the NPPF, which requires approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay.
241. The NPPF lists the three dimensions to sustainable development: economic, social, and environmental. These dimensions are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways to achieve sustainable development.
242. In terms of its economic role, the proposed development will deliver employment led growth within the Science Park which is identified as a location within South Cambridge to deliver appropriate employment proposals.
243. In a social role the proposal will achieve well designed buildings appropriate to their context in a modern business park.
244. In an environmental role the proposal makes effective use of previously developed land with buildings which embrace sustainable construction whilst also minimising energy consumption through passive design and the use of renewable energy, thus demonstrating buildings which are adaptable and resilient to climate change.
245. The proposed development will also provide a net gain in biodiversity and not cause harm to other aspects of the environment such as air, water, or soil.
246. The proposed development is therefore considered to meet the objectives of sustainable development in accordance with the NPPF and the South Cambridgeshire and Cambridge City Council Local Plans and it is recommended that planning permission is granted.

## **Recommendation**

**GRANT PLANNING PERMISSION subject to;**

247. The prior completion of a Section 106 Agreement under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 with delegated authority to officers to negotiate, secure and complete such an Agreement on the terms set out within paragraphs 227-238 of this report and any others considered appropriate and necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms; and
248. The planning conditions specified in this report and detailed in Appendix 1 and 2 with authority delegated to officers to include any minor drafting changes thereto; and
249. The relevant informatives as set out in Appendix 1 and 2 to be included at the discretion of officers.

### **Background Papers**

250. North East Cambridge – Interim Transport Approach (Report of Joint Director of Planning and Economic Development to JDCC 17 March 2021)

### **Appendices**

251. Appendix 1: Conditions and Informatives for Planning Application ref. 20/03523/ful
252. Appendix 2: Conditions and Informatives for Planning Application ref. 20/03524/ful

### **Report Author:**

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