



25/02022/FUL – 1 Cambridge Business Park, Robinson House, Cowley Road, Cambridge

Application details

Committee Date: 19 November 2025

Report to: Joint Development Management Committee

Lead Officer: Joint Director of Planning and Economic Development

Ward/parish: East Chesterton

Proposal: Refurbishment and extension to existing building for continued Class E use (including office and laboratory use with ancillary cafe, event and community space) and landscaping, car and cycle parking, plant and storage and other associated works.

Applicant: The Crown Estate Commissioners

Presenting officer: Philippa Kelly

Reason presented to committee: Referred back to JDMC to approve one additional planning condition. The adding of the additional condition cannot be dealt with under the delegation given to officers as part of the 20 August 2025 JDMC committee resolution to approve the application.

The committee are advised that having resolved to approve the application on 20 August 2025 the only issue to be considered is that of the additional 'Grampian style' planning condition.

Member site visit date: None

Key issues: 1. Foul water

Recommendation: Approve, in addition to the planning conditions previously approved by JDMC on 20 August 2025, the additional ‘Grampian style’ planning condition relating to foul water, as detailed at number 23 of the planning conditions listed in Section 4 of this report.

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1.0 Executive Summary

- 1.1 A full planning application, reference 25/02022/FUL for “Refurbishment and extension to existing building for continued Class E use (including office and laboratory use with ancillary cafe, event and community space) and landscaping, car and cycle parking, plant and storage and other associated works.”, was submitted to Cambridge City Council on 21 May 2025.
- 1.2 The application was considered by the Council’s Joint Planning Committee (the ‘Joint Development Management Committee’ (JDMC)) on 20 August 2025, where it was resolved to grant permission subject to conditions.
- 1.3 An additional condition requiring water monitoring was added by members for which the precise wording of which was required to be agreed by the Chair and Vice Chair of JDMC outside of the 20 August 2025 meeting.
- 1.4 Following the 20 August 2025 meeting of JDMC and prior to the planning decision being issued, Anglian Water wrote to the Local Planning Authority to advise that a revised response was being provided for the application in respect of foul water, and a holding objection raised.
- 1.5 The revised consultation response from Anglian Water dated 01 September 2025 does not affect consideration of the principle of development of the site. At the time of reporting the application to the JDMC on 20 August 2025, foul water was considered neutral in the planning balance. The imposition of an additional ‘Grampian’ style planning condition means that officers

would again consider the matter of foul water to be a neutral issue in the planning balance.

- 1.6 The 20 August 2025 JDMC resolution to grant planning permission does not include delegation to officers to impose additional planning conditions. It is therefore necessary to seek JDMC approval for the imposition of the additional 'Grampian' style planning condition relating to foul water.
- 1.7 Officers recommend that the Joint Development Management Committee approve application 25/02022/FUL in accordance with the JDMC resolution of 20 August 2025, and with the imposition of the additional planning condition relating to foul water.

2.0 Update Report

- 2.1 This full planning application was reported to the 20 August 2025 meeting of the Joint Development Management Committee (JDMC). The application was approved subject to planning conditions. A copy of the officer report to that committee can be found at **Appendix 1**.
- 2.2 On 01 September 2025 a new consultation response on the application was received from Anglian Water (AW) revising its position. The new AW consultation response raises a holding objection to the application on the grounds of insufficient wastewater treatment capacity at the existing Cambridge Water Recycling Centre (WRC). It comments that any connection into the foul network from the proposed development will contribute to pollution and deterioration of the watercourse via the WRC as it cannot accommodate additional flows.
- 2.3 AW advise in their 01 September 2025 correspondence that a comprehensive feasibility review is being undertaken of all available options to determine how future growth can be supported at the existing Cambridge WRC. This assessment is ongoing and is expected to conclude by June 2026. Until this work is complete, AW advise that they are issuing holding objections to all new planning applications that propose a connection to the public wastewater network within the Cambridge WRC catchment.

AW Objection

- 2.4 AW were originally consulted on the planning application on 27 May 2025. Comments were submitted to the local planning authority on 29 May 2025 which recommend a 'Grampian' style planning condition requiring the applicant to provide written confirmation from AW that there is sufficient

headroom in the water recycling centre prior to the occupation of the development. The LPA sought further information from AW and requested details of the level of harm associated with granting the permission without their recommended condition. AW responded to confirm that they could not provide this information, as the impact of individual planning applications is not modelled by AW.

- 2.5 The planning balance section of the report to JDMC on 20 August 2025 was updated via the committee amendment sheet to confirm that the foul water flows are a material planning consideration which are afforded neutral weight in the planning balance in respect of environmental harm. The Grampian condition recommended by AW was not included in the officer recommendation to committee, due to a lack of evidence of harm associated with granting the permission. Members resolved to approve the planning application without the imposition of the Grampian condition recommended by AW.
- 2.6 Following the JDMC resolution on 20 August 2025, and prior to the planning decision notice being issued, AW submitted a revised representation to the Local Planning Authority on 01 September 2025. The representation advises that AW has changed their position in the light of the announcement in August 2025 from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) that the Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) will no longer be available to support the delivery of a new Water Recycling Centre (WRC) for Greater Cambridge. Until such time as alternative plans to increase capacity at the existing Cambridge WRC (the catchment WRC for this planning application) to deal with wastewater from growth are confirmed, AW raises a holding objection to all future planning applications.
- 2.7 The representation goes on to advise that this position will continue until alternative plans to increase capacity at the existing Cambridge WRC to deal with wastewater from growth are confirmed. A comprehensive feasibility review of all available options is being undertaken by AW to determine how future growth can be supported at Cambridge WRC. The assessment is not expected to conclude until June 2026. Until such time as the feasibility review is concluded, AW raise a 'holding' objection to the proposed development.
- 2.8 Officers note that AW does not have the statutory power to issue a 'holding direction' or directly prevent the local planning authority from determining the planning application.

- 2.9 Notwithstanding AW's position, officers consider that the scale of the net increase of foul flow rates from the application site has the potential to increase the likelihood of storm overflow discharges to watercourses in non-exceptional circumstances based upon the existing sites performance.
- 2.10 No direct evidence has been provided by AW to substantiate their position. No information on the environmental harm arising from the additional foul flows has been submitted to the LPA by AW alongside their objection.
- 2.11 Nonetheless, officers have undertaken a desktop exercise and reviewed datasets published by the Environment Agency which relate to the monitoring of storm overflows at Cambridge WRC. The results are extracted below.

Year	Number of Spills	Duration (Hours)
2021	0	0
2022	0	0
2023	74	1476
2024	23	295

Table: Cambridge WRC Storm Overflow, Spill frequency event duration monitoring data (Source: Environment Agency Storm Overflow – Spill Frequency Portal)

- 2.12 The data indicates that storm overflows at Cambridge WRC are being used in circumstances other than the exceptional storm conditions for which they were designed. This would appear to validate AW's position that there is currently inadequate capacity to deal with existing waste flows in normal non-storm circumstances, and that – for a limited number of spills and for a specified duration – untreated sewerage is being discharged into the receiving water course (The River Cam).
- 2.13 The desktop exercise indicates that as Cambridge WRC is currently operating above its operational capacity, additional flows could worsen the situation. On this basis, officers take the view that the net increase in foul water flow arising from this development has the potential to cause environmental harm to receiving watercourses.
- 2.14 That risk of harm is capable of being mitigated significantly, by investment in and implementation of a suitable scheme to upgrade the capacity and capability of the existing Water Treatment Works. AW have committed to make that investment in their October 2025 statement. On that basis, officers have re-considered whether a planning condition that limits net

increased foul water discharges could substantially overcome the adverse impacts identified by AW in their objection following the August 2025 meeting of JDMC.

- 2.15 Notwithstanding AW's position as advised in their revised consultation response dated 01 September 2025, officers are therefore of the view that there is a reasonable prospect that alternative plans to improve capacity at Cambridge WRC will be forthcoming within the life of a planning permission.
- 2.16 In reaching this position, particular regard has been had to the Ministerial Statement made on 23 October 2025 on Delivering ambitious and high-quality sustainable growth in Greater Cambridge by Matthew Pennycook, Minister of State for Housing and Planning. To demonstrate the government's firm commitment to realising the full potential of Greater Cambridge in the months and years ahead, the Statement confirms that the government has instructed AW to accelerate planning for wastewater infrastructure upgrades required to accommodate development and growth, and that this will be reported to government by early 2026.
- 2.17 The Applicant has confirmed that the use of the following pre-occupation Grampian condition would be acceptable to them:

Prior to the occupation of the development hereby permitted, written confirmation will be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority evidencing that the anticipated additional net increase in waste water generated by the development is capable of being accommodated by the Cambridge Water Recycling Centre, or there is sufficient on-site capacity to deal with a net increase in waste water flows from the development.

Reason: To ensure that foul water can be adequately managed without causing significant environmental harm, and to protect water quality from pollution associated with increased phosphate discharges (In accordance with paragraphs 7,8 and 187 of the NPPF and Cambridge Local Plan 2018 policy 85)

Summary

- 2.18 The revised consultation response from AW dated 01 September 2025 does not materially affect consideration of the principle of development of the site. At the time of reporting the application to JDMC on 20 August 2025, foul water was considered neutral in the planning balance. The proposed Grampian condition means that officers would again consider the matter of

foul water as to be a neutral issue in the planning balance having regard to policy 85 of the Cambridge Local Plan 2018.

- 2.19 Officers recommend that whilst Anglian Water's holding objection is noted, this application is approved in accordance with the below recommendation.

3.0 Recommendation

- 3.1 **Approve**, in addition to the planning conditions previously approved by JDMC on 20 August 2025, the additional 'Grampian style' planning condition relating to foul water (as detailed at number 23 of the planning conditions listed in Section 4 of this report), with delegated authority to officers to carry through amendments to those conditions (including additional/revised conditions as appropriate and necessary) prior to the issuing of the planning permission.

4.0 Planning Conditions

1. Time

The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: In accordance with the requirements of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).

2. Drawings

The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plans as listed on this decision notice.

Reason: In the interests of good planning, for the avoidance of doubt and to facilitate any future application to the Local Planning Authority under Section 73 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

3. Materials

No development shall take place above ground level, other than demolition, until details of the materials and finishes; to be used in the construction of the development have been submitted to and approved in writing by the

Local Planning Authority. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure that the external appearance of the development does not detract from the character and appearance of the area. (Cambridge Local Plan 2018 policies 55 and 57)

4. Plant/flues

No roof mounted plant/flues/equipment shall be installed until details of the plant/flues/equipment have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The details shall include the type, dimensions, materials, location, and means of fixing. The development shall only be carried out and maintained thereafter in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure that the external appearance of the development does not detract from the character and appearance of the area. (Cambridge Local Plan 2018 policies 55 and 57)

5. Hard and soft landscape (bespoke)

No development above ground level, other than demolition, shall commence until a hard and soft landscaping scheme has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall include the following:

- a) proposed finished levels or contours; car parking layouts, other vehicle and pedestrian access and circulation areas;
- b) hard surfacing materials;
- c) Street furniture and artifacts (including refuse and cycle storage);
- d) planting plans; written specifications (including cultivation and other operations associated with plant and grass establishment); schedules of plants, species, plant sizes and proposed numbers/densities where appropriate;

- e) boundary treatments indicating the type, positions, design, and materials of boundary treatments to be erected (including gaps for hedgehogs);
- f) an implementation programme.
- g) details of any monitoring equipment and interpretation signage which will be used as part of the test beds and experimental elements of the landscape

The development shall be fully carried out in accordance with the approved details. If within a period of 5 years from the date of planting of any trees or shrubs, or 5 years from the commencement of development in respect of any retained trees and shrubs, they are removed, uprooted, destroyed, die or become seriously damaged or diseased, replacement trees and shrubs of the same size and species as originally planted shall be planted at the same place in the next available planting season, or in accordance with any variation agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure the development is satisfactorily assimilated into the area and enhances biodiversity (Cambridge Local Plan 2018 policies 55, 57, 59 and 69).

6. Landscape management and maintenance plan

Before the development is first occupied or brought into use a landscape maintenance and management plan, including long term design objectives, management responsibilities and maintenance schedules for all landscape areas, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The landscape management plan shall be carried out as approved.

Reason: To ensure that before any development commences an appropriate landscape and ecological management plan has been agreed (Cambridge Local Plan 2018 policies 57, 59 and 70).

7. Tree protection

The installation of tree protection measures and completion of any other works proposed to be carried out within root protection areas (RPAs) shall be carried out in full accordance with the approved Arboricultural Method

Statement as set out in document ;PC-AMS-01, dated May 2025, by Plowman Craven, and under the supervisions of a suitably qualified arboriculturist. All tree protection barriers and ground protection will be installed prior to the commencement of any development works, including demolition, and will be retained until all development is complete, and all machinery and materials are removed from site.

Reason: To ensure that trees to be retained will be adequately protected, to preserve the arboricultural amenity in accordance with section 197 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and Policy 71 of the Cambridge Local Plan 2018.

8. Unexpected contamination

If unexpected contamination is encountered during the development works which has not previously been identified, all works shall cease immediately until the Local Planning Authority has been notified in writing. Thereafter, works shall only restart with the written approval of the Local Planning Authority following the submission and approval of a Phase 2 Intrusive Site Investigation Report and a Phase 3 Remediation Strategy specific to the newly discovered contamination.

The development shall thereafter be carried out in accordance with the approved Intrusive Site Investigation Report and Remediation Strategy.

Reason: To ensure that any unexpected contamination is rendered harmless in the interests of environmental and public safety (Cambridge Local Plan 2018 policy 33).

9. Construction hours

No construction or demolition work shall be carried out and no plant or power operated machinery operated other than between the following hours: 0800 hours and 1800 hours on Monday to Friday, 0800 hours and 1300 hours on Saturday and at no time on Sundays, Bank or Public

Holidays, , unless otherwise previously agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To protect the amenity of the adjoining properties. (Cambridge Local Plan 2018 policy 35).

10. Plant noise (operational)

No operational plant, machinery or equipment shall be installed until a noise assessment and any noise insulation/mitigation as required has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Any required noise insulation/mitigation shall be carried out as approved and retained as such.

Reason: To protect the amenity of nearby properties (Cambridge Local Plan 2018 policy 36).

11. Sustainability

The development hereby approved shall not be occupied until a post construction statement confirming that the provisions as set out in the Energy Strategy (5200028-HLE-XX-XX-RP-ST-402026 rev P04), Sustainability Strategy (5200028-HLE-XX-XX-RP-ST-402085 Rev P04) and Whole Life Carbon Assessment (5200028-HLE-XX-XX-RP-ST-602028 Rev P03) have been fully implemented.

Reason: In the interests of reducing carbon dioxide emissions and promoting principles of sustainable construction and efficient use of buildings (Cambridge Local Plan Policy 28 and the Greater Cambridge Sustainable Design and Construction SPD 2020).

12. BREEAM design stage

Within 12 months of commencement of development, a BRE issued Design Stage Certificate shall be submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority demonstrating that BREEAM 'excellent' as a minimum will be met, with maximum credits for Wat 01 (water consumption). Where

the Design Stage certificate shows a shortfall in credits for BREEAM 'excellent', a statement shall also be submitted identifying how the shortfall will be addressed. If such a rating is replaced by a comparable national measure of sustainability for building design, the equivalent level of measure shall be applicable to the proposed development.

Reason: In the interests of reducing carbon dioxide emissions and promoting principles of sustainable construction and efficient use of buildings (Cambridge Local Plan 2018 Policy 28 and the Greater Cambridge Sustainable Design and Construction SPD 2020).

13. BREEAM post construction certificate

Within 12 months following first occupation, a BRE issued post Construction Certificate shall be submitted to, and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, indicating that the approved BREEAM rating has been met. If such a rating is replaced by a comparable national measure of sustainability for building design, the equivalent level of measure shall be applicable to the proposed development.

Reason: In the interests of reducing carbon dioxide emissions and promoting principles of sustainable construction and efficient use of buildings (Cambridge Local Plan 2018 Policy 28 and the Greater Cambridge Sustainable Design and Construction SPD 2020).

14. Surface water drainage – operational (bespoke)

No laying of services, creation of hard surfaces or erection of a building shall commence until a detailed design of the surface water drainage of the site has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Those elements of the surface water drainage system not adopted by a statutory undertaker shall thereafter be maintained and managed in accordance with the approved management and maintenance plan.

The scheme shall be based upon the principles within the agreed Flood Risk Assessment and SuDS Statement prepared by Howard Ward Associates Ltd (ref: P24158-HWA-ZZ-XX-RP-C-5001 Version v03) dated 28 March 2025 and shall also include:

- a) Full results of the proposed drainage system modelling in the QBAR, 3.3% Annual Exceedance Probability (AEP) (1 in 30) and 1% AEP (1 in 100) storm events (as well as 1% AEP plus climate change), inclusive of all collection, conveyance, storage, flow control and disposal elements and including an allowance for urban creep, together with an assessment of system performance;
- b) Detailed drawings of the entire proposed surface water drainage system, attenuation and flow control measures, including levels, gradients, dimensions and pipe reference numbers, designed to accord with the CIRIA C753 SuDS Manual (or any equivalent guidance that may supersede or replace it);
- c) Full detail on SuDS proposals (including location, type, size, depths, side slopes and cross sections);
- d) Site Investigation and test results to confirm infiltration rates;
- e) CCTV investigation into the receiving sewer network to determine outfall;
- f) Demonstration that the surface water drainage of the site is in accordance with DEFRA non-statutory technical standards for sustainable drainage systems;
- g) Measures taken to prevent pollution of the receiving groundwater and/or surface water

Reason: To ensure that the proposed development can be adequately drained and to ensure that there is no increased flood risk on or off site resulting from the proposed development and to ensure that the principles of sustainable drainage can be incorporated into the development, noting that initial preparatory and/or construction works may compromise the ability to mitigate harmful impacts.

15. Cycle parking details

Notwithstanding the approved plans, prior to the occupation of the development, details of staff cycle parking shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The details shall include:

- I. The number of cycle parking spaces
- II. The layout of the cycle store
- III. The type of stands
- IV. Means of access to the cycle store

The cycle parking shall be installed in accordance with the approved details prior to the occupation of the development and shall be retained thereafter.

Reason: To ensure adequate cycle parking provision for staff (Cambridge Local Plan 2018 policy 81)

16. Waste

Prior to the occupation of the development, a complete Waste Management Plan shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The waste management plan shall be fully implemented in accordance with the approved details prior to the occupation of the development and the measures shall be retained thereafter.

Reason: To ensure adequate waste management for the site (policies 56 and 58 of the Cambridge Local Plan 2018)

17. Ecology compliance

Prior to the occupation of the development, the ecological mitigation shall be carried out in full in accordance with the details contained in the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Preliminary Roost Assessment (Plowman Craven, May 2025). The ecological measures shall thereafter be retained for the lifetime of the development.

Reason: To conserve and enhance ecological interests. (Cambridge Local Plan policies 57, 59 and 70).

18. Ecological enhancement scheme

No development above ground level shall take place until an ecological enhancement scheme has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The scheme shall include details of bat and bird box installation, hedgehog provisions and other ecological enhancements. The approved scheme shall be fully implemented prior to first occupation or in accordance with a timescale agreed in writing by the local planning authority.

Reason: To conserve and enhance ecological interests in accordance with Cambridge Local Plan policies 57, 59 and 70 and the Greater Cambridge Planning Biodiversity Supplementary Planning Document (2022).

19. Ecologically sensitive lighting

Prior to the installation of any artificial lighting in any phase, an ecologically sensitive artificial lighting scheme for that phase shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall include details of the baseline condition of lighting, any existing and proposed internal and external artificial lighting of the site in that phase and an artificial lighting impact assessment with predicted lighting levels. The scheme shall:

- a) include details (including luminaires, fittings and any shrouds) of any artificial lighting on the site and an artificial lighting impact assessment with predicted lighting levels at the site boundaries;
- b) unless otherwise agreed, not exceed 0.4 lux level (against an agreed baseline) on the vertical plane at agreed locations;
- c) detail all building design measures to minimise light spillage;
- d) set out a monitoring and reporting regime for the lighting scheme.

The approved lighting scheme shall be fully installed, maintained and operated in accordance with the approved details. The scheme shall be retained as such thereafter.

Reason: To fully conserve and enhance ecological interests (Cambridge Local Plan 2018 policies 57, 59 and 70).

20. Demolition and construction traffic management plan

The measures contained within the demolition and construction traffic management plan (uploaded to the portal on 10/05/2025) shall be fully implemented prior to the commencement of development and development shall thereafter be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure that before development commences, highway safety will be maintained during the course of development. (Cambridge Local Plan 2018 Policy 81).

21. BNG

Development may not be begun unless: (a) a biodiversity gain plan has been submitted to the planning authority, and (b) the planning authority has approved the plan.

Reason: To ensure compliance with Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (inserted by the Environment Act 2021). Anglian Water

22. Commercial water metering

Prior to first occupation a comprehensive water metering and monitoring system shall be commissioned and installed within the building to quantify at least daily: the total volume of mains water used.. No occupation shall occur until such time as the local planning authority has been notified through an independent verification report that the water metering and monitoring system has been installed and is fully functional. The metering and monitoring system shall be retained in a fully functioning operational use at all times and for the lifetime of the development.

Reason: To ensure that the development makes efficient use of water and promotes the principles of sustainable construction in accordance with Policy 28 of the Cambridge Local Plan 2018, the Greater Cambridge Sustainable Design and Construction SPD 2020, the Written Ministerial Statement on Addressing water scarcity in Greater Cambridge: update on government measures (March 2024) Joint Ministerial Statement on addressing Water Scarcity in Greater Cambridge.

23. Foul water flows

Prior to the occupation of the development hereby permitted, written confirmation will be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority evidencing that the anticipated additional net increase in waste water generated by the development is capable of being accommodated by the Cambridge Water Recycling Centre, or there is sufficient on-site capacity to deal with a net increase in waste water flows from the development.

Reason: To ensure that foul water can be adequately managed without causing significant environmental harm, and to protect water quality from pollution associated with increased phosphate discharges (In accordance with paragraphs 7,8 and 187 of the NPPF and Cambridge Local Plan 2018 policy 85)