26/00092/FUL – AstraZeneca South Plot, West Of Francis Crick Avenue, Cambridge Biomedical Campus

Application details

Committee Date: 15 April 2026

Report to: Joint Development Management Committee

Lead Officer: Joint Director of Planning and Economic Development

Ward/parish: Queen Ediths

Proposal: Demolition of existing structures and redevelopment for a Conference Centre (Use Class F1) and Office (Use Class E(g)(i)). Including hard and soft landscaping, servicing, access and associated infrastructure.

Applicant: AstraZeneca UK Limited

Presenting officer: James Truett (Principal Planner)

Reason presented to committee: Non-residential building or buildings where the floorspace to be created by the development is 1,000 square metres or more.

Member site visit date: Monday 13 April 2026

Key issues:

1. Principal of Development
2. Design, Layout, Scale and Landscaping
3. Trees
4. Water Management and Flood Risk – Foul Water

Recommendation: Approve subject to conditions.

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1.0 Executive Summary

1.1 The application seeks full planning permission for the redevelopment of the site for a conference centre (Use Class F1) and Office (Use Class E(g)(i)), including hard and soft landscaping, servicing, access and associated infrastructure. The proposed development would provide a workplace for AstraZeneca staff, and includes a 200-person conference centre, 450 seat auditorium and associated restaurant.

1.2 The principle of a new conference centre and office buildings is consistent with both national and local planning policy objectives which seek to support and maintain Cambridge's role as a world leading location for knowledge-based industries.

1.3 The proposed design-led approach is considered to respond appropriately to the surrounding character. The proposed development is aiming for BREEAM Outstanding and WELL Gold Certification.

1.4 The proposed scheme would deliver a number of benefits including but not limited to a high-quality scheme providing a large auditorium and conference centre on the biomedical campus. The scheme provides office space and a restaurant within a well landscaped setting. Further, the proposal would result in a highly sustainable building which would align with the existing AstraZeneca south plot. This proposal would support the desire to provide a world-class venue for the Cambridge Biomedical Campus.

1.5 Technical matters have all been resolved and can be addressed further through conditions. The concerns raised by Anglian Water in respect to the lack of wastewater capacity at Cambridge Waste Water Recycling Centre (Cambridge WRC) are acknowledged. Whilst the proposed scheme would result in a net increase in foul water flow arising from this development, officers consider that it would be limited and that it would not be possible to attribute any meaningful or significant harm arising from this scheme to the water environment beyond that already occurring. A Grampian condition preventing occupation until Anglian Water confirms wastewater treatment capacity is not necessary

1.6 In the overall planning balance, officers consider that the proposed development will bring social, economic and environmental benefits that accord with the three dimensions of sustainable development.

1.7 Officers recommend that the Joint Development Management Committee APPROVE the application subject to conditions, as set out in Section 25 below, with any minor amendments delegated to officers.

2.0 Site Description and Context

2.1 The site is located within the Cambridge Biomedical Campus (CBC), to the south of Cambridge. It sits within phase 1 of the CBC expansion, as approved through outline permission 06/0796/OUT (as amended via 17/2258/S73), which expired on 15 October 2021. The proposal is located within the AstraZeneca South Plot extending 2.24ha comprising an existing construction compound. The site is within the Cambridge Local Plan (2018) allocation Policy 17: Cambridge Biomedical Campus (including Addenbrooke's Hospital Area of Major Change).

2.2 The east of the site is bound by Francis Crick Avenue, along which the proposed Cambridge South East Transport improvements (CSET) would be situated. To the West of the AstraZeneca South plot is the railway line and Cambridge South Station, which is currently under construction and is due to open later this year. The southern part of the site is bound by a vacant plot with the Anne McLaren Laboratory. The existing AstraZeneca Travel Hub is located to the south of the parcel. To the north is the Rosaland Franklin Building which is currently under construction (20/05027/REM) and the Cambridge South Station forecourt. In the wider context the AstraZeneca DISC building sits to the north-east of the site,

and the Heart and Lung Research Institute is to the east on the opposite side of Francis Crick Avenue.

2.3 The site is located within Flood Zone 1 and is therefore recognised to have a low probability of flooding. The site is adjacent to the Cambridge Green Belt. There are no buildings of listed grade/Building of Local Interest on the site.

3.0 The Proposal

3.1 The application seeks full planning permission for the demolition of existing structures and redevelopment for a Conference Centre (Use Class F1) and Office (Use Class E(g)(i)). The proposals include hard and soft landscaping, servicing, access and associated infrastructure.

3.2 The proposed scheme seeks to deliver a single six-storey (Research and Development) building providing; workspace for approximately 736 staff members, a 200-person conference centre, a 450-person auditorium, and a 110-cover restaurant for staff and users of the conference centre and auditorium. This would encompass 11,973sqm of gross internal area. This would form the centre of the proposal, with the wider redline boundary (encompassing 2.24ha) including a landscaped promenade, improved east-west connectivity, a coach drop-off point south of the Sustainable Travel Hub, additional accessible parking bays within the existing surface level car park, and reallocated cycle parking. The scheme targets BREEAM Outstanding and WELL Gold Certification.

3.3 The building design proposes a feature penthouse which will contain the auditorium, below which will be the conference centre. The building is framed by the proposed adjoining Northern Passage, providing access to the AstraZeneca South Plot, The Southern Strategic Gap, a landscaped area offering a green connection between Francis Crick Avenue and the promenade, and the promenade itself. The promenade is a central highly landscaped feature running north-south through the southern campus, and providing a series of pedestrian connectivity links east-west.

3.4 During the course of the application, further information was received to address representations received. Further consultations have been carried out as appropriate.

3.5 The application is accompanied by the following supporting reports and key plans:

- Location Plan
- Site Plans
- Floor Plans
- Sectional Plans
- Elevational Plans

- Design and Access Statement
- Air Quality Assessment
- Arboricultural Impact Assessment
- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal
- Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment
- Energy Statement
- Flood Risk Assessment
- Foul Sewage and Utilities Assessment
- Contamination Report
- Health Impact Assessment
- Landscape Plans
- Noise Impact Assessment
- Waste Strategy
- Planning Statement
- Public Art Strategy
- Statement of Community Involvement
- Surface and Foul Water Drainage Strategy
- Sustainability Statement
- Town and Visual Appraisal
- Transport Assessment
- Travel Plan
- Ventilation and Extraction Statement

4.0 Relevant Site History

Reference	Description	Outcome
06/0796/OUT	Up to 215,000sqm floorspace (excluding plant areas) comprising 60,000sqm of clinical research and treatment (D1 and/or clinical in-patient treatment), 115,000sqm of biomedical and biotech research and development (B1(b)), 15,000sqm of biomedical and biotech research and development (B1(b)) or clinical research and treatment (D1 and/or clinical in-patient treatment), and 25,000sqm of either clinical research and treatment (D1 and/or clinical in-patient treatment) or higher education or sui generis medical research institute uses, and including related support activities within use classes A1, A3, B1, D1 (creches/nurseries) or sui generis uses, with no individual premises used for	Granted Permission – 20 October 2009

	support activities to exceed 500sqm; new areas of public realm; landscaping; parking areas; highway works; drainage works and all other associated infrastructure.	
14/2094/S73	Section 73 to vary condition 63 (to extend the timeframe for submission and agreement of Off-Site Highway Works) of planning approval 06/0796/OUT for: Up to 215,000sqm floorspace (excluding plant areas) comprising 60,000sqm of clinical research and treatment (D1 and/or clinical in-patient treatment), 115,000sqm of biomedical and biotech research and development (B1(b)), 15,000sqm of biomedical and biotech research and development (B1(b)) or clinical research and treatment (D1 and/or clinical in-patient treatment), and 25,000sqm of either clinical research and treatment (D1 and/or clinical in-patient treatment) or higher education or sui generis medical research institute uses, and including related support activities within use classes A1, A3, B1, D1 (creches/nurseries) or sui generis uses, with no individual premises used for support activities to exceed 500sqm; new areas of public realm; landscaping; parking areas; highway works; drainage works and all other associated infrastructure.	Granted Permission – 5 March 2015
17/0850/S73	Section 73 application to vary condition 26 of 06/0796/OUT for the Cambridge Biomedical Campus development to allow a variation in construction working times for the New Papworth Hospital development only. The proposal is to extend construction working hours from	6 September 2017

	the currently approved 0730 to 18:00 Monday to Fridays, 08:00 to 13:00 on Saturday and at no time on Sundays, Bank or Public Holidays in respect of specific limited works to 0700 to 2000 Monday to Friday, 0700 to 1600 on Saturdays and 0700 to 1600 on Sundays and Bank or Public Holidays.	
17/2258/S73	Section 73 application to vary condition 26 of 17/0850/S73 for the Cambridge Biomedical Campus development to allow a variation in construction working times for the AstraZeneca development only. The proposal is to extend specific limited works for internal construction working hours from the currently approved 0730 to 18:00 Monday to Fridays, 08:00 to 13:00 on Saturday and at no time on Sundays, Bank or Public Holidays to the amended times of 0700 to 2000 Monday to Friday, 0700 to 1600 on Saturdays and 0700 to 1600 on Sundays and Bank or Public Holidays.	9 March 2018
21/01584/S73	Section 73 application to vary condition 26 (Construction hours) of outline permission 17/2258/S73 for the Cambridge Biomedical Campus development to allow a variation in construction working times for the AstraZeneca north plot development only.	29 September 2021
19/1070/REM	Reserved matters application pursuant to outline approval 06/0796/OUT (amended by Section 73 approval 17/2258/S73) for: an R&D Enabling Building of 13,197 sqm; an Amenities Hub of 3,261 sqm; associated car, motorbike and cycle parking including a Multi Storey Car Park; a temporary Multi Use Games Area; hard and soft landscaping; and internal	10 January 2020

	roads, supporting facilities and ancillary infrastructure. Includes partial discharge of conditions 13, 16, 18, 24, 25, 45, 47, 48, 49, 56, 57, 58 and 59 pursuant to outline consent 06/0796/OUT.	
20/05027/REM	Reserved Matters application pursuant to outline approval 06/0796/OUT (amended by Section 73 approval 17/2258/S73) for: a South Office Building of 13,502 sqm; a Hive of 3,593 sqm; associated car, motorbike and cycle parking including a Travel Hub of 2,970 sqm; a temporary Multi Use Games Area; hard and soft landscaping; and internal roads, supporting facilities and ancillary infrastructure. Includes partial discharge of conditions 13, 16, 18, 23, 24, 25, 45, 47, 48, 49, 56, 57, 58 and 59 pursuant to Section 73 approval 17/2258/S73.	30 June 2021

Table 2: Site History

5.0 Policy

5.1 National

National Planning Policy Framework 2024

National Planning Practice Guidance

National Design Guide 2021

Environment Act 2021

Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017.

Local Transport Note 1/20 (LTN 1/20) Cycle Infrastructure Design

Draft Greater Cambridge Local Plan 2024-2045 (Regulation 18 Stage Consultation - December 2025 to January 2026)

The Regulation 18 Draft Greater Cambridge Local Plan (the draft 'Joint Local Plan' (JLP)) represents the next stage of preparing a new joint Local Plan for Greater Cambridge. Once it is adopted, it will become the statutory development plan for the Greater Cambridge area, replacing the current (adopted) Local Plans for Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire District.

Following endorsement by Joint Cabinet in November 2025, the draft JLP proceeded to a formal public consultation (under Regulation 18 of The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012) between 1 December 2025 and 30 January 2026.

In line with paragraph 49 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), local planning authorities may give weight to relevant policies in emerging plans according to several factors. The draft JLP is consistent with policies in the current NPPF, but represents an earlier stage of the plan making process. Therefore, at this stage, the draft JLP and its policies can only be afforded limited weight as a material consideration in decision making.

5.2 Cambridge Local Plan 2018

Policy 1: The presumption in favour of sustainable development
Policy 2: Spatial strategy for the location of employment development
Policy 14: Areas of Major Change and Opportunity Areas
Policy 17: Cambridge Biomedical Campus
Policy 28: Sustainable design and construction, and water use
Policy 29: Renewable and low carbon energy generation
Policy 30: Energy-efficiency improvements in existing dwellings
Policy 31: Integrated water management and the water cycle
Policy 32: Flood risk
Policy 33: Contaminated land
Policy 34: Light pollution control
Policy 35: Human health and quality of life
Policy 36: Air quality, odour and dust
Policy 37: Cambridge Airport Public Safety Zone and Air Safeguarding
Policy 40: Development and expansion of business space
Policy 42: Connecting new developments to digital infrastructure
Policy 55: Responding to context
Policy 56: Creating successful places
Policy 57: Designing new buildings
Policy 58: Altering and extending existing buildings

Policy 59: Designing landscape and the public realm
Policy 65: Visual pollution
Policy 68: Open space and recreation provision through new development
Policy 69: Protection of sites of biodiversity and geodiversity importance
Policy 70: Protection of priority species and habitats
Policy 71: Trees
Policy 73: Community, sports and leisure facilities
Policy 80: Supporting sustainable access to development
Policy 81: Mitigating the transport impact of development
Policy 82: Parking management
Policy 85: Infrastructure delivery, planning obligations and the Community Infrastructure Levy

5.3 Supplementary Planning Documents

Cambridge Biomedical Campus SPD – Adopted March 2025
Biodiversity SPD – Adopted February 2022
Sustainable Design and Construction SPD – Adopted January 2020
Cambridgeshire Flood and Water SPD – Adopted November 2016
Public Art SPD – Adopted January 2009

6.0 Consultations

6.1 Anglian Water – Object

6.2 Temporary objection to all future planning applications until alternative plans to increase capacity at the existing Cambridge Recycling Centre to deal with wastewater from growth are confirmed. The used water network at present has available capacity for the anticipated foul flows. Informatives recommended. Wishes to be reconsulted on any surface water drainage strategy updates.

6.3 Cambridge Water – No comments received

6.4 County Archaeology – No Objection

6.5 The proposed redline has previously been subject to archaeological investigation including open area excavation. The site has been fully recorded and therefore we have no further comments or recommendations.

6.6 County Highways Development Management – No Objection

6.7 No significant adverse effect upon the Public Highway is anticipated should the proposal gain the benefit of Planning Permission.

6.8 County Transport Team – No Objection

6.9 No objection subject to mitigation package regarding Travel Plan condition.

6.10 Ecology Officer – No Objection

6.11 There is sufficient ecology information to determine the application. Conditions recommended regarding Ecological Enhancement Plan, lighting strategy, statutory BNG requirements.

6.12 Environment Agency – No comments received

6.13 Environmental Health – No Objection

6.14 The development proposed is acceptable subject to conditions regarding Unexpected contamination, remediation, Material Management Plan, construction/demolition hours, delivery hours, noise, vibration, dust, odour and ventilation, and plant equipment.

6.15 Landscape Officer – No Objection

6.16 Supportive of the application. Requests clarifications and amendments in relation to below ground constraints in the Promenade and Strategic Gap, species palette to incorporate forest scale tree in the promenade, landscaping details adjacent to the proposed coach drop off point, and the use of tree irrigation bags. Conditions recommended relating to: Hard and Soft Landscaping, Tree Pits, Landscape management and maintenance plan, and Lighting.

6.17 Lead Local Flood Authority – No Objection

6.18 The submitted documents demonstrate that surface water from the proposed development can be managed through attenuation and flow restrictors. Conditions recommended regarding Surface Water Drainage.

6.19 Police Architectural Liaison Officer – No Objection

6.20 Provided comments for consideration regarding the below:

- External Lighting, bollard should only be used for wayfinding
- Door security
- Window and glazing security
- Access Control
- Cycle parking security
- Boundary Treatments
- CCTV
- Signage, alarms, and landscaping
- Construction phase security

6.21 Shared Waste Service –No Objection

6.22 The application should comply with the recommended waste storage requirement including consideration for bulky items, waste storage standards, and drag distances. There is no need for a Condition for a Waste Management Strategy.

6.23 Sustainability Officer – No Objection

6.24 Generally supportive of overall approach to sustainability and the developer's commitment to achieving BREEAM 'Outstanding' for this site. Clarifications requested regarding the Energy Use Intensity. Recommends conditions regarding BREEAM Design stage certificate, BREEAM Post construction Certificate, Commercial Water Metering, Sustainability and Energy Strategies, and Grey and rainwater harvesting. Some updated clarification in response to differing EUI targets have been provided.

6.25 S106 Officer – No Objection

6.26 In the event that a S106 is required a District council monitoring fee is required.

6.27 Tree Officer – No Objection

6.28 No objections to the proposal. Recommends arboricultural methodology statement condition.

6.29 Urban Design and Conservation Team – No Objection

6.30 The proposals for a conference centre, auditorium, and office space on the AstraZeneca South Campus deliver a coordinated and high-quality urban design response aligned with the Cambridge Biomedical Campus masterplan. Overall, the scheme successfully integrates functionality, public realm quality, and architectural expression to contribute positively to the emerging character and long term vision of the Cambridge Biomedical Campus. The proposed scheme is supported in Urban Design terms. Conditions recommended regarding Design details and Materials, and Roof Top Plant.

6.31 Cambridgeshire Quality Panel Meeting (20 October 2025)

6.32 The scheme was reviewed by the Cambridgeshire Quality Panel at pre-application stage in October 2025. A copy of the review letter is attached in full at appendix 1. The Applicant submitted a response to the main points of feedback and amendments that had been made as a result; these are considered in the assessment section below.

6.33 The following is summary of the Panels specific recommendations:

- Improve Visibility and Access
- Clarify Community Engagement

- Enhance Public Amenities
- Strengthen Inclusive Design
- Review Operational Practicality
- Improve Direct Access Routes
- Influence redesign Francis Crick Avenue as a Street
- Enhance Cycling Infrastructure
- Adopt a User-Focused Mobility Strategy
- Review Traffic Management and Signage
- Strengthen Energy Performance Strategy
- Integrate Whole Life Carbon Assessment Early
- Enhance Climate Resilience
- Optimise MEP Systems and Plant Location
- Improve Material Sustainability
- Strengthen Spatial Connections and Wayfinding
- Develop Distinct Character Areas
- Enhance Public Interface and Community Access
- Clarify Building Identity and Functionality
- Embed Sustainability and Long-Term Maintenance

7.0 Publicity

7.1 The following publicity has been undertaken:

Neighbour notification	Yes
Site Notice	Yes
Advertisement	Yes

8.0 Third Party Representations

8.1 1 representation in support of the proposed development has been received.

8.2 The representation raises the following issues:

- There is a need for a Conference Centre on the Campus to help secure its place as a world class location for life sciences.
- Need for increase amenities across the campus.
- Excellent location for sustainable transport on the campus noting the existing bus stops, and future bus connections and train station.
- High-quality design

9.0 Member Representations

9.1 No representations received.

9.2 The above representations are a summary of the comments that have been received. Full details of the representations are available on the Council's website.

10.0 Assessment

11.0 Planning Background

11.1 The site is located on the western edge of the Cambridge Biomedical Campus (CBC). The site sits within the outline consent for Phase 1 of the Cambridge Biomedical Campus (planning reference 06/0796/OUT, and subsequent Section 73 consents). This outline permission expired in October 2021. This scheme has therefore come forward as a full planning application as opposed to a reserved matters submission under the outline consent.

11.2 Outline permission 06/0796/OUT indicated that the application site would come forward for commercial development. The proposed scheme fits largely with the previous outline parameter plan requirements.

11.3 The site lies within Addenbrooke's Hospital Campus and within the 'Cambridge Biomedical Campus (including Addenbrooke's Hospital) Area of Major Change' covered by Policy 17 and the site allocation 'M15' supported by Policy 27 of the Cambridge Local Plan (2018).

Cambridge Biomedical Campus SPD (adopted March 2025)

11.4 The Cambridge Biomedical Campus (CBC) SPD sets out development principles to guide future development proposals on the CBC and provides a framework for consideration when determining planning applications. This document post dates the historic outline application (06/0796/OUT).

11.5 The adopted CBC SPD acknowledges the previous phases of the CBC growth and looks to support the CBC aspirations of being a world-leading location for healthcare, education, medical innovation and life science research. It also seeks to build on the important local, regional and national role in providing medical facilities and medical research.

11.6 The CBC SPD sets out six key themes to guiding the future developments:

- Open spaces and landscape
- The public realm
- The built form
- Connectivity and movement
- Sustainability
- Phasing and delivery

11.7 These principles promote the provision of:

- High-quality open space and landscapes that perform a range of functions and contribute to biodiversity, geodiversity and nature are vital in creating sustainable developments.
- Create a high-quality public realm which encourages healthy lifestyles, physically active communities and positively contributes to mental health and wellbeing.
- Encourage high-quality built form that can encourage the interaction between people and place and can respond to the local character, materiality and the historic environment.
- Recognises the wide range of users needs throughout the CBC and works to tackle the challenges in connectivity and movements by creating safe and attractive routes that promote walking, wheeling and cycling, and which can connect into Campus facilities.

11.8 The SPD builds on the adopted Local Plan principles for reduce energy demand and associated carbon emissions, as well as carbon reduction requirements and adhere to or go beyond requirements for sustainability set out in the Sustainable Design and Construction SPD to design and deliver more sustainable forms of development. Work alongside the long-term infrastructure and campus growth, through well phased and coordinated strategies, to ensure future developments work towards the overall SPD vision.

11.9 The application documents which have been submitted in support of the application sets out how the proposals seek to align with the visions and themes set within the CBC SPD. Throughout the pre-application process the design evolution of the scheme regard was had to the aspirations of the CBC SPD and helped establish the design framework for the proposals.

Pre-application Engagement

11.10 Throughout the design process, the project team have engaged extensively with stakeholders though meetings, workshops, presentations, and handouts. Alongside working with officers from the shared planning service, the project team have sought a collaborative approach through the Planning Performance Agreement process.

11.11 The development proposals have been the subject of detailed pre-application dialogue with officers since June 2025. The scheme was reviewed by the Cambridgeshire Quality Panel in October 2025, and presented to the Joint Development Control Committee in July 2025 providing an opportunity for Members to review the emerging scheme.

11.12 The developer has responded positively to the pre-application discussions and sought to enhance the scheme following officer guidance and Cambridgeshire Quality Panel feedback. The formal application responds and builds on the key considerations raised throughout the pre-application

processes through the technical documents submitted in support of the application, the design of the proposed building and how the proposal aligns with relevant policies.

Environmental Impact Assessment Screening

11.13 A Screening Request for the development of the AstraZeneca Office Building and Conference Centre was submitted to the Local Planning Authority under the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017, to determine whether the proposed development constituted EIA development (planning reference 26/00386/SCRE).

11.14 The Local Planning Authority issues a Screening opinion on 23 February 2026 that, based on the submitted information the proposed development was Schedule 2 development under the EIA Regulations (an urban development project and greater than 1 hectare) but would not constitute EIA development. The Screening Matrix issued as part of the Local Planning Authority's Opinion noted that several aspects of development could be managed through the planning process.

12.0 Principle of Development

12.1 Policy 1 of the Cambridge Local Plan (2018) sets out a presumption in favour of sustainable development and that when considering development proposals, the Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

12.2 Policy 2 of the Cambridge Local Plan (2018) focuses on the Special Strategy for the Location of employment development. It sets out that employment development should be focused in the urban area, Areas of Major Change (which includes Cambridge Biomedical Campus), and build on existing strengths in 'knowledge-based' activities.

12.3 Policy 5 of the Cambridge Local Plan (2018) deals with sustainable transport and infrastructure, setting out that development proposals must be consistent with and contribute to the implementation of the transport strategies and priorities set out in the Cambridgeshire Local Transport Plan and the Transport Strategy for Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire.

12.4 Policy 14 of the Cambridge Local Plan (2018) deals with general principles for Areas of Major Change and Opportunity Areas, setting out that development within these areas should be of the highest quality design and incorporate the principles of sustainable design and construction. Development in these areas is supported subject to a range of criteria

relating to infrastructure, a site-wide masterplan, movement, activity and protection of existing assets including heritage and landscape.

12.5 Policy 17 of the Cambridge Local Plan (2018) relates specifically to the Cambridge Biomedical Campus (including Addenbrooke's Hospital) Area of Major Change. The policy supports development where it can be demonstrated that development is required to meet a local, regional or national health care need or for biomedical and biotechnological research and development activities within class B1(b), related higher education and sui generis medical research institutes. The supporting text specifies that the CBC is an international centre of excellence for patient care, biomedical research, and healthcare education. Furthermore, that the local plan will support its continuing development as such, and as a high quality, legible and sustainable campus. It also reinforces the existing biomedical and biotechnology cluster in the Cambridge area.

12.6 The proposed scheme seeks to deliver a single six-storey (Research and Development) building providing; workspace for approximately 736 staff members, a 200-person conference centre, a 450-person auditorium, and a 110-cover restaurant for staff and users of the conference centre and auditorium. This would encompass 11,973sqm of gross internal area.

12.7 The principal of development is considered to accord to the aims and objectives of policy 17 of the Cambridge Local Plan (2018), biomedical and biotechnological research and development activities on the AstraZeneca campus within class B1(b) (now under Use Class E(g)), and thus are acceptable.

12.8 It is also material to note that the site did gain outline planning permission in 2009 for Up to 215,000sqm floorspace (excluding plant areas) comprising 60,000sqm of clinical research and treatment (D1 and/or clinical in-patient treatment), 115,000sqm of biomedical and biotech research and development (B1(b)), 15,000sqm of biomedical and biotech research and development (B1(b)) or clinical research and treatment (D1 and/or clinical in-patient treatment), and 25,000sqm of either clinical research and treatment (D1 and/or clinical in-patient treatment) or higher education or sui generis medical research institute uses, and including related support activities within use classes A1, A3, B1, D1 (creches/nurseries) or sui generis uses, with no individual premises used for support activities to exceed 500sqm; new areas of public realm; landscaping; parking areas; highway works; drainage works and all other associated infrastructure.

12.9 Whilst the outline permission has expired it confirms the principle of the development is in accordance with the site allocation policy as set out in the adopted Local Plan (2018). Further to this Policy 27 sets out site specific development opportunities and refers to sites considered suitable for development to contribute towards Cambridge's needs to 2031, which

are set out in the proposals schedule (Appendix B of the Local Plan). Here, site 'M15' deals with the Cambridge Biomedical Campus (including Addenbrooke's Hospital) and further supports medical services and biomedical research.

12.10 The principle of development is acceptable and in accordance with policies 1, 2, 5, 14, 17, and 27 of the Cambridge City Local Plan (2018).

13.0 Design, Layout, Scale and Landscaping

Site Layout and Context

13.1 The proposal sits within the AstraZeneca South plot on the Cambridge Biomedical Campus. The proposed scheme largely follows, the now expired, Outline planning permission for the AstraZeneca south plot (06/0796/OUT, 20/05027/REM) and masterplan core principles for the site including central green promenade, perimeter buildings, active ground-floor uses with covered walkways, and a common architectural identity. It is not a requirement of any future planning permission to adhere to these core principles and the framework set at by the previous outline permission. The proposed scheme is considered to be an evolution of the previous outline permission, and seeking to build a higher-quality scheme.

13.2 The proposed development consists of a pavilion-style building, built to fit within the context of the surrounding buildings and landscaping. The inclusion of some of existing features with permission, such as the central promenade landscaping, provides the opportunity to reconsider the approved design to ensure its functionality will remain high-quality and align with the additional proposed Conference Centre and Office Building.

13.3 The scheme includes the existing Vehicular Accesses, Servicing and Logistics, a Coach Drop-off Bay, Pedestrian routes, the existing Energy and Data Centre, Landscape Promenade, and the Northern Passage and Strategic Gap.

13.4 Pedestrians would access the site and southern campus primarily from the northern passage which links to Francis Crick Avenue and wider CBC. This links to the internal landscaped Promenade where all the buildings on the AstraZeneca southern plot have their main entrance, including the proposed conference centre and office building.

13.5 The inclusion of the Coach Drop-off Bay is proposed to the south of the Travel Hub to enable an area for future visitors of the site to have a safe arrival point via organised bus without impeding other travel modes across the site. This is supported by officers and would not result in a detrimental impact upon the extant scheme and would encourage the use of sustainable transport to the site for organised events. It is noted that this would result in the loss of 4no. trees, which in the context of the improved

landscaping of the south plot, as a whole, is not considered to have a detrimental impact upon the existing site. This matter is considered further in Section 14 (Trees).

13.6 Utilising and improving upon the above mentioned existing or approved elements of the previous permission (20/05027/REM) is supported by officers as this would help ensure efficiencies on the site. The previous scheme also accounted within the master planning for a building of a similar nature coming forward in this location. Therefore, elements including car and cycle parking, energy and data centre uses, and servicing and logistics arrangements, which have been designed and provided, based on the entire buildout of the southern plot would support the proposed development.

13.7 The proposed site layout responds to the constraints of the site and to the approved surrounding buildings and landscape layout (20/05027/REM). The arrangement around a central promenade green space provides good connectivity and outdoor amenity space. The proposed temporary surface car park would not prejudice the future development of the promenade.

13.8 The scale, massing and layout of the scheme is considered acceptable.

Townscape and Visual Appraisal

13.9 The application is accompanied by a Townscape and Visual appraisal (TVA) to assess the visual effects of the proposed development on the Cambridge Biomedical Campus. This has been reviewed by officers and it is considered that the proposed building sits comfortably within the broadly accepted envelope of the CBC.

13.10 It is acknowledged that the scheme would result in some loss of openness within the campus. This approach is consistent with the CBC SPD design principles and therefore considered acceptable. The scheme would also enhance permeability within the AstraZeneca south plot through high-quality landscape design and public realm amenity.

13.11 The visual appraisal and supporting technical visualisations demonstrate that the height of the proposed building is consistent with the context and does not detract from the character of the Cambridge skyline. Further to this the rooftop pavilion element, housing the conference centre and auditorium, contributes positively to the area by adding distinctive focal point reducing the risk of coalescing on the CBC.

13.12 The TVA shows that visually the proposed development would have minor or negligible longer distance effects. From shorter distance views the scheme would form part of the established collection of contemporary

buildings defining this edge. The TVA also shows through the 15-year visualisations that as the planting establishes the development edge will soften especially as the planting within the strategic gap matures.

13.13 This has been reviewed by the council's Landscape architect, and officers overall agree with the findings within the TVA. Therefore, it is considered that the proposed development will make a positive contribution to the character of the receiving townscape, the surrounding visual context, and overall skyline.

Design

13.14 The proposed scheme has undergone an extensive design evolution which has resulted in pavilion-style building following the built form established from the under-construction Rosaland Franklin Building. The development places the conference facilities and auditorium in the upper "penthouse" which is expressed as a sculptural crown element with a gently curved roof.

13.15 At ground level the proposals activate building frontages with the entrance and restaurant facilities. The main entrance is accessed from the central promenade which has a covered canopy area helping to define the building entrance from a way finding perspective. The ground floor provides a large receiving space, with a clearly defined circulation strategy separating the day-to-day office access from conference and event visitors via dedicated lift cores creating a controlled access. The restaurant wraps around the eastern and southern elevations, animating these edges. The restaurant includes a spill-out area within and adjacent to the strategic gap, activating the space.

13.16 The lower sections of the building continue the established architectural language of the south plot campus. This area would house the work/office space, and is designed to accommodate 566 desks, breakout and collaboration spaces, and other office amenities (such as printing space, kitchen areas, and toilet facilities).

13.17 The upper element intentionally takes a different approach from the established architectural language to reflect its special use. The scheme is designed to house 450 people within the auditorium, and 200 people within the conference centre (which can be subdivided for flexibility). Surrounding the lower level of the "penthouse" is a wraparound terrace which provides additional breakout space, circulation space, and allows panoramic views to the CBC.

13.18 The proposed development would exceed the now expired outline permission maximum permitted height of 31m with no more than 60% of the site exceeding 26 m. The exceeded limit to 33m is considered to be acceptable in these circumstances as it is for a special architectural

element, the auditorium “crown.” The conference centre shoulder height is 25m, with the curved roof form reaching 33m at its peak. Crucially, the majority of the auditorium massing remains below 31m and is not considered to undermine the established (now expired) height strategy.

13.19 The roof maintenance and access requires the use of a crane, with operatives utilising a fall restraint and clipped-in access system. Further details of this are secured via **Condition 4**, to ensure that the storage of this equipment to ensure it does not affect the roofline’s visual quality. The proposed solar panels on the roof are designed to ensure that they flow with the roofline and would not detract from the architectural expression.

13.20 The continuation of the datum line across the 1st to 3rd floors aligns with neighbouring plots, establishing visual continuity within the existing campus. This is characterised through the concrete frame. The auditorium introduces a distinct architectural feature which is expressed further through the use of timber throughout the upper floors.

13.21 This material choice ensures the building reads as a visually distinctive yet harmonious component of the campus. To ensure the high-quality materials and finishes of the proposed scheme **Condition 3** is recommended. Similarly, the depth of the upper-floor canopy overhang has been designed to provide functional shelter while respecting the terrace edge, contributing to a well-proportioned elevation.

13.22 The proposed scheme successfully integrates functionality, public realm quality, and architectural expression to contribute positively to the emerging character and long-term vision of the Cambridge Biomedical Campus. The proposed development is considered by officers to be a high-quality scheme which is guided by four principles – Character, Climate, Connectivity, and community. The building has been designed to an exceptionally high standard and would deliver a high-quality penthouse-level space accommodating both the auditorium and conference centre.

Landscape

13.23 The proposed landscape strategy consists of 3 main areas. The strategic gap, the promenade, and the northern passage.

13.24 Throughout the pre-application processes the role and function of the strategic gap has evolved. This space was originally envisaged as a 25m gap between the proposed building and any future building to the south (on the temporary MUGA). This space now is around 13m between the conference centre building canopy and the adjacent safeguarded plot for future development.

13.25 The original rationale for this gap was to support a 25m green link from Hobsons Park, to the West, through to the CBC. The nature of this interface has evolved since the now-lapsed, 2009 outline consent, particularly with the introduction of the railway station and associated infrastructure. It does however remain important that the transition between the green belt and the relatively large scale-built form associated with CBC is carefully managed.

13.26 Whilst the strategic gap is reduced, the space is sufficient to accommodate a large enough tree, that can read together with foreground planting to form a continuous canopy. This space now also provides additional amenity function with spill-out space from the proposed ground floor restaurant, a bench seat area, and Lawned area for informal seating and other amenity use. The strategic gap would still create a green connection, though is now reduced

13.27 The promenade central landscaping has been reviewed as part of this application. This has seen refinements to the pathway connections to reflect the alteration in desire lines as the proposed conference centre and office building design has progressed.

13.28 The promenade design is considered to adhere to the original design vision under the approval (20/05027/REM) and remains a high-quality landscaped space. The evolution of this space appropriately reflects the changing nature of this area with the introduction of an additional building and appropriately considering the desired routes through the promenade to access neighbouring buildings and facilities.

13.29 The northern passage would serve as the primary pedestrian routes for the conference centre and office building, and the south plot. This space is proposed to be a 10m wide hard landscaped area with free standing planters and a focal tree with seating at the western end. This is designed to draw users through to the site to the promenade as a clear and legible space.

13.30 This space would function as a ‘street-type condition,’ providing permeability while accommodating practical needs such as service access to plant and back-of-house facilities.

13.31 Officers are supportive of the northern passage, and the design appropriately reflects its intended use as a more highly trafficked pedestrian connection route.

Summary

13.32 The proposed landscaping details submitted are generally considered acceptable. The proposed strategy would see an appropriate level of planting and highly landscaped scheme. The scheme is considered to

respond well to the surrounding existing landscaping. **Conditions 5, 6, 7, and 20** are recommended to secure further hard and soft landscaping details, tree pit details, landscaping management and maintenance plan, and a lighting strategy.

13.33 Overall, the proposed development is a high-quality design that would contribute positively to its surroundings and be appropriately landscaped. The proposal is compliant with Cambridge Local Plan (2018) policies 55, 56, 57, 58 and 59 and the NPPF.

14.0 Trees

14.1 Policy 59 and 71 seek to preserve, protect and enhance existing trees and hedges that have amenity value and contribute to the quality and character of the area and provide sufficient space for trees and other vegetation to mature. Para. 131 of the NPPF seeks for existing trees to be retained wherever possible.

14.2 The application is accompanied by an Arboricultural Impact Assessment. This shows that as part of the proposed development there are 18no. trees which would be impacted. This includes the removal of 4no. smaller trees to the south of the Travel Hub for the implementation of a coach drop-off layby. The scheme also proposes an additional 2no. trees along Frances Crick Avenue.

14.3 The proposed structures would not encroach into the tree root protection areas of the retained trees and therefore is unlikely to have a detrimental impact upon the trees to be retained.

14.4 The Council's Arbouricultural Officer has no objection to the scheme and recommends **Condition 8** to secure an Arboricultural Methodology Statement.

14.5 Subject to conditions as appropriate, the proposal would accord with policies 59 and 71 of the Local Plan.

15.0 Heritage Assets and Archaeology

15.1 There are no Listed Buildings, Scheduled Ancient Monuments, or Conservation Areas within the site. There are 16 non-statutory designated sites located within 1km of the site, the closest being Hobson's Park Country Wildlife Site (approximately 0.3km to the East). The closest Scheduled monument is approximately 570m away, and the closest listed building is approximately 630m away.

15.2 The County Council Archaeology officer has been consulted and confirmed that the site has already been subject to archaeological investigation including open area excavation within the proposed redline. The site has been fully recorded.

15.3 The Listed Buildings, Scheduled Ancient Monuments, and Conservation Areas are not directly adjacent to the site and are therefore not considered to be affected by the proposed scheme.

15.4 The proposal would not give rise to any harmful impact on the identified heritage assets and is compliant with the provisions of the Planning (LBCA) Act 1990, the NPPF and Local Plan policies 60 and 61.

16.0 Carbon Reduction and Sustainable Design

16.1 The Council's Sustainable Design and Construction SPD (2020) sets out a framework for proposals to demonstrate they have been designed to minimise their carbon footprint, energy and water consumption and to ensure they are capable of responding to climate change.

16.2 Policy 28 states development should take the available opportunities to integrate the principles of sustainable design and construction into the design of proposals, including issues such as climate change adaptation, carbon reduction and water management. The same policy requires new non-residential buildings to achieve full credits for Wat 01 of the BREEAM standard for water efficiency and the minimum requirement associated with BREEAM excellent for carbon emissions.

16.3 Policy 29 supports proposals which involve the provision of renewable and / or low carbon generation provided adverse impacts on the environment have been minimised as far as possible.

16.4 The application is supported by a sustainability statement, BREEAM pre-Assessment, and Energy Statement. These show that the scheme is targeting BREEAM Outstanding. The BREEAM pre-assessment provided demonstrates a score of 88.41% can be achieved which is above the 85% required rating. Further to this the scheme would be set to achieve WELL Gold.

16.5 The proposed scheme would be connected to the nearby existing energy and data centre ustilising air source heat pumps and water source heat pumps ensure an all-electric approach. There are proposed to be a large solar photovoltaic (PV) arrange covering 514sqm of the main roof space. The proposed energy strategy would result in a carbon reduction of 33.7% above the Building Regulations Part L baseline.

16.6 The application has been subject to formal consultation with the Council's Sustainability Officer who raises no objection to the proposal subject to **conditions 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, and 16** relating to BREEAM Design stage certificate, BREEAM Post construction Certificate, Commercial Water Metering, Sustainability and Energy Strategies, and Grey and rainwater harvesting.

16.7 The applicants have suitably addressed the issue of sustainability and renewable energy and, subject to the recommended conditions, the proposal is in accordance is compliant with Local Plan policies 28 and 29 and the Greater Cambridge Sustainable Design and Construction SPD 2020.

17.0 Biodiversity

17.1 The Environment Act 2021 and the Councils' Biodiversity SPD (2022) requires development proposals to deliver a net gain in biodiversity following a mitigation hierarchy which is focused on avoiding ecological harm over minimising, rectifying, reducing and then off-setting. This approach is embedded within the strategic objectives of the Local Plan and policy 70. Policy 70 states that proposals that harm or disturb populations and habitats should secure achievable mitigation and / or compensatory measures resulting in either no net loss or a net gain of priority habitat and local populations of priority species.

17.2 The emerging Greater Cambridge Local Plan aspires to require that all major development to achieve minimum of 20% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG).

17.3 In accordance with policy and circular 06/2005 'Biodiversity and Geological Conservation', the application is accompanied by a preliminary ecological appraisal and Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment which sets out that the scheme should achieve a 58.63% Net gain for area habitats and a 12.40% net gain for hedgerow units. This would exceed the statutory minimum and the minimum proposed in the emerging local plan.

17.4 The existing site consists of buildings, hardstanding, hedgerows, grassland and trees. There are no non-statutory protected sites within the vicinity that are likely to be impacted by the application.

17.5 The application has been subject to formal consultation with the Council's Ecology Officer, who raises no objection to the proposal and recommends **conditions 18, 19, and 20** to ensure the protection of species, Lighting strategy, and the estimated biodiversity net gain is delivered.

17.6 In consultation with the Council's Ecology Officer, subject to an appropriate condition, officers are satisfied that the proposed development would not result in adverse harm to protected habitats, protected species or priority species and achieve a biodiversity net gain. Taking the above into account, the proposal is compliant with 57, 69 and 70 of the Cambridge Local Plan (2018).

18.0 Water Management and Flood Risk

18.1 Policies 31 and 32 of the Local Plan require developments to have appropriate sustainable foul and surface water drainage systems and minimise flood risk. Paras. 159 – 169 of the NPPF are relevant.

Surface Water and Water Use

18.2 The site is in Flood Zone 1 and is therefore considered at low risk of flooding. The majority of the site is identified as being very low risk of surface water flooding, with some minor areas indicated as being medium and high risk.

18.3 The applicants have submitted a Flood Risk Assessment and a Surface and Foul Water Drainage Strategy. These demonstrate that the surface water from the proposed development can be managed through the use of attenuation and flow restrictors, restricting surface water discharge to 6.8l/s. This includes the use of swales as an addition to controlling the rate of surface water leaving the site this also provides water quality treatment which is of particular importance when discharging into a watercourse.

18.4 The Local Lead Flood Authority has advised that they have no objection to the proposed scheme subject to **Conditions 9 and 10** regarding surface water drainage.

18.5 The scheme proposes the use of water-efficient fixtures, rainwater harvesting, seeks to achieve full compliance with BREEAM WAT-01. This is considered to conform with Policy 31 by re-using water where possible and reducing demand on potable water. Further, as mentioned above the council's sustainability officer has recommended conditions regarding water metering, and grey and rainwater harvesting systems. The implications of the proposed development on strategic and local water resources are not considered to be significant and therefore its future risks on water environment are considered acceptable.

18.6 Considering the above officers are content that the proposed scheme would adhere to policies 31 and 32 of the Cambridge City Local Plan (2018).

Foul Water

18.7 Under Section 106 of the Water Industry Act 1991, all Water and Sewerage Companies have a legal obligation to provide developers with the right to connect to a public sewer. The duty imposed by section 94 of the 1991 Act requires these companies to deal with any discharge that is made into their sewers.

18.8 Paragraph 201 of the NPPF states that the focus of planning policies and decisions should be on whether proposed development is an acceptable use of land, rather than the control of processes or emissions (where these are subject to separate pollution control regimes). Planning decisions should assume that these regimes will operate effectively.

18.9 The application site lies within the Cambridge Water Recycling Centre (WRC) catchment area. Anglian Water advise in their representation that Cambridge WRC currently lacks the capacity to treat the additional flows generated by the proposed development,

18.10 Anglian Water advise that given the circumstances, a temporary objection will be raised, until alternative plans to increase capacity at the existing Cambridge WRC to deal with wastewater from growth are confirmed. This is on the grounds that any connection into the foul network will contribute to pollution and deterioration of the watercourse via the WRC, as it is unable to accommodate the additional flows.

18.11 It is understood by officers that a comprehensive feasibility review of all available options is being undertaken by Anglian Water to determine how future growth can be supported at the existing facility. This assessment is not expected to conclude until June 2026.

18.12 Wastewater infrastructure capacity has become a strategic issue for many local planning authorities across the south-east of England over the last year. At a local level, the MHCLG decision in August 2025 not to support the relocation of the Cambridge WRC has resulted in objections being raised by Anglian Water to planning applications within the Cambridge WRC catchment.

18.13 Whilst Anglian Water's consultation response is described as a temporary objection with regard to wastewater treatment, officers note that Anglian Water does not have the statutory power to directly prevent the Local Planning Authority from determining a planning application. Officers consider that the availability of treatment capacity at Cambridge WRC, and any environmental or amenity harm caused by increased discharges from storm overflows associated with the application proposals is a material planning consideration in the assessment of this planning application. The weight to be attached to this matter is for the decision maker.

18.14 Officers do not consider it reasonable to withhold the consideration of this planning application until the conclusion of Anglian Water's feasibility review to determine how future growth can be supported at the Cambridge WRC. Developers retain a right to appeal against non-determination if there is an unnecessary delay in determining planning applications.

Capacity of Cambridge WRC

18.15 Under the application proposals, foul water would be treated at Anglian Water's Cambridge WRC. Anglian Water have advised that this treatment works currently lacks the capacity to treat the additional flows generated by the proposed development.

18.16 Anglian Water has advised that using the latest 2024 Q90 dry weather flow (DWF) headroom figures, as verified by the Environment Agency, the WRC consent permit is for 37,330 m3 per day (37,330,000 litres per day). As of 2024 Q90 data, the WRC was operating at 39,354 m3 per day (39,354,000 litres per day), which demonstrates that the WRC is operating above consenting capacity.

18.17 Whilst no specific environmental harm has been identified by Anglian Water from the additional flows from this particular proposal to substantiate their objection, 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 – see Table 3 below.

Year	Number of spills	Duration (hours)
2021	0	0
2022	0	0
2023	74	1476
2024	23	295

Table 3: Cambridge WRC Storm Overflow, Spill frequency event duration

18.18 The above 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 validates Anglian Water'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). However, this issue is no fault of any developer, nor is the solution – a strategic investment decision for Anglian Water - within any developer's direct control.

18.19 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, albeit any attribution of harm from a single development site, including a proposal that does not amount to EIA development as in this case, is difficult to ascertain.

Foul Water Drainage Strategy

18.20 The submitted documentation in support of the application proposals confirm that the foul water drainage strategy builds upon previously approved drainage designs for Cambridge Biomedical Campus and the wider masterplan drainage network. Foul water flows will discharge into the existing private foul sewer along Francis Crick Avenue, which connects to the Cambridge Biomedical Campus pumping chamber. It is understood that this discharges to Anglian Water at a fixed rate of 66 litres/second, and that this will remain unchanged under the proposed development.

18.21 No direct evidence has been provided by Anglian Water to substantiate their position, or to demonstrate the harm to the environment that the additional foul flows arising from this development would cause to the receiving watercourse. Notwithstanding this position, officers have extracted the daily discharge rates approved under the expired outline application for the entire South Plot and proposed daily use water discharge rates associated with the proposed development from the Surface and Foul Water Drainage Strategy (Part 1 of 2) - CB003-RAM-XX-XXX-RP-C 009001 P06 and Surface and Foul Water Drainage Strategy (Part 2 of 2) - CB003-RAM-XX-XXX-RP-C 009002 P03 which accompanies the planning application– see Table 4 below.

Development	Area of building GIA (M2)	Daily Discharge Rates Already Permitted (Litres/Day)	Daily Discharge rates (Litres/Day)
AstraZeneca South Plot consisting of, Office Building, Hive, Travel Hub (20/05027/REM)	20,065	1,200,960	190,427
Proposed Development	11,973	N/A	109,000

Table 4: Existing and proposed foul water flow rates

18.22 The applicant has confirmed that the daily foul water discharge rate for the proposed scheme is 109,000 litres a day. The information presented in Table 4 indicates that the proposed scheme would generate around 9% of the daily foul water discharge rates which were originally permitted for the AstraZeneca south plot under the outline permission.

Assessment of Harm

18.23 Notwithstanding the position that the daily foul flow rates would still be within the 'allowable' site discharge rate for the South Plot, it is considered appropriate to undertake an assessment of harm based on predicted daily foul water discharge rates, against the context of the objection from Anglian Water.

18.24 As a proportion of the existing overall processing at CWRC, which is accepted as above the current permit licence, officers consider that the net increase of foul flow rates from the application site would have the potential to cause harm to the water environment beyond that already occurring. Whilst noting that there would be a cumulative effect with other development, the scheme is not EIA development and there is no requirement for such an assessment to be undertaken by the applicants. On this basis, officers consider the additional foul water contribution from the proposed development to CWRC would not be significant.

18.25 The risk of harm is capable of being mitigated significantly by investment in and implementation of a suitable scheme to upgrade the capacity of the catchment wastewater treatment works, Cambridge WRC. Anglian Water have committed to make that investment in their October 2025 statement.

18.26 In light of the statutory obligations imposed on Anglian Water, the lack of evidence concerning attributable harm arising from this development and its limited contribution to the daily dry weather WRC processing, officers consider that a planning condition to restrict occupation until net capacity is improved is not considered necessary. This is because the proportionate impact of 109,000 L/D equating to 0.28% of the approximate 39 million litres per day currently processing at Cambridge WRC, is considered to render any harm minimal. A Grampian condition should only be imposed if the impacts were such they would result in a recommendation of refusal. In this case, it is not necessary to impose a condition to grant planning permission. Whilst the proposal before members would result in a degree of conflict with the development plan and the NPPF, such conflict is minimal and should not bear any significant material weight in favour of a condition being considered necessary.

Planned improvements to Cambridge WRC

18.27 Notwithstanding Anglian Water's position as advised in consultation correspondence (that there are currently no funded plans to increase capacity at Cambridge WRC to deal with wastewater from growth), officers are of the view that there is a reasonable prospect that alternative plans will be forthcoming within the life of a planning permission. In reaching this position, officers have had particular regard to the government's agenda for growth in Cambridge and its environs, as reaffirmed in the Written Ministerial Statement on Delivering ambitious and high-quality sustainable growth in Greater Cambridge, made by Matthew Pennycook, Minister of State for Housing and Planning, on 23 October 2025. This statement demonstrates the government's firm commitment to realising the full

potential of Greater Cambridge in the months and years ahead and confirms that the government has instructed Anglian Water to accelerate planning for wastewater infrastructure upgrades required to accommodate development and growth.

Conclusion

18.28 Foul water is a material planning consideration in the assessment of the application proposals. The development would increase foul water flows to a receiving WRC which is already operating over capacity. The net increase has the potential to cause cumulative environmental harm to receiving watercourses, but any increase in this case would be limited and incapable of meaningful attribution in terms of harm. The application is acceptable with reference to its likely impacts notwithstanding policy 32 of the Local Plan 2018, in light of NPPF advice and Government signalling.

19.0 Highway Safety and Transport Impacts

19.1 Policy 80 supports developments where access via walking, cycling and public transport are prioritised and is accessible for all. Policy 81 states that developments will only be permitted where they do not have an unacceptable transport impact.

19.2 Para. 111 of the NPPF advises that development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.

19.3 The application is supported by a Travel Plan.

19.4 The site is accessed, for motor traffic, via a single existing access road to the south of the site from Francis Crick Avenue. The site is accessed on foot and on cycle from 2no. access points, one existing to the south of the site, and a new proposed norther passage adjacent to the proposed Conference Centre and Office Building. The site benefits from an existing network of cycleways and footways throughout the Biomedical Campus. Similarly, the Cambridge guided busway stops nearby the site, and the future proposed Cambridge south east transport improvements, and under construction Cambridge south station are both adjacent to the site.

19.5 The roads adjoining the site on the Cambridge Biomedical Campus are not adopted by the Cambridgeshire Highways Authority, therefore the Highway Authority does not consider there would be an adverse impact on the public highway. Thus, no objection is raised.

19.6 The submitted information shows that it is anticipated that most of the visitors for the Conference centre would be AstraZeneca employees, therefore the majority would already be on site when accessing the facility. The Cambridge Biomedical Campus is well connected with cycle, bus and

rail links to the surrounding area. It is therefore considered that the proposed site is in a well connected and sustainable location where future users would be able to access the site utilising sustainable travel modes.

19.7 The County Council Transport Assessment Team has been consulted and raise no objection to the scheme subject to the inclusion of a **condition 17** regarding a Travel Plan which should include a requirement to provide a welcome pack to ensure that sustainable travel options are utilised by visitors.

19.8 Subject to conditions the proposal accords with the objectives of policy 80 and 81 of the Local Plan and is compliant with NPPF advice.

20.0 Cycle and Car Parking Provision

Cycle Parking

20.1 The Cambridge Local Plan (2018) supports development which encourages and prioritises sustainable transport, such as walking, cycling and public transport. Policy 82 of the Cambridge Local Plan (2018) requires new developments to comply with the cycle parking standards as set out within appendix L. To support the encourage sustainable transport, the provision for cargo and electric bikes should be provided on a proportionate basis.

20.2 The existing Travel Hub provides over 600no. secure cycle spaces, 64 e-bike charging lockers, showers, lockers and drying rooms. There are a total of 1,138no. cycle parking spaces access the camps (1,088 staff and 50 visitor), of which 794no. staff spaces are provided on the AstraZeneca south plot. There are no additional proposed spaces on the site for cycle parking as the existing Travel Hub is expected to exceed the anticipated demand for cycle parking spaces base on a mode share of 30% of the 3,600 anticipated AstraZeneca staff, which related to 80% of the 4,500 staff which can be accommodated on the site, cycling. This aligns with the strategy approved in the reserved matters for the travel hub (20/05027/REM) of the previous now expired Outline permission. The travel plan details that there is a safeguarded area where an additional 176no. visitor cycle parking spaces could be provided. The Transport Assessment team has requested that this ongoing monitoring is included in the conditioned Travel Plan.

Car parking

20.3 Policy 82 of the Cambridge Local Plan (2018) requires new developments to comply with, and not exceed, the maximum car parking standards as set out within appendix L. Car-capped development is supported provided the site is within an easily walkable and cyclable distance to a District Centre or the City Centre, and has high public transport access.

20.4 The site does not propose any additional parking spaces. The wider AstraZeneca south plot contains 603no. car parking spaces including 24no. disabled parking spaces. The proposal does include the reallocation and provision of 11no. disabled parking spaces. The proposed is considered acceptable and accords with the strategy approved in the reserved matters for the travel hub (20/05027/REM) of the previous now expired Outline permission.

20.5 Subject to conditions, the proposal is considered to accord with policy 82 of the Local Plan and the Greater Cambridge Sustainable Design and Construction SPD.

21.0 Amenity

21.1 There are no residential dwellings within the immediate vicinity of the site. There are sensitive uses within the nearby Royal Papworth Hospital and other hospital buildings. The impact on the wider area including recent developments on the southern fringe also need to be considered. The amenity of the future occupants of the proposed buildings is also relevant.

Construction and Environmental Impacts

21.2 The Environmental Health Team has advised that the potential to generate pollution from the demolition and construction phases on surrounding properties if not controlled. **Conditions 26 and 27** are recommended requiring construction/demolition/delivery permitted hours and construction noise / dust assessment, mitigation and monitoring in the interest of amenity.

21.3 It has also been identified that noise could have a potential impact upon neighbouring amenity. Having regard to the scale, nature and location etc of the proposals this is considered a negligible / low adverse noise risk impact application site and area. **Condition 31** is recommended in regard to plant equipment noise to ensure that the scheme can be delivered and operates without an unacceptable adverse noise impacts.

21.4 The application is accompanied by a Ventilation and Extraction statement. The main potential sources of odour and fume emissions have been identified and most sources will discharge high at / above roof level etc so a high level of dilution and dispersion likely and acceptable. Negligible or very low adverse odour and fume generation risk impact / effect. **Condition 30** is recommended for Odours & Ventilation and Extraction.

21.5 Artificial Lighting is also considered by the Environmental Health Team in regard to human health. Due to the scale, nature and location of the proposals, potential human receptor adverse artificial lighting impacts are very low risk.

21.6 The scheme is supported by a preliminary contaminated land risk assessment with this application – (Ground Condition & Contamination Report). The report very reasonably concludes that a proportionate confirmatory site investigation will need to be undertaken prior to commencement of the development. Therefore, **Conditions 21, 22, 23, 24, and 25** are recommended regarding unexpected contamination, remediation, Material Management Plan, and verification report.

21.7 The Environmental Health Team has also reviewed the application in relation to Air Quality and find that subject to the plans being installed / constructed as approved we have no objections on air quality grounds.

Health Impact Assessment

21.8 The scheme is accompanied by a Health Impact Assessment (HIA). This considers health and wellbeing impacts which are healthy, safe, inclusive places that promote social interaction, active lifestyles and access to high-quality environments.

21.9 The HIA finds that the scheme would result in no adverse health impacts were identified with most impacts classified as either neutral or minor beneficial. These relate to employment and economic opportunities, active travel promotion, and strong connectivity to public transport, services and amenities.

21.10 The HIA finds that the Proposed Development is anticipated to deliver a net positive effect on health determinants through design, operational measures, and integration. There are no major recommendations for mitigation and enhancements, but does recommend a Construction Environmental Management Plan (or equivalent). Officers are in agreement with the report and support the mitigations suggested and is achieved through the above recommended conditions.

Summary

21.11 The proposal adequately respects the amenity of its neighbours and of future occupants and is considered that it is compliant with Cambridge Local Plan (2018) policies 33, 34, 35, and 36.

22.0 Other Matters

Waste

22.1 The application is supported by an Operational Waste Management and Minimisation Strategy. Estimated waste volumes and storage provision has been provided by the private waste contractor based on actual data from the nearby operational DISC building (of similar use and size). The

proposed development will comprise a ground floor internal waste store. Bins will be transferred to a separate external waste store (the 'South Plot Store') prior to collection. The South Plot Store is located within 10m of the refuse vehicle collection point. This has been reviewed by the Shared Waste Service and is considered to be acceptable.

22.2 Considering the submitted information the proposed is considered to comply with policy 57 of the Cambridge Local Plan (2018).

Public Art

22.3 The proposed development is accompanied by a Public Art Strategy. The strategy highlights potential areas and a vision for how public art might come forward on the site. To ensure the delivery of the Public Art on site **Condition 32** is recommended to secure a Public Art Delivery Plan.

22.4 Overall, the Public Art Strategy provides a positive foundation upon which high quality and distinctive art can be delivered onsite. Subject to conditions the proposals comply with Policy 55 and 56 of Cambridge Local Plan (2018).

Designing out crime

22.5 The comments raised by the Cambridge Constabulary are acknowledged. The design of the scheme has been consistent with the Secure by Design principles which are aligned with AstraZeneca's security standards. The applicant has stated in updated information that they will engage directly with the Secured by Design policing team as the scheme progresses through the build processes to ensure their input is captured early, and they will establish a structured consultation process.

22.6 It is considered by officers that AstraZeneca have a robust security process and have agreed to incorporate the observations into the evolving design. As a result no further action is necessary from a planning perspective at this stage.

23.0 Planning Balance

23.1 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).

23.2 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 2024, which requires approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay, or any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the NPPF 2024 taken as a whole.

23.3 The NPPF 2024 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. These roles are considered in weighing up the benefits and dis-benefits of the development proposals, relative to all material considerations discussed in the report.

23.4 Summary of harm

Environmental Impacts

23.5 With regard to environmental impacts arising from increased foul water flows from the development, whilst Anglian Water has raised an objection, the Environment Agency has not raised any comments on the proposed scheme. The impacts from this scheme are considered to be limited and any harm is not capable of meaningful attribution. The scheme also proposes to use water efficiency strategies such as water-efficient fixtures, and water re-use (such as grey water recycling) to reduce any additional waste water flows. On this basis, officers consider this issue to be limited in the planning balance, recognising that it would not be possible to attribute any meaningful or significant harm arising from this scheme to the water environment beyond that already occurring.

23.6 Summary of benefits

Social

23.7 The proposed development would provide a range of social benefits including new and enhanced public realm which would facilitate social interaction. The enhanced and improved landscaping would provide collision space for socialising and a space for relaxation which is accessible to both AstraZeneca staff and the general public.

23.8 The auditorium and conference centre would provide space for hosting events. This would facilitate collaboration both internally and externally. Further to this the restaurant on the ground floor would provide users of the building a space to eat, interact, and socialise.

23.9 The social benefits arising from the conference centre and office building are afforded moderate wight in the planning balance.

Economic

23.10 The proposed scheme would make a significant contribution towards to the office space provided on this part of the campus. This would also provide for both a local need on the biomedical campus and wider need within Cambridge for an auditorium and conference centre of this nature.

23.11 The proposed would be located in a highly sustainable location, with the under-construction Cambridge South Station, which in accordance with the Local Plan policies and the CBC SPD which will maintain the vitality of Cambridge as a world renowned location for technology research and knowledge economy.

23.12 There would be considerable new employment associated with both the construction and operational phase of the development which would also help to support local services and facilities in terms of the multiplier effect, together with increased spending in the area.

23.13 The economic benefits of the proposed development are afforded significant positive weight in the planning balance.

Environmental

23.14 The proposals would result in a high-quality architectural and sustainable building seeking BREEAM Outstanding and Well Gold certification. The scheme would positively contribute to the surrounding built environment.

23.15 The scheme promotes sustainable transport by prioritising pedestrian and cycle movements within the site by increasing the public realm and contributing towards pedestrian connectivity.

23.16 The proposed scheme would deliver a biodiversity net gain of over 58% through the provision of high quality landscaping and tree planting.

23.17 The environmental benefits arising from the proposed development are afforded significant weight in the planning balance.

23.18 Overall Conclusion

23.19 Officers have carefully considered the proposed development against the Cambridge Local Plan (2018), The NPFF (2024) and the Cambridge Biomedical Campus SPD. The scheme would result in minimal harm from a Wastewater Perspective. Set against this hard is a substantial package of economic, social and environmental public benefits. These benefits

attract significant weight, consistent with the NPPF's emphasis on economic growth, environmental enhancement, and social equity.

23.20 Having taken into account the provisions of the development plan, NPPF and NPPG guidance, the views of statutory consultees and wider stakeholders, as well as all other material planning considerations, the proposed development is recommended for approval.

24.0 Recommendation

24.1 **Approve** subject to:

-The planning conditions as set out below with minor amendments to the conditions as drafted delegated to officers.

25.0 Planning Conditions

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. Approved Plans
   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. Design Details and materials
   No part of the external façade shall be installed until details of all the materials for the external surfaces of buildings to be used in the construction of the development have been submitted to and approved in

writing by the local planning authority. The details shall include non-masonry walling systems; tongue-and-groove European oak planks, mullions and fins; windows and spandrel glazing; doors and entrances; porches and canopies; roof cladding; external metal work, balustrades, anodised aluminium, anodised copper and metal fascia; edge junctions and coping details; colours and surface finishes. The details shall consist of a materials schedule and a design details document, including detailed elevations and sections (scaled 1:5, 1:10, 1:20) and/or samples as appropriate to the scale and nature of the development in question and shall demonstrate consistency with the approved elevations. The 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, 56 and 57.

4. Roof Top Plant
   The roof-mounted plant/equipment shown on drawing no CB003JWA-XX-L60-DR-A-201611 (General Arrangement Plan Sixth Floor), including PV panels, hatch and ladder access, and associated man safe system shall not be installed until details of the plant/equipment for that stage 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 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, 56 and 57.

5. Hard and Soft Landscaping
   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.

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. Tree Pits
No tree planting or installation of tree pits shall take place until full details of all tree pits, including those in planters, hard paving and soft landscaped areas have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority and these works shall be carried out as approved. All proposed underground services will be coordinated with the proposed tree planting.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity and to ensure that suitable hard and soft landscape is provided as part of the development. (Cambridge Local Plan 2018; Policies 55, 57 and 59).

7. 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).

8. Arboricultural methodology statement condition
Prior to commencement of development, including demolition, and in accordance with BS5837 2012, a phased tree protection methodology in the form of an Arboricultural Method Statement (AMS) and Tree Protection Plan (TPP) shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the local planning authority before any tree works are carried out and before any equipment, machinery or materials are brought onto the site for the purpose of development (including demolition).

In a logical sequence the AMS and TPP will consider all phases of construction in relation to the potential impact on trees and detail tree works, the specification and position of protection barriers and ground protection and all measures to be taken for the protection of any trees from damage during the course of any activity related to the development, including supervision, demolition, foundation design (allowing for tree root growth and accounting for heave and subsidence), storage of materials, ground works, installation of services, erection of scaffolding and landscaping.

The development shall be carried out fully in accordance with the approved AMS and TPP.

Reason: To ensure that trees to be retained will be protected from damage during any construction activity, including demolition (Cambridge Local Plan 2018 Policy 71 and Section 197 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990).

9. Surface water
No development of any part of the site (excluding demolition and site clearance) 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 AstraZeneca Conference Centre and Office Building Surface & Foul Water Drainage Strategy, prepared by Ramboll, (ref: CB003-RAM-XX-XXX-RP-C-09001) dated November 2025 and shall also include:

a. Full calculations detailing the existing surface water runoff rates for the QBAR, 3.3% Annual Exceedance Probability (AEP) (1 in 30) and 1% AEP (1 in 100) storm events;
b. Full results of the proposed drainage system modelling in the above referenced storm events (as well as 1% AEP plus climate change at 40%), 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;
c. 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);
d. Full detail on SuDS proposals (including location, type, size, depths, side slopes and cross sections);
e. Site Investigation and test results to confirm infiltration rates;
f. Full details of the maintenance/adoption of the surface water drainage system;

g. Measures taken to prevent pollution of the receiving groundwater and/of 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.

10. Surface Water Run-off
No development of any part of the site (excluding demolition and site clearance) shall commence until details of measures indicating how additional surface water run-off from the site will be avoided during the construction works have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The applicant may be required to provide collection, balancing and/or settlement systems for these flows. The approved measures and systems shall be brought into operation before any works to create buildings or hard surfaces commence.

Reason
To ensure surface water is managed appropriately during the construction phase of the development, so as not to increase the flood risk to adjacent land/properties or occupied properties within the development itself; recognising that initial works to prepare the site could bring about unacceptable impacts.

11. BREEAM – Design Stage Certificate

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 'outstanding' 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 'outstanding', 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).

12. 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).

13. 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, the total volume of greywater reclaimed, and the total volume of rainwater 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.

14. Bespoke sustainability & energy strategies
The development hereby approved shall not be occupied until a post construction statement confirming that the provisions as set out in the Sustainability Statement and BREEAM Pre-Assessment (CB003-RAM-X-XXX-RP-R-009000 P07) and Energy Statement (CB003-RAM-XX-XXX-RP-R-999001 P06) 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).

15. Grey Water
No above-ground construction of the buildings (other than demolition and enabling/ utility diversion works, and hard and soft landscaping) shall take place until a detailed scheme for the approved grey water harvesting and recycling strategy has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall include relevant drawings showing the location of the necessary infrastructure required to facilitate the water reuse. The development shall be carried out and thereafter maintained strictly in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To respond to the serious water stress facing the area and ensure that development makes efficient use of water and promotes the principles of sustainable construction (Cambridge Local Plan 2018 Policy 28 and the Greater Cambridge Sustainable Design and Construction SPD 2020).

16. Rainwater harvesting systems

No above-ground construction of the buildings (other than demolition and enabling/ utility diversion works, and hard and soft landscaping) shall take place until a detailed scheme for the approved rainwater harvesting and recycling strategy has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall include relevant drawings showing the location of the necessary infrastructure required to facilitate the water reuse. The development shall be carried out and thereafter maintained strictly in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To respond to the serious water stress facing the area and ensure that development makes efficient use of water and promotes the principles of sustainable construction (Cambridge Local Plan 2018 Policy 28 and the Greater Cambridge Sustainable Design and Construction SPD 2020).

17. Travel Plan

No occupation of the building shall commence until a Travel Plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The Travel Plan shall specify: the methods to be used to discourage the use of the private motor vehicle and the arrangements to encourage use of alternative sustainable travel arrangements such as public transport, car sharing, cycling and walking how the provisions of the Plan will be monitored for compliance and confirmed with the local planning authority The Travel Plan shall be implemented and monitored as approved upon the occupation of the development.

Reason: In the interests of encouraging sustainable travel to and from the site (Cambridge Local Plan 2018, policies 80 and 81).

18. 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 approved plans**.** The ecological measures shall thereafter be retained for the lifetime of the development.

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

19. Ecology – Enhancement
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).

20. Lighting strategy for sensitive biodiversity
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).

21. Phase 2 Intrusive Site Investigation & Phase 3 Remediation Strategy
No development (or phase of) shall commence until the following have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority:

a. A Phase 2 Intrusive Site Investigation Report based upon the findings of the approved Phase 1 Desk Top Study.
b. A Phase 3 Remediation Strategy based upon the findings of the approved Phase 2 Intrusive Site Investigation Report.

Reason: To ensure that any contamination of the site is identified and appropriate remediation measures agreed in the interest of environmental and public safety (Cambridge Local Plan 2018 policy 33).

22. Implementation of Remediation
The development (or each phase of the development where phased) shall not be occupied until the approved Phase 3 Remediation Strategy has been implemented in full.

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

23. Phase 4 Verification/Validation Report
The development (or each phase of the development where phased) shall not be occupied until a Phase 4 Verification/Validation Report demonstrating full compliance with the approved Phase 3 Remediation Strategy has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To demonstrate that the site is suitable for approved use in the interests of environmental and public safety (Cambridge Local Plan 2018 policy 33).

24. 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).

25. Material Management Plan
No material for the development (or phase of) shall be imported or reused until a Materials Management Plan (MMP) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The MMP shall include:

a) details of the volumes and types of material proposed to be imported or reused on site
b) details of the proposed source(s) of the imported or reused material
c) details of the chemical testing for ALL material to be undertaken before placement onto the site.
d) results of the chemical testing which must show the material is suitable for use on the development
e) confirmation of the chain of evidence to be kept during the materials movement, including material importation, reuse placement and removal from and to the development.

All works will be undertaken in accordance with the approved MMP.

Reason: To ensure that no unsuitable material is brought onto the site in the interest of environmental and public safety in accordance with (Cambridge Local Plan 2018 Policy 33).

26. Construction / demolition hours
No construction or demolition work shall be carried out and no plant or power operated machinery operated other than between the following hours: 0730 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).

27. Demolition / construction collections / deliveries
There should be no collections from or deliveries to the site during the demolition and construction stages outside the hours of 0800 hours and

1800 hours on Monday to Friday, 0800 hours to 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).

28. Construction/demolition noise/vibration & piling
In the event of piling, no development shall commence until a method statement detailing the type of piling, mitigation measures and monitoring to protect local residents from noise and/or vibration has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Potential noise and vibration levels at the nearest noise sensitive locations shall assessed in accordance with the provisions of BS 5228-1&2:2009 Code of Practice for noise and vibration control on construction and open sites.

Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved statement.

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

29. Dust condition
No development shall commence until a scheme to minimise the spread of airborne dust from the site including subsequent dust monitoring during the period of demolition and construction, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority.

The development shall be implemented in accordance with the approved scheme.

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

30. Odours & Ventilation and Extraction

The development hereby approved shall be constructed, implemented and maintained thereafter in accordance with the submitted 'AstraZeneca Conference Centre and Office Building: Ventilation and Extraction Statement, Date November 2025 (Document Reference CB003-RAM-XX-XXX-RP-3-009003, Status: S3, Revision: P06', by Ramboll.

To protect / safeguard the health and quality of life (amenity) at existing premises in accordance with Policy 36 (air quality) of the Cambridge Local Plan 2018.

31. Plant / Equipment and Mechanical Building Services Noise Emission Limits

The development hereby approved shall be constructed, implemented and maintained thereafter in accordance / compliance with the day and nighttime operational plant / equipment and mechanical building services noise emission limits as detailed in the submitted 'AstraZeneca Conference Centre and Office Building: Noise Impact Assessment, Date November 2025 (Document Reference CB003-RAM-XX-XXX-RP-U-000002 Status: S3 Revision: P06)', by Ramboll.

To protect / safeguard the health and quality of life (amenity) at existing premises in accordance with Policy 35 (noise and vibration) of the Cambridge Local Plan 2018.

32. Public art pre-occupation

No development above ground level, other than demolition, (or in accordance with a timetable agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority), shall commence until a Public Art Delivery Plan (PADP) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The PADP shall include the following:

a) Details of the public art and artist commission;
b) Details of how the public art will be delivered, including a timetable for delivery;
c) Details of the location of the proposed public art on the application site;
d) The proposed consultation to be undertaken;
e) Details of how the public art will be maintained;
f) How the public art would be decommissioned if not permanent;
g) How repairs would be carried out;
h) How the public art would be replaced in the event that it is destroyed;

The approved PADP shall be fully implemented in accordance with the approved details and timetabling. Once in place, the public art shall not be moved or removed otherwise than in accordance with the approved maintenance arrangements.

Reason: To provide public art as a means of enhancing the development and (Cambridge Local Plan policies 55 and 56 and the Cambridge City Council Public Art SPD (2010).

Informatives

1. Signage
   Appropriate signage should be used in multi-function open space areas that would normally be used for recreation but infrequently can flood during extreme events. The signage should clearly explain the use of such areas for flood control and recreation. It should be fully visible so that infrequent flood inundation does not cause alarm. Signage should not be used as a replacement for appropriate design.

2. Pollution Control
   Surface water and groundwater bodies are highly vulnerable to pollution and the impact of construction activities. It is essential that the risk of pollution (particularly during the construction phase) is considered and mitigated appropriately. It is important to remember that flow within the watercourse is likely to vary by season and it could be dry at certain times throughout the year. Dry watercourses should not be overlooked as these watercourses may flow or even flood following heavy rainfall.

3. Construction Surface Water Maintenance
   Prior to final handover of the development, the developer must ensure that appropriate remediation of all surface water drainage infrastructure has taken place, particularly where the permanent drainage infrastructure has been installed early in the construction phase. This may include but is not limited to jetting of all pipes, silt removal and reinstating bed levels. Developers should also ensure that watercourses have been appropriately maintained and remediated, with any obstructions to flows (such as debris, litter and fallen trees) removed, ensuring the condition of the watercourse is better than initially found. This is irrespective of the proposed method of surface water disposal, particularly if an ordinary watercourse is riparian owned.

4. Notification of intention to connect to the public sewer under S106 of the Water Industry Act Approval and consent will be required by Anglian Water, under the Water Industry Act 1991. Contact Development Services Team 0345 606 6087 Option 2.

5. Protection of existing assets - A public sewer is shown on record plans within the land identified for the proposed development. It appears that development proposals will affect existing public sewers. It is recommended that the applicant contacts Anglian Water Development Services Team for further advice on this matter. Building over existing public sewers will not be permitted (without agreement) from Anglian Water.

6. Building near to a public sewer - No building will be permitted within the statutory easement width of 3 metres from the pipeline without agreement from Anglian Water. Please contact Development Services Team on 0345 606 6087 Option 2.

7. The developer should note that the site drainage details submitted have not been approved for the purposes of adoption. If the developer wishes to have the sewers included in a sewer adoption agreement with Anglian Water (under Sections 104 of the Water Industry Act 1991), they should contact our Development Services Team on 0345 606 6087 Option 2 at the earliest opportunity. Sewers intended for adoption should be designed and constructed in accordance with Sewers for Adoption guide for developers, as supplemented by Anglian Water's requirements.

8. As the development includes uses that are intended to be run as or includes food type businesses, the applicant is reminded that under the Food Safety Act 1990 (as amended) the premises / uses will need to register with Cambridge City Council, as required by law. In order to avoid additional costs, it is recommended that the applicant ensure that the kitchen, food preparation and foods storage areas comply with food hygiene legislation, before construction starts. The applicant is advised to contact the Commercial Team, Environmental Health & Public Safety, Communities at Cambridge City Council on telephone number (01223) 457890 or email commercial@cambridge.gov.uk for further information / advice etc.

9. To satisfy and discharge Environmental Health conditions relating to artificial lighting, contaminated land, noise / sound, air quality and odours / fumes, any assessment and mitigation shall be in accordance with the scope, methodologies and requirements of relevant sections of the Greater Cambridge Sustainable Design and Construction SPD, (Adopted January 2020) https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/greater-cambridge-sustainable-design-and-construction-spd and in particular section 3.6 - Pollution and the following associated appendices:

   6: Requirements for Specific Lighting Schemes
   7: The Development of Potentially Contaminated Sites in Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire: A Developers Guide
   8: Further technical guidance related to noise pollution

Appendix 1 – Cambridgeshire Quality Panel Report

Cambridgeshire Quality Panel

AstraZeneca Conference Centre and Office Building

Monday 20th October 2025

AstraZeneca Campus, Cambridge Biomedical Campus

Panel: Robin Nicholson (chair), Phil Armitage, June Barnes, Simon Carne, John Dales, and Fiona Heron.

Local Authority: Jonathan Brookes (GCSP), James Truett (GCSP), Emma Lilley (GCSP) and Leonie Simmonds (GCSP).

The Cambridgeshire Quality Charter for Growth sets out the core principles for the level of quality to be expected in new development across Cambridgeshire. The Cambridgeshire Quality Panel provides independent, expert advice to developers and local planning authorities against the four core principles of the Charter: connectivity, character, climate, and community.

Development overview

The site is located within the Cambridge Biomedical Campus (CBC), specifically within the existing AstraZeneca Southern Campus. It is bounded by the railway line — including the new Cambridge South Station — to the west, and Francis Crick Avenue to the east. The site originally fell under Phase 1 of the 2009 Outline Consent (ref: 06/0796/OUT), which expired in 2021. As such, this proposal will be submitted as a separate Full Planning Application.

The proposed development comprises a conference centre and office building. It will include a large auditorium with approximately 450 seats, a dedicated conference space for up to 200 attendees, workspace for around 700 staff, and an onsite restaurant.

Presenting team

The presenting team included Richard Surma from **AstraZeneca**; Nicola Roberts from **Northmores**, leading on project management; Guy Kaddish and Ed Jones from **Bidwells**, providing planning expertise; Tomislav Dushanov and Ryoko Ikeda from **Herzog and de Meuron** as architects, Jude Harris and Liliana Vaz from J**estico Whiles**, also serving as architects, Oliver Smith from **Gillespies**, responsible for landscape design; and Tim Parris and Sofia from **Ramboll**, covering transport and sustainability respectively.

Local authority's request

Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service have acknowledged the proposed scheme has progressed through a series of pre-application discussions, including urban design workshops and this Quality Panel review, with officers broadly supportive of the emerging building's design and aspirations. Key issues for further consideration included the landscaping strategy—particularly the function of the southern strategic gap following changes to pedestrian access—the visual relationship with Francis Crick Avenue, where the gabion wall and hedge currently obstruct views, and inter-site connectivity, specifically access from the western car park and travel hub. Officers were also keen to understand the Panel's views on the overall scale and massing of proposals.

Cambridgeshire Quality Panel summary

The Panel expressed their appreciation to the applicant for hosting the session and delivering the presentation. They reiterated their role as a critical friend within what is, broadly speaking, a prestigious scheme. The Panel noted that, with the planning application expected towards the end of November 2025, it is unfortunate the scheme was not brought to them sooner, as the opportunity to influence meaningful changes is now limited

Several questions of clarification were asked as follows: -

The Panel queried the sun and shade patterns within the courtyard, noting that cross-sectional drawings would have been helpful in illustrating this more clearly. In response, the applicant described the sun's movement throughout the day and across the seasons, explaining how this influences the distribution of sunlight and shaded areas within the space.

To what extent are the environmental measures formal targets? The applicant clarified that the stated targets will be included within the planning application, while the more ambitious, stretched targets are aspirational in nature but will be referenced as part of the broader strategy.

The Panel asked about the intended functions of the open spaces and the anticipated number of users. The applicant responded that while the number of public users remains unknown, the DISC building will accommodate approximately 2,400 people, with a further 2,000 based at the southern campus. In addition, the site will include 900 bicycle parking spaces and a dedicated Travel Hub facility to support sustainable transport options.

What lessons had been learned from earlier phases of development? The applicant explained that the Travel Hub café is no longer required, reflecting evolving user needs, who now use the facility in The Hub instead. Assumptions around electric vehicle provision has also shifted, influenced by car design changes since the original campus design, and anticipated impacts from the new railway station, surrounding developments, and the CSET project are unknown. In addition, evolving internal working practices and broader amenity requirements have necessitated a more proactive and adaptive approach to planning.

The Panel commented that the plan showing the adjacent balancing pond needs updating to show the new Cambridge South railway station access.

These views are expanded upon below, and include comments made in closed session.

Community – *"places where people live out of choice and not necessity, creating healthy communities with a good quality of life"*

The Panel reflected that, although it is likely too late to reconsider, the decision to locate the conference centre on the top floor might have been open to challenge. Given the excellent public transport connections, the facility also has potential for evening and weekend use and may have been more accessible and visible if positioned at ground level.

While the community consultation appears to have been well executed, a question was raised about the composition of respondents — specifically, how many were nearby residents or campus employees? Clarifying this would help assess the relevance and reach of the feedback received.

Although the building entrance is good, its inward-facing orientation turns away from Francis Crick Avenue, reducing its visibility and making wayfinding more difficult for visitors. A corner-facing entrance would have offered greater prominence and clearer access, especially for those arriving from key approach routes.

The café and adjoining overspill area are well-considered, but there's an opportunity to be more ambitious with the design and activation of this outdoor space. Given its potential popularity during the summer months, enhancing its size and functionality could significantly enrich the user experience.

Ensure that baby changing and nursing facilities are provided on the ground floor and are available on the upper levels to support accessibility and convenience for all users throughout the building.

The entrance hall currently presents a corporate feel, but there's an opportunity to introduce a more engaging and playful character. Incorporating elements such as exhibition space, including options for community exhibition space, that could help activate the area, making it more welcoming and visually stimulating for visitors.

The mobility strategy for the building is unclear, particularly in terms of how wheelchair users and individuals with limited vision navigate the space. Greater detail is needed to understand how inclusive design principles have been applied to support accessible movement throughout the building.

The flexibility of the conference space is commendable; however, concerns were raised about the practicality of catering logistics. With kitchens located on the ground floor, ensuring that food arrives hot and ready to serve on the top floor may present operational challenges that warrant further consideration.

Connectivity – *"places that are well-connected enable easy access for all to jobs and services using sustainable modes"*

Reflections were shared on how the building connects with its external context. One example highlighted the experience of alighting from the Guided Bus, where the most direct route to the site is obstructed by a ditch, impeding access. Looking ahead, the forthcoming CSET scheme will reshape Francis Crick Avenue, presenting an opportunity for this project to help influence positive changes that enhance connectivity and improve access for all users.

Should Francis Crick Avenue be designed as more of a street?

The footpaths along Francis Crick Avenue appear too narrow to accommodate anticipated foot traffic, and the adjacent grass borders are likely to be [further] worn down over time. This issue will be further exacerbated by the opening of the railway station and the cumulative impact of surrounding development and emerging transport schemes.

It was observed that cyclists are not always able to ride directly into the cycle park, requiring them to dismount for the final part of the journey. This presents a barrier to seamless access and is considered poor practice in terms of user experience and active travel design. There needs to be clarity of routes and connectivity to pick up desired cycle trips into the AZ southern campus.

The provision for visitor cycle parking was unclear. However, it was noted that additional outside bike spaces are planned to come online at a later stage, which should offer greater visibility and ease of access for visitors by bike.

Greater consideration is needed for the range of users navigating the site. While demand for access is clearly being generated, some of the existing routes appear inadequate in meeting the practical needs of pedestrians, cyclists, and those with mobility challenges. A more user-focused approach to route planning would help ensure safe, intuitive, and inclusive movement throughout the development.

Bridges—and the potential for additional ones, particularly connecting to the garden space in the strategic gap—could significantly enhance accessibility from Francis Crick Avenue by increasing permeability to the site. More crossing points would support smoother, more direct movement for pedestrians and cyclists, helping to integrate the development more effectively with its surroundings

Vehicle and cycle turning movements into and out of the Travel Hub, from Francis Crick Avenue, appear to have restricted right turns, yet these limitations appeared frequently disregarded. The existing signage on Francis Crick Avenue seems insufficient to enforce the intended traffic movements of 'banning' right turn in, and this aspect should be reviewed to improve clarity, safety, and compliance. It may not even be needed at all given the usage levels of Francis Crick Avenue.

Climate – *"Places that anticipate climate change in ways that enhance the desirability of development and minimise environmental impact"*

The commitments appear good, but this doesn't look like a low energy building!

The extensive use of glass raises questions about its environmental and performance impact. Has this been fully assessed, and what baseline data was used to evaluate factors such as thermal efficiency, glare, solar gain, and acoustic performance?

Glare and solar gain could pose significant challenges, particularly given the building's extensive glazing. Shading is likely to present a challenge due to the building's east–west facades, which are more exposed to low-angle sunlight. It was noted that while blinds are easy to lower, they are often then left down—potentially limiting natural light and views. This highlights the need for a thoughtful approach to solar control that balances comfort, usability, and daylight access.

The building appears to operate as a sealed environment, raising questions about the provision of natural ventilation. Adopting a mixed-mode strategy—combining

mechanical and passive systems—would offer greater flexibility, improve occupant comfort, and enhance environmental performance.

The auditorium will seemingly benefit from natural light, creating a bright and uplifting environment that enhances the overall experience for users.

The curved roof is visually striking, but its performance under increasingly frequent heavy downpours warrants closer scrutiny. Has its drainage capacity been thoroughly tested to ensure resilience against future climate conditions and extreme weather events? Considering the long-term impacts of climate change is important for future proofing.

The Panel noted the design challenge arising from surrounding the auditorium with plant that will need to be acoustically separated.

Whole life carbon assessment should be integrated as a proactive design tool, not merely used for post-design reporting. Embedding it early in the process enables more informed decisions that can significantly reduce environmental impact throughout the building's lifecycle.

What is the recycled content of the proposed materials? Future reuse should also be considered although it is noted that the building is likely to have a 60-100 lifespan. It was highlighted that treated glass is hard to recycle.

It was recommended to minimise the extent of mechanical, electrical, and plumbing (MEP) systems where possible. Locating plant equipment adjacent to quiet or sensitive spaces is inefficient, as it necessitates additional mitigation measures to manage noise and vibration—adding complexity and cost to the design.

Following the principles of Net Zero Building Standard is applauded.

Character – *"Places with distinctive neighbourhoods and where people create 'pride of place'*

The spatial connections are crucial, but the current passageways and gaps feel unresolved. As people cross Francis Crick Avenue, they're confronted by a blank wall, which creates a disjointed experience. Consider emphasizing gateways and focal points more deliberately—use planting and seating to invite movement and interaction, and don't be afraid to make bold, distinctive choices. The hedge has potential to define

spaces and guide crossing points more effectively. Currently, the use of plant pots in the northern gap feels like a missed opportunity and lacks impact. Hard landscape materials should be used more boldly to mark and celebrate the entrance. The hedge might turn into the passage, or a line of trees might run through it.

Consider developing distinct character areas throughout the site to enrich the overall experience. The attenuation zones offer untapped potential—could they celebrate water more actively, perhaps through playful or reflective features? Strengthen the identity of each space by using materials to define boundaries and transitions more clearly. The tree in the southern gap works well as a starting point, but there is a danger of the space becoming just a green space with a tree. There's an opportunity to be more ambitious with this space—explore how purpose and activity could shape it into a stronger destination or connector, that is unique in character from the Promenade.

The garden for the nursery children is a delightful and well-considered space, but there's an opportunity to push it further and integrate it more meaningfully into the wider scheme. Could it become a playful anchor or a sensory gateway that sets the tone for the surrounding landscape? Think about how its character, materials, and planting might echo or contrast with adjacent areas to create a richer narrative across the site. There's real potential here to make it not just a standalone moment, but a key part of the overall experience.

The cafés at the conference centre and The Hub are not very visible from Francis Crick Avenue, which limits their accessibility and appeal to the wider community. Consider how their presence could be signalled more clearly—through signage, sightlines, or landscape cues—to invite community use. These spaces have the potential to become vibrant social anchors, but only if people know they're welcome. How might the design better communicate openness and encourage spontaneous discovery?

At a strategic level, there was reflection on whether the building truly reflects the significance of what takes place within it. The campus, as it stands, feels like a collection of individual buildings rather than a unified whole—missing the coherence that a site-wide masterplan might have provided. The conference centre is arguably the most important building on the south campus, yet its architectural expression risks

being read as an office block with an ambiguous feature on top. The use of the term ‘penthouse’ feels clichéd and doesn’t convey the ambition or distinctiveness the space deserves. There’s an opportunity here to rethink how the building communicates its role and status within the wider campus.

There’s a broader question of whether the building truly sends the right message. Functionally, it appears challenging to move around in, particularly in terms of vertical circulation. Do internal users need to descend to the lobby before accessing the upper levels again? If so, that raises concerns about efficiency and user experience. There’s also a sense that the upper levels may be overburdened—has too much been placed up top? It’s worth reflecting on whether the investment has been directed to the areas that most enhance the building’s purpose and visibility.

The use of natural light in the auditorium was once again applauded, highlighting a thoughtful and commendable design move. A comparison was drawn to Storey’s Field community centre at Eddington, which demonstrates a simpler yet highly effective approach. It creates a much more flexible space and could form a model for how the auditorium could be specified with a flat floor and bleachers. This reference also reinforces the value of restraint and clarity in architectural expression—showing that impactful results can be achieved without complexity.

The edges of building, at the higher levels were liked which should remain thin and the elevations merge the plant in a way that creates a sense of it being a huge space.

The design should be led by sustainable features.

Is there a comprehensive and effective maintenance plan in place? The building’s design appears to present challenges in terms of upkeep—particularly the higher-level windows and in less accessible areas. It’s important to consider how maintenance will be managed long-term, and whether the architectural choices support practical, cost-effective servicing. A visually striking building must also be maintainable to ensure its quality and performance are sustained over time.

Specific recommendations

The Panel enjoy seeing the AstraZeneca campus schemes come forward, and although this review seems a little late in the process, the following points are made:

Improve Visibility and Access: Reconsider entrance orientation and signage to make public-facing spaces like the café and conference centre more visible and welcoming from Francis Crick Avenue.

Clarify Community Engagement: Provide more detail on the makeup of consultation respondents to ensure feedback reflects both local residents and campus users.

Enhance Public Amenities: Expand and activate the café and overspill area and ensure baby changing facilities are available on all levels to support inclusive use.

Strengthen Inclusive Design: Develop a clearer mobility strategy that addresses accessibility for wheelchair users and those with limited vision.

Review Operational Practicality: Assess the functionality of placing the conference centre on the top floor, especially in relation to catering logistics and long-term maintenance.

Improve Direct Access Routes: Address physical barriers such as the ditch to enable more direct and intuitive access to the site.

Influence redesign Francis Crick Avenue as a Street: Seek to influence the avenue's design to better accommodate pedestrian flow, with wider footpaths and durable surfaces that respond to increasing foot traffic and future transport developments.

Enhance Cycling Infrastructure: Ensure cyclists can ride directly into the cycle park and clarify visitor cycle parking provision to support seamless and visible access for active travel.

Adopt a User-Focused Mobility Strategy: Reassess site navigation to better serve pedestrians, cyclists, and all users and those with mobility challenges through inclusive and intuitive route planning.

Review Traffic Management and Signage: Improve signage and enforce turning restrictions at the Travel Hub to ensure safe and compliant vehicle movements.

Strengthen Energy Performance Strategy: Ensure the building meets low-energy targets through rigorous assessment of glazing, shading, and ventilation—consider adopting a mixed-mode approach to balance comfort and efficiency.

Integrate Whole Life Carbon Assessment Early: In future, use whole life carbon analysis as a proactive design tool from the outset to guide material choices and reduce long-term environmental impact in future phases.

Enhance Climate Resilience: Review the drainage capacity of the curved roof and other design elements to ensure robustness against future extreme weather and climate change.

Optimise MEP Systems and Plant Location: Minimise mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems where possible, and avoid placing plant near sensitive areas to reduce noise, vibration, and unnecessary complexity.

Improve Material Sustainability: Evaluate the recyclability and environmental impact of materials—especially treated glass—and prioritise those with higher recycled content and lower embodied carbon.

Strengthen Spatial Connections and Wayfinding: Improve the clarity and impact of passageways, gateways, and focal points—especially across Francis Crick Avenue—using bold planting, seating, and landscape cues to guide movement and enhance visibility.

Develop Distinct Character Areas: Enrich the site by defining varied spatial identities, celebrating features like attenuation zones and the nursery garden as playful, sensory anchors that contribute to a cohesive landscape narrative.

Enhance Public Interface and Community Access: Make cafés and social spaces more visible and inviting from key approach routes to encourage wider community use and spontaneous engagement.

Clarify Building Identity and Functionality: Ensure the building expresses its purpose and status within the campus, addressing concerns around vertical circulation, spatial hierarchy, and architectural coherence.

Embed Sustainability and Long-Term Maintenance: Lead with sustainable design principles, ensure natural light and ventilation are optimised, and develop a robust maintenance strategy to support long-term performance and resilience.

The opportunity for ongoing engagement with the developer and design team would be welcomed on future phases. as the scheme develops.

Contact details

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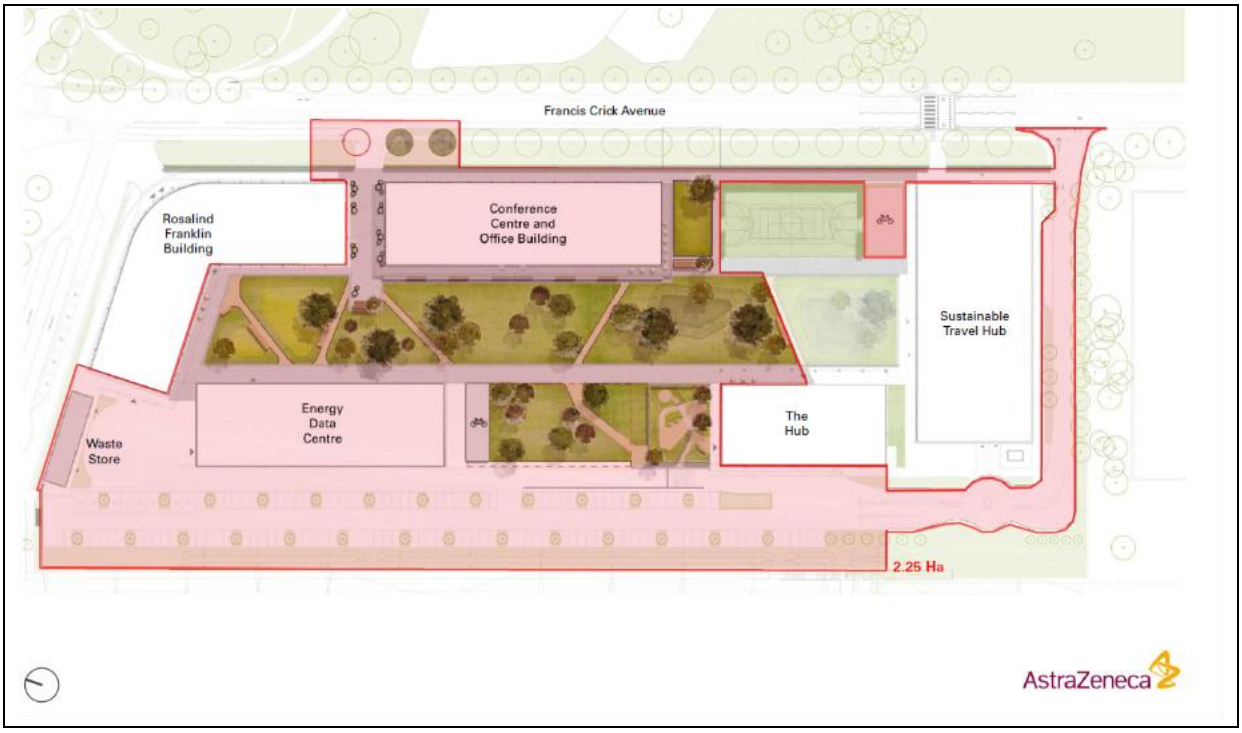
Issue date: 23rd October 2025

Appendix A – Background information list and plan

- Main presentation
- Local authority background note
- Applicant background notes

Documents may be available on request, subject to restrictions/confidentiality.



Proposed Site Plan (Source: Gillespies, Herzog & de Meuron and Jestico + Whiles)