GREATER CAMBRIDGE
SHARED PLANNING

NATIONAL SCHEME OF DELEGATION
SCHEDULE 2 APPLICATION GATEWAY ASSESSMENT FORM

APPLICATION DETAILS:

Item	Details
Application Reference	**26/02816/FUL**
Site Address	50-55 William James House, Cowley Road, Cambridge CB4 0WX
Proposal Description	Demolition of existing buildings/hardstanding and erection of commercial building(s) (use classes E(g)(ii), E(g)(iii), B2 and B8 to be applied flexibly) with associated substation, servicing, access, parking, landscaping and associated infrastructure works.
Applicant	Cowley PropCo Limited
Ward	East Chesterton
Parish/Town Council	N/A
Application type	Full application
Case Officer	Janine Richardson
Date of Assessment	21 October 2026
Nominated Officer	Philippa Kelly
Nominated Member	Katie Porrer

1. Schedule 2 Qualification:

X Major planning application (inc. 10 or more residential dwellings/site area of more than 0.5 hectares)

☐ Section 73 application relating to a Schedule 2 permission

☐ Section 73A retrospective application

☐ Reserved Matters relating to a large outline permission

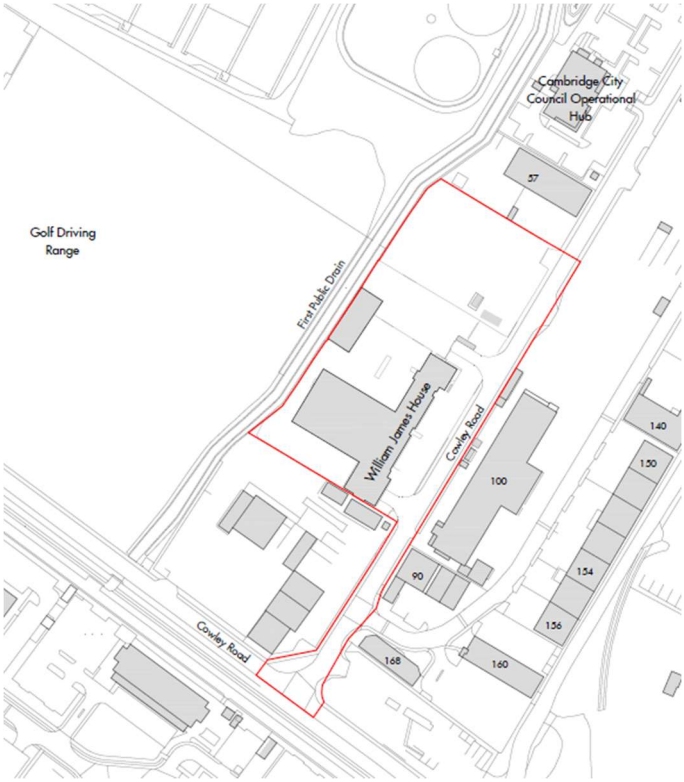
☐ Other – please specify

2. SUMMARY OF DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL:

Key Facts

Matter	Details
Site area	1.55ha
Existing use	Office
Proposed use	Commercial (use classes E(g)(ii), E(g)(iii), B2 and B8)
Number of dwellings	None
Floorspace proposed	7,159 sqm
Heritage designation(s)	None
Environmental designation(s)	None
Policy allocation status	Policy 15 of the CLP – 'Cambridge Northern Fringe and new railway station'
EIA Development	No
Major Infrastructure Implications	No

Site location plan



Officer Summary

The proposal is to demolish an existing office building, small industrial unit and hardstanding. Four modern, architect designed flexible commercial units are proposed with car and cycle parking, amenity space, new trees and landscaping.

The site lies with the 'Cambridge Northern Fringe and new railway station' as an area of major change under Policy 15 of the CLP. The proposed uses are in accordance with the plan and would provide additional employment opportunities.

The principal planning issues include:

- The proposed flexible commercial uses
- Impact on character of area and scale
- Sustainability
- Transport impacts
- Water usage and foul water discharge

The proposed building would have excellent sustainability credentials aiming for BREAAM excellent.

Anglian Water have raised objections on the foul water flows from the development. The applicant has provided additional information. AW have reviewed the additional information and whilst they acknowledge that the increase in flows are relatively small they consider the cumulative impacts and their objection remains due to the lack of capacity at the Cambridge WRC.

The County Transport Assessment Team raise no objection to the proposals subject to mitigation measures including a contribution towards sustainable transport improvements in the area (amount to be confirmed) and a Travel Plan.

3. CRITERION A ASSESSMENT:

Does the application raise an economic, social or environmental issue of significance to the local area?

Economic Significance:

Consideration	Assessment
Employment creation/loss	The proposal would lead to the loss of an existing office building but would provide new flexible commercial space (with an additional 3277sqm) and would employ up to 200 people.
Impact on local economy	The proposal would provide a contemporary industrial and commercial scheme that is responding to current market requirements.
Strategic investment implications	None known

Impact on town/village centres	None known
Impact on business land supply	None known.

Officer Commentary

The proposal would provide modern, market led flexible commercial units in an existing industrial area. The proposed design and scale of the proposed buildings would enhance the area and meet the aspirations for the Northern Fringe area as set out in the Local Plan and the emerging GCLP. The applicant will provide an employment and skills plan to support roles in the local area and create additional jobs.

The economic benefits are considered to be of high significance.

Social Significance:

Consideration	Assessment
Housing delivery significance	None – Low
Affordable housing implications	None – Low
Community facilities/services	None – Low
Health and wellbeing impacts	Low
Impact on community cohesion	Low

Officer Commentary

Environmental Health Officers have raised no objection. A Heath Impact Assessment (HIA) has been submitted with the application. The proposals would support healthy lifestyles with an emphasis on sustainable travel. Amenity space and an improvement of the environment around the proposed building with tree planting and additional landscaping is proposed. An employment and skills plan is proposed by the applicants to support the local community.

The social benefits are considered to be of low significance.

Environmental Significance:

Consideration	Assessment
Climate change implications	The proposed buildings will achieve a minimum BREEAM Excellent and EPC A rating and exceed current LP policies.
Biodiversity impacts	40% BNG is proposed on site.
Landscape/townscape effects	The proposed buildings would be an enhancement to the area.
Heritage impacts	No heritage assets would be affected. Archaeology can be dealt with by condition.
Flood risk considerations	No objection raised by the LLFA.
Transport impacts	No objection from County Transport Assessment team, mitigation can be by condition and S106.

Officer Commentary

The proposed development would bring about environmental enhancements to the existing site with environmentally sustainable buildings with smart water management. A 40%+ increase in BNG would be achieved on site with new tree planting and landscaping. There are outstanding issues in relation to foul water capacity. There is an existing building on site and the additional foul flows from the development are unlikely to cause significant environmental impacts. Transport impacts can be mitigated with suitable conditions and legal agreement.

The environmental benefits are considered to be of low significance.

Overall Criterion A Conclusion

☐ Criterion A NOT met

☐ Criterion A MAY be met

Y **Criterion A clearly met**

Reasons

The proposal will bring significant economic effects to the local area. The objection from Anglian Water (AW) is on the capacity to take additional foul flows. There would be a minor increase in foul water flows which is not considered to cause significant environmental impacts and no evidence from AW has been provided to demonstrate any harm, however, it remains that Anglian Water objects to the proposals. Transport impacts can be mitigated with conditions and any relevant obligations through a Section 106 Agreement.

4. Criterion B Assessment

Does the application raise a significant planning matter having regard to the Development Plan and other material considerations?

Development Plan Considerations

Factor	Assessment
Departure from Development Plan	No
Departure from Site Allocation	No
Conflict with Strategic Policies	No
Conflict with Neighbourhood Plan	No

Material Considerations

Matter	Significance
Highways	Low

Flooding	Low
Design	Low
Heritage	Low
Ecology	Low
Landscape	Low
Amenity	Low
Other	

Statutory Consultation Issues

Consultee	Objection Outstanding?
Highways Authority	No
Environment Agency	No
Historic England	N/A
Lead Local Flood Authority	No
Other	

Other consultee (Anglian Water)

Anglian Water have objected to the proposals. They have stated that the receiving wastewater infrastructure currently has insufficient capacity to accommodate additional flow without an unacceptable risk to the environment and existing customers. Consequently, Anglian Water must consider the cumulative impact of all additional flows entering the wastewater system, regardless of whether the increase arising from an individual development is relatively small.

Whilst the redevelopment of previously developed land and the efficient use of existing employment sites is supported in principle, their objection remains due to the lack of capacity at Cambridge WRC.

Officer Commentary

The application is considered to raise a significant planning matter in respect of the objection from Anglian Water.

Overall Criterion B Conclusion

☐ Criterion B NOT met

☐ Criterion B MAY be met

Y Criterion B clearly met

Reasons

The principle of development is accepted and in line with the Local Plan.

The application is considered to raise a significant planning matter in respect of the objection from Anglian Water.

5. Gateway Recommendation Meeting Summary

☐ Neither Criterion A nor B met

☐ Criterion A met

☐ Criterion B met

Y Both Criteria met

7. Nominated Officer and Nominated Member Decision

Y Refer to Planning Committee

☐ Delegate to Officers

Date of Gateway Panel Meeting:

21 October 2026

Notes for Assessors

- The presumption under the National Scheme of Delegation is **officer determination of Schedule 2 applications**, with referral occurring only in exceptional circumstances.
- The number of objections received is **not, by itself, a reason for referral**.
- The assessment should focus on the **significance** of the issue rather than the popularity or controversy of the proposal.

For criteria A significance, ***Note****: The statutory guidance states that significance will vary according to local circumstances and should be assessed on a case-by-case basis. Examples may include major allocated developments, significant community facilities, or notable heritage assets.*

- **For criteria B significance,** Government guidance advises that significant planning matters are unlikely where a proposal broadly complies with an adopted allocation and relevant planning policies unless new material considerations arise.

- This written record should be retained explaining how the gateway tests were applied.