



Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government

Caroline Bywater & Peter Seaborn
Mills and Reeve
Botanic House
100 Hills Road
Cambridge, CB2 1PH

Our ref: APP/Q0505/V/25/3360616

Your ref: 23/03204/OUT

9 December 2025

Sent by email only

Dear Caroline Bywater and Peter Seaborn

**TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 – SECTION 77
APPLICATION MADE BY RAILWAY PENSION NOMINEES LTD (RAILPEN)
THE BEEHIVE CENTRE, COLDHAMS LANE, CAMBRIDGE, CB1 3ET
APPLICATION REF: 23/03204/OUT**

This decision was made by the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Building Safety, Fire and Democracy, Samantha Dixon MP, on behalf of the Secretary of State

1. I am directed by the Secretary of State to say that consideration has been given to the report of Jonathan Bore MRTPI, who held a public local inquiry which opened on 24 June 2025 into your client's outline application (with all matters reserved) for planning permission for the demolition of existing buildings and structures and redevelopment of the site for a new local centre (E (a-f), F1(b-f), F2(b,d)), open space and employment (office and laboratory) floorspace (E(g)(i)(ii)) to the ground floor and employment floorspace (office and laboratory) (E(g)(i)(ii)) to the upper floors; along with supporting infrastructure, including pedestrian and cycle routes, vehicular access, car and cycle parking, servicing areas, landscaping and utilities, in accordance with application Ref. 23/03204/OUT, dated 14 August 2023.
2. On 12 February 2025, this application was called in for the Secretary of State's determination, in pursuance of Section 77 of the Town and Country Planning Act (TCPA) 1990, that your client's application be referred to him instead of being dealt with by the local planning authority, Cambridge City Council.

Inspector's recommendation and summary of the decision

3. The Inspector recommended that the application be approved, and planning permission granted, subject to conditions.
4. For the reasons given below, the Secretary of State agrees with the Inspector's conclusions, except where stated, and agrees with his recommendation. He has decided to approve the application and grant planning permission, subject to conditions. The

Ministry of Housing Communities & Local Government
Laura Webster, Decision Officer
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2 Marsham Street
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Email: PCC@communities.gov.uk

Inspector's Report (IR) is attached. All references to paragraph numbers, unless otherwise stated, are to that report.

Environmental Statement

5. In reaching this position, the Secretary of State has taken into account the Environmental Statement which was submitted under the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 and the Environmental Statement Addendum (IR5.1-5.2). Having taken account of the Inspector's comments at IR5.3, the Secretary of State is satisfied that the Environmental Statement and other additional information provided complies with the above Regulations and that sufficient information has been provided for him to assess the environmental impact of the proposal.

Matters arising since the close of the inquiry

6. A list of representations which have been received since the inquiry is at Annex A. The Secretary of State is satisfied that the issues raised do not affect his decision, and no new issues were raised in this correspondence to warrant further investigation or necessitate additional referrals back to parties. Copies of these letters may be obtained on request to the email address at the foot of the first page of this letter.

Policy and statutory considerations

7. In reaching his decision, the Secretary of State has had regard to section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (PCPA) 2004 which requires that proposals be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
8. In this case the development plan consists of Cambridge Local Plan (CLP) (adopted October 2018), and the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Local Plan (MWLP) (adopted July 2021). The Secretary of State considers that relevant development plan policies include those in the documents referred to at IR6.3.
9. Other material considerations which the Secretary of State has taken into account include the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) published on 12 December 2024 and updated on 7 February 2025, and associated planning guidance (the Guidance), and the documents at IR6.5-6.7.

Emerging plan

10. The emerging plan comprises the Greater Cambridge Joint Local Plan, which is being prepared jointly by Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council. This had reached Regulation 18 stage at the time of the inquiry, and public consultation was being undertaken at the time of this decision. The Secretary of State notes that the parties agree it carries very limited weight in decision-making (IR6.4).
11. Paragraph 49 of the Framework states that decision makers may give weight to relevant policies in emerging plans according to: (1) the stage of preparation of the emerging plan; (2) the extent to which there are unresolved objections to relevant policies in the emerging plan; and (3) the degree of consistency of relevant policies to the policies in the Framework. The emerging Greater Cambridge Joint Local Plan is at an early stage of preparation. In accordance with paragraph 49 of the Framework, the Secretary of State agrees with parties that only very limited weight can be given to this plan.

Main issues

Economic growth and employment

12. For the reasons given at IR13.1-13.5 and IR13.59-13.63, the Secretary of State agrees that the scheme would create enhanced provision for an internationally important cluster of knowledge and high technology industries (IR13.5). He further agrees that it would promote economic growth in a sustainable and accessible location and facilitate innovation and research and knowledge-based industry (IR13.62). He further agrees that the scheme would accord with Policy 2 and also Policy 40 of the CLP which focus employment development on the urban area and the city centre, and support employment proposals in sustainable locations and new business space in areas where there is strong demand (IR13.63). The Secretary of State considers benefits relating to the proposal's support for economic growth and productivity in the Greater Cambridge area should be given significant weight.
13. The Secretary of State has considered the position on need, taking into account the evidence agreed between the main parties at IR7.4-7.15. He agrees with the Inspector that there is a significant level of demand for wet lab space and scale-up space that is not matched by current commitments, and the shortfall may remain until the end of the local plan period (IR13.2). He has also considered the opposing view, with reference to the Icen report¹, that there is less need for office and dry lab space. Unlike the Inspector at IR13.62, the Secretary of State does not consider that on the evidence before him he is able to accurately determine need for the development, given uncertainties in the delivery pipeline against commitments and demand. The Secretary of State therefore does not give separate weight to need.
14. The Secretary of State notes that the scheme would create an estimated 6,445 direct jobs and agrees with the Inspector that this would be a very big increase over the Beehive Centre's existing 855 jobs (670 full time equivalent) (IR13.4²). He further agrees that strategies for employment and skills, community outreach and start up and scale up, which are included in the s.106 agreement, would also enhance local opportunities for employment and training and agrees the scheme would deliver significant social value (IR13.4). The Secretary of State considers the benefits in terms of employment and social value arising from employment should be given significant weight.

Vitality of town centres

15. For the reasons given at IR13.6-13.10 and IR13.65-13.66, the Secretary of State agrees that the retail park does not enjoy policy protection and, although large format retailing would be lost, there would be adequate retail provision both in the surrounding area and in the form of a new local centre created on the site (IR13.65). The Secretary of State notes that the retail park would be replaced by a local centre of a little over 5,000 square metres, and agrees that this would provide convenience and comparison floorspace and restaurants and cafes for local people and workers in the new development (IR13.7). He further agrees it would provide opportunities for small convenience shopping that would also be of value to local people (IR13.8). The Secretary of State agrees with the Inspector the scheme would not adversely affect the vitality or viability of any town centre, and that it would be consistent with Government policies in Chapter 7 of the Framework for ensuring the vitality of town centres (IR13.10). He further agrees the scheme would be

¹ The Greater Cambridge Growth Sectors Study September 2024, as referred at IR7.6

² This refers to an unnumbered paragraph directly following IR13.4

in accordance with CLP Policy 6 (IR13.65). The Secretary of State considers that benefits relating to convenience retail provision for the local community should be given moderate weight.

16. For the reasons given at IR13.9 and 13.66 the Secretary of State agrees there would a partial conflict with CLP Policy 73 through the loss of the swimming pool and gym from the site.

Design

Urban design and transport

17. For the reasons given at IR13.12-13.16 and IR13.52 the Secretary of State agrees that the site currently is dominated by motor vehicles, that it has little sense of place or enclosure and no local distinctiveness, and that it does not represent a very efficient use of urban land (IR13.12). He further agrees that the scheme would bring about a great improvement in its character, appearance and intensity of use, and would support local facilities and transport networks (IR13.12).
18. The Secretary of State agrees that land uses, access and circulation, landscape and open space and maximum building heights and plots would all be effectively controlled by the parameter plans and by the Design Code, the latter being a requirement of Condition 3 (IR13.13). He further agrees that the Design Code would ensure that the buildings would be of high quality (IR13.15). He further agrees that the parameter plans and Design Code are comprehensive and embody the qualities of good urban design, create a distinctive place, contain well-designed spaces with animated streets and active street frontages (13.52).
19. The Secretary of State agrees that the development would remove the current car-dominated development in favour of a scheme that would promote sustainable and active travel, and that the development would be accessed from Coldhams Lane through a new pedestrian and cycle friendly junction which would provide a better public realm (IR13.16). He further agrees that the addition of a number of pedestrian and cycle routes would assist in integrating the development with the movement pattern of its surroundings, and that there would be improved bus services (IR13.16). The Secretary of State considers benefits relating to sustainable transport should be given moderate weight.

Townscape and heritage

20. For the reasons given at IR13.17-13.19, IR13.53 and IR13.70, the Secretary of State agrees that while the scheme would break the skyline when seen from Castle Hill Mound, the overall impact on that viewpoint would be small (IR13.19), and that it would not appear obtrusive in views from Castle Mound or other vantage points such as Redmeadow Hill (IR13.53). He further agrees that the parameter plan and Design Code would ensure that the development was divided visually into separate parts, that the mass was broken up through varied elevational design and material tones, and that an interesting roof profile was created, thus reducing the scheme's perceived bulk. Overall, he agrees that the scheme would be assimilated successfully into the wider townscape, and would not harm the townscape of wider Cambridge (IR13.19). He considers that the harm to townscape arising from the impact from Castle Hill Mound should be given limited weight.

21. For the reasons given at IR13.20-13.26, IR13.53 and IR13.70, the Secretary of State agrees that from public viewpoints there is little intervisibility between the application site and Mill Road Conservation Area, apart from a limited view at the corner of York Street and Ainsworth Street, and that the new buildings would not overtop the roofs of the existing housing when seen from the streets themselves (IR13.20). He further agrees that there would be a small degree of harm to the conservation area's significance arising from the proximity of the proposed development and the change of scale, but this would be at the lower end of less than substantial (IR13.21).
22. The Secretary of State notes that the Applicant's Heritage Assessment identified less than significant harm to five other heritage assets: Christ Church in Newmarket Road (Grade II Listed), Jesus College Chapel (Grade I), All Saints Church in Jesus Lane (Grade I), Castle and Victoria Road Conservation Area, and the Central Cambridge Conservation Area (IR13.22). The Secretary of State agrees that the site itself is not especially physically close to any of these assets (IR13.22). He has taken into account the Inspector's analysis that the Heritage Assessment and the Applicant's expert heritage witness concluded that there would have a "negligible adverse" effect on the six assets identified by the Applicant, and that the Council assessed the impact to be greater, though still less than substantial (IR13.24). He further agrees that the proposal would be in accordance with CLP Policy 60 which relates to tall buildings and the Cambridge skyline, and policies 61 and 62 which relates to heritage (IR13.70). Overall, the Secretary of State concludes that there would be less than substantial harm at a low level to the significance of the Mill Lane Conservation Area, and at a very low level to the significance of Christ Church in Newmarket Road, Jesus College Chapel, All Saints Church in Jesus Lane, Castle and Victoria Road Conservation Area, and the Central Cambridge Conservation Area.
23. In line with paragraph 212 of the Framework, the Secretary of State considers that the harm to the designated heritage assets considered at paragraphs 21 and 22 above carry great weight. The Secretary of State has undertaken the balancing exercise under paragraph 215 of the Framework at paragraph 36 below.
24. For the reasons given at 13.25-13.26 and IR13.70, the Secretary of State agrees with the Inspector's conclusions on the Porcelanosa building, and does not give any weight to its loss.

Residential amenity

25. For the reasons given at IR13.27-13.51, IR13.54-13.58 and IR13.67-13.69, the Secretary of State agrees that that if it were possible to build the scheme to the maximum building envelopes shown on the parameter plans, a substantial number of windows and habitable rooms would fail against the Building Research Establishment (BRE) Guidance³, with many examples of major reductions in daylight and low retained Vertical Sky Component (VSC) values (IR13.55). However, he has taken into account that the buildings could not be built out everywhere to the maximum envelopes shown on the parameter plans and that the parameter plans and the Illustrative Scheme are not alternatives; the Illustrative Scheme is indicative of how a scheme might come forward in compliance with the controls exerted by the parameter plans and Design Code (IR13.29). Like the Inspector at IR13.54, the Secretary of State considers that the Illustrative Scheme demonstrates that the parameter plans and Design Code can work together to produce a successful scheme that would be acceptable in its impacts on neighbouring

³ CD8. 01

homes in respect of daylight, sunlight, overshadowing and outlook. He agrees that the BRE Guidelines would still be breached in a number of instances but notes that some of the reductions in VSC arise from the fact that much of the site is currently very open and that conditions will of necessity change to make the best use of this urban brownfield site (IR13.54).

26. The Secretary of State agrees that the Illustrative Scheme demonstrates that an acceptable development can be built within the terms of the outline planning application (IR13.56). The Secretary of State notes that, at the inquiry, the main parties came to an agreement over the wording of a condition which was aimed at ensuring that the daylight, sunlight and overshadowing effects of any reserved matters proposal would be no greater than those modelled in respect of the Illustrative Scheme (IR1.8). The Secretary of State agrees with the Inspector that the condition is necessary, because it would provide a degree of certainty for those who are concerned about the potential impact of the eventual scheme (IR13.57). It is included as Condition 6 in Annex B to this decision letter. He further agrees with the Inspector's conclusion that even under the Illustrative Scheme residents whose homes back closely on to the site would experience a substantial adjustment in their rear aspect in daylight levels, scale and outlook (IR13.58). The Secretary of State considers the harm to residential amenity should be given significant weight.

Overall conclusion on design

27. Further to the Secretary of State's considerations above at paragraphs 17–26, and for the reasons given at IR13.12-13.58 and IR13.67-13.69 the Secretary of State agrees with the Inspector that the scheme would make much better and more intensive use of an urban site and overall, as a neighbour, it would be a much better designed development than the current Beehive Centre (IR13.58). He further agrees that the design strategy set out in the Design and Access Statement, and the controls exerted by the parameter plans and the Design Code, would combine to create a successful place based on good urban design principles, and that it accords with CLP Policies 55, 56, 57 and 59 which relate to design (IR13.69). The Secretary of State considers that benefits relating to design and placemaking should be given moderate weight.

Other matters

28. Having regard to the Inspector's findings at IR13.4, IR13.52 and IR13.73, the Secretary of State agrees the scheme would make the best use of this urban brownfield site (IR13.52). The Secretary of State considers that the benefits of making efficient use of a brownfield site should be given significant weight.
29. Having regard to the Inspector's findings at IR13.64, the Secretary of State agrees that there is nothing in the plan that would actually require residential development to be included on the site and the scheme would not conflict with Policy 3 in respect of the spatial strategy for housing.
30. Further to the Secretary of State's considerations above at paragraphs 11-28, and having regard to the Inspector's findings at IR13.64 and IR13.71-13.72, the Secretary of State agrees that the proposal would accord with the development plan as a whole.

Planning conditions

31. The Secretary of State has had regard to the Inspector's analysis at IR12.1-12.16, the recommended conditions set out at the end of the IR and the reasons for them, and to national policy in paragraph 57 of the Framework and the relevant Guidance. He is satisfied that the conditions recommended by the Inspector comply with the policy test set out at paragraph 57 of the Framework and that the conditions set out at Annex B should form part of his decision.

Planning obligations

32. The Secretary of State has had regard to the Inspector's analysis at IR12.17-12.34, the planning obligation dated 2 July 2025, paragraph 58 of the Framework, the Guidance and the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Regulations 2010, as amended. For the reasons given at IR12.17-12.34, he agrees with the Inspector's conclusion that the obligation complies with Regulation 122 of the CIL Regulations 2010 and the tests at paragraph 58 of the Framework.

Planning balance and overall conclusion

33. For the reasons given above, the Secretary of State considers that the application is in partial conflict with CLP Policy 73 of the development plan, but is in accordance with the development plan overall. He has gone on to consider whether there are material considerations which indicate that the proposal should be determined other than in line with the development plan.

34. Weighing in favour of the proposal are economic growth and productivity in the Greater Cambridge area, employment benefits and derived social value, and efficient use of a brownfield site, which each carry significant weight; and community benefits, design and placemaking, and sustainable transport which each carry moderate weight.

35. Weighing against the proposal are harm to residential amenity which carries significant weight; less than substantial harm to the settings of designated heritage assets which carries collective great weight; and townscape impacts which carry limited weight.

36. In line with the heritage balance set out at paragraph 215 of the Framework, the Secretary of State has considered whether the identified 'less than substantial' harm to the significance of the designated heritage assets is outweighed by the public benefits of the proposal. Taking into account the public benefits of the proposal as identified in this decision letter, overall the Secretary of State considers that the benefits of the appeal scheme are collectively sufficient to outbalance the identified 'less than substantial' harm to the significance of Mill Road Conservation Area, Christ Church in Newmarket Road, Jesus College Chapel, All Saints Church in Jesus Lane, Castle and Victoria Road Conservation Area, and the Central Cambridge Conservation Area. He considers that the balancing exercise under paragraph 215 of the Framework is therefore favourable to the proposal.

37. Overall, in applying s.38(6) of the PCPA 2004, the Secretary of State considers that the accordance with the development plan and the material considerations in this case indicate that permission should be granted.

38. The Secretary of State therefore concludes that the application should be approved, and planning permission granted, subject to conditions.

Formal decision

39. Accordingly, for the reasons given above, the Secretary of State agrees with the Inspector's recommendation. He hereby grants outline planning permission (with all matters reserved) subject to the conditions set out in Annex B of this decision letter for the demolition of existing buildings and structures and redevelopment of the site for a new local centre (E (a-f), F1(b-f), F2(b,d)), open space and employment (office and laboratory) floorspace (E(g)(i)(ii)) to the ground floor and employment floorspace (office and laboratory) (E(g)(i)(ii)) to the upper floors; along with supporting infrastructure, including pedestrian and cycle routes, vehicular access, car and cycle parking, servicing areas, landscaping and utilities, in accordance with application ref 23/03204/OUT, dated 14 August 2023.
40. This letter does not convey any approval or consent which may be required under any enactment, bye-law, order or regulation other than section 57 of the TCPA 1990.

Right to challenge the decision

41. A separate note is attached setting out the circumstances in which the validity of the Secretary of State's decision may be challenged. This must be done by making an application to the High Court within 6 weeks from the day after the date of this letter for leave to bring a statutory review under section 288 of the TCPA 1990.
42. An applicant for any consent, agreement or approval required by a condition of this permission for agreement of reserved matters has a statutory right of appeal to the Secretary of State if consent, agreement or approval is refused or granted conditionally or if the Local Planning Authority fail to give notice of their decision within the prescribed period.
43. A copy of this letter has been sent to Cambridge City Council, and notification has been sent to others who asked to be informed of the decision.

Yours faithfully

Laura Webster

Decision officer

This decision was made by Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Building Safety, Fire and Democracy, Samantha Dixon MP, on behalf of the Secretary of State, and signed on her behalf

Annex A - Schedule of Representations

General representations

Party	Date
Railpen Pension Nominees Ltd	12 November 2025
Railpen Pension Nominees Ltd	13 November 2025

Annex B List of conditions

1. No development on any phase shall commence until details of the appearance, means of access, landscaping, layout and scale, (hereinafter called the 'reserved matters') for that phase have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The development of each phase shall be carried out as approved.
2. Application(s) for approval of the reserved matters for any phase shall be made to the local planning authority before the expiration of ten years from the date of this permission. The development of each phase hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of approval of the last of the reserved matters of that phase to be approved.
3. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the approved documents, as listed below, save for where such details are superseded by further details being submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority pursuant to the conditions attached to this permission.
 - PO - LDA - ZZ - XX - DR - A – 08000 REV P2 (Site Location Plan)
 - PO - LDA - ZZ - XX - DR - A – 08003 REV P2 (Maximum Building Heights & Plots)
 - PO - LDA - ZZ - XX - DR - A – 08004 REV P2 (Land Use – Ground Floor)
 - PO - LDA - ZZ - XX - DR - A – 08005 REV P2 (Land Use – Upper Floors)
 - PO - LDA - ZZ - XX - DR - A – 08006 REV P2 (Access and Circulation)
 - PO - LDA - ZZ - XX - DR - A – 08007 REV P2 (Landscape and Open Space)
 - Design Code (Leonard Design Architects, dated November 2024).
4. The proposed maximum floorspace of all land uses indicated (including any basements and external bin/cycle stores) shall not exceed a total of 166,685 sqm (gross external area).
5. Prior to or concurrently with the submission of the first of the reserved matters application(s) for any phase of the development, a site wide phasing plan for the development hereby permitted shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The site wide phasing plan shall identify all phases of the development and the sequence in which they will be developed and shall include a mechanism for its review and amendment. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.
6. Each reserved matters application shall be accompanied by a report which tests the daylight, sunlight and overshadowing effects of each building to which the reserved matters application relates in accordance with the relevant BRE Guidance: Site Layout Planning for Daylight and Sunlight – A Guide to Good Practice (BR209 2022 Edition).

Each such report shall set out the impacts on each identified window and room of all receptor properties and their gardens identified in the Illustrative Scheme results for VSC, NSL, APSH, Winter PSH and BRE 2-hour sunlight test (on 21 March), as set out in tables within appendices 2b, 3b, 4b and 5 to the daylight, sunlight and overshadowing evidence prepared by eb7 and dated 27 May 2025 (the eb7 Appendices). It shall include

a full pack of neighbouring window referencing and NSL contour plots for room layout interpretation including neighbouring property reference locators.

Each report shall use the baseline and arrangement of neighbouring properties on which the results in the eb7 Appendices were derived and also take into account the effects of any other building(s) which have been granted reserved matters approval and, for any plots that have not, the footprint and position of the buildings shown for that plot on the Illustrative Masterplan PO-LDA-ZZ-XX-DR-A-08010 Rev P2.

The daylight, sunlight and overshadowing effects of the development shall not amount to any greater Vertical Sky Component loss, No-Sky Line loss, Annual Probable Sunlight Hours loss, Winter Probable Sunlight Hours loss or BRE 2-hour sunlight test loss on 21 March to any of the identified windows and rooms of receptor properties, or their gardens, than those identified in the eb7 Appendices.

7. Prior to commencement of development on any phase (other than site investigation, archaeological works and enabling works to make the site ready for construction), cross sections showing the finished floor levels of all proposed buildings and associated external landscaping within that phase in relation to the existing and proposed ground levels of the surrounding land and buildings shall be submitted for approval to the local planning authority. The development shall be constructed in accordance with the approved details.
8. Prior to the commencement of development on any phase (other than site investigation, archaeological works and enabling works to make the site ready for construction), a demolition and construction environmental management plan for that phase shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The development of each phase shall be undertaken in accordance with the approved plan.
9. Demolition and construction, and deliveries for those purposes, shall be carried out only between 0800 hours to 1800 hours Monday to Friday, and 0800 hours to 1300 hours on Saturday and at no time on Sundays, Bank or Public Holidays, unless the local planning authority gives written consent to any variation.
10. Any reserved matters application for a phase or building containing plant or equipment likely to generate external noise affecting noise-sensitive premises both within and beyond the site boundary shall be accompanied by a noise assessment for approval by the local planning authority. The noise assessment shall contain details of mitigation measures to be carried out in respect of the noise source and where necessary and appropriate the insulation of the buildings against external noise. The approved details shall be implemented before the relevant phase or building is occupied and shall be retained thereafter in accordance with the approved details.
11. Any reserved matters application for a phase which includes space that is intended to be used for outdoor events likely to generate noise shall include a plan for the approval of the local planning authority containing details for the management and mitigation of such noise to minimise disturbance to nearby noise sensitive premises. The approved details shall be implemented from the first occupation of the relevant phase and maintained thereafter.

12. Reserved matters applications for each phase shall include a scheme for approval by the local planning authority for external and internal artificial lighting within that phase. The scheme shall be designed to minimise light pollution and disturbance to residential properties. The details shall be accompanied by an artificial lighting impact assessment. Each approved lighting scheme shall be fully installed, maintained and operated in accordance with the approved scheme.
13. Prior to the use of any commercial floorspace in which fumes or odours are emitted, details of a scheme for the extraction and filtration of such fumes and odours shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The scheme shall be fully installed, maintained and operated in accordance with the approved details prior to the premises being brought into use.
14. No laying of services, creation of hard surfaces or erection of buildings shall commence on any phase until a detailed design for the surface water drainage for that phase, including a timetable for implementation and full details of maintenance and adoption, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The submitted details shall be based upon the principles within Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy Appendix 8.1A (October 2024). The surface water drainage works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details for that phase. Any elements of the surface water drainage system within that phase that are not adopted by a statutory undertaker shall thereafter be maintained and managed in accordance with the approved maintenance details. An independent report from an appropriately qualified person shall be submitted to the local planning authority on completion of each phase and before its occupation, confirming that the surface water drainage system has been installed in accordance with the approved details.
15. No development of any phase, other than site investigation, shall commence until the following have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority in relation to that phase:
 - a site investigation strategy in respect of contamination risk based upon the findings of the Preliminary Risk Assessment ref: WIE17469-100-R-5-3-1-PRA, dated July 2024 and the Preliminary Generic Quantitative Risk Assessment, ref: WIE17469-100-R-12-1-2-GQRA, dated February 2023;
 - an intrusive site investigation report; and
 - a remediation strategy.

The development of each phase shall be undertaken in accordance with the agreed remediation strategy and no occupation of that phase shall take place until a report has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority demonstrating compliance with the approved remediation strategy. If unexpected contamination is encountered during the development works which has not previously been identified, all works on the relevant phase shall cease immediately and shall not recommence until an intrusive site investigation report and a remediation strategy specific to the newly discovered contamination have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved intrusive site investigation report and remediation strategy.

16. No demolition or development in any phase shall commence until a programme of archaeological work has been undertaken for that phase in accordance with a written scheme of investigation that has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority.
17. No development above ground level, other than demolition, in any phase shall commence until a hard and soft landscaping scheme for that phase, including long term maintenance and management responsibilities, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Hard and soft landscaping works within each phase shall be carried out and maintained in accordance with the approved landscaping details. If within a period of ten years from the date of the planting, any tree or plant is removed, uprooted or destroyed or dies, it shall be replaced within the next planting season by another equivalent tree or plant of the same species and size.
18. Prior to the commencement of development, a site wide biodiversity gain plan shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority which shall include the strategic approach to securing a minimum 20% net gain in biodiversity on-site, using the most up to date DEFRA metric.
19. No development shall commence on any phase until a biodiversity gain plan for that phase, which shall be generally in accordance with the site wide biodiversity gain plan, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The phase biodiversity gain plan shall set out the detailed biodiversity net gain requirements for that phase together with details of implementation, management and monitoring for a period of 30 years for significant habitat enhancements, on-site and off-site as appropriate. Measures for biodiversity gain plan in each phase shall be implemented in full in accordance with the approved plan.
20. Details of the design and maintenance of any biodiverse roof, including the control of access thereto, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority before development of that building above ground level.
21. All reserved matters applications for buildings shall be accompanied by a sustainability statement and an energy statement which shall have regard to the targets and commitments set out within the submitted Sustainability Strategy, Revision 01 (16 August 2024), and the submitted Energy Strategy, Revision 01 (August 2024). The sustainability statement shall be accompanied by a BREEAM pre-assessment for approval by the local planning authority which shall demonstrate that all buildings to which the reserved matters application relates are capable of achieving a minimum of BREEAM excellent with at least 5 credits for Wat01, save that:
 - the pre-assessment shall show that any office floorspace within the reserved matters area shall be capable of achieving BREEAM outstanding with at least 5 credits achieved for Wat01; and
 - the BREEAM requirement shall not relate the multi-storey car park element of Building 10.

The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Within six months following first occupation of each building, a post construction statement shall be submitted to the local planning authority confirming that the water efficiency provisions relating to that building as set out in relevant sustainability statement have been fully implemented, including the achievement of no less than 5 Wat01 credits.

22. No development above base course of a permanent building, excluding Building 10, shall take place until a detailed scheme for the management and recycling of grey water and/or rainwater for that building, including any necessary infrastructure, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The development shall be carried out and thereafter maintained in accordance with the approved details.
23. Prior to the installation of any back-up power generator associated with the approved development, or any phase of development, details of the generator shall be submitted to and agreed in writing with the local planning authority. The details shall demonstrate that the operation of the generator will not lead to hourly exceedances of both nitrogen dioxide and particulate matter (PM10) against local air quality management objectives. The approved system shall be installed, maintained and operated in accordance with the approved details.
24. No development except for enabling works shall commence on any phase until a scheme for the on-site storage facilities for commercial waste, including waste for recycling in that phase, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The approved scheme shall be carried out before the use of that phase is commenced or otherwise in accordance with a programme approved by the local planning authority for that phase and shall be retained thereafter.
25. Prior to the occupation of any phase which includes commercial buildings, a delivery, servicing and emergency vehicle management plan relating to that phase shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Each such plan shall be based upon the principles within the agreed Appendix 13.4A Delivery and Servicing Plan prepared by Waterman (ref: WIE17469-100-R 6-2-1-DSP) dated August 2024 and shall include details of access arrangements, and any proposed restrictions on permitted hours for service collections / dispatches from and deliveries to the commercial units within that phase (including refuse/ recycling collections where appropriate).

Each approved delivery, servicing and emergency vehicle management plan shall be implemented in full in accordance with the approved details.
26. All reserved matters applications for a phase which includes buildings shall be accompanied by a parking management plan for that phase, based upon the principles within the agreed Appendix 13.3A Car Parking Management Plan prepared by Waterman (ref: WIE17469-100-5-2-1-PMP) dated August 2024. Each approved phase parking management plan shall be implemented in accordance with its approved details.
27. An electric vehicle charging scheme shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority:

- prior to the setting out of any car parking spaces within the multi-storey car park, and
- for each phase, prior to the setting out of any car parking in that phase.

The scheme shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details and maintained and retained thereafter.

28. Before any development within a phase commences (excluding enabling works), details shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority to demonstrate that the proposed construction equipment relating to that phase shall not impair the performance of communication, navigational aids and surveillance equipment required for the safe operation of Cambridge Airport. The development of each phase shall be carried out and thereafter operated in accordance with the approved assessment.
29. Development within any phase (excluding enabling works) shall not commence until a bird hazard management plan relating to that phase has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The management plan shall take into account the advice in Combined Aerodrome Safeguarding Team (CAST) Advice Note 3 “Wildlife Hazards Around Aerodromes” (April 2024). Each such plan shall be implemented as approved and shall remain in force for the life of the relevant buildings.
30. No solar photovoltaic panels shall be fixed in place until a glint and glare assessment for such panels has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The installation, operation, and maintenance of the solar photovoltaic panels shall thereafter be in accordance with the approved assessment.
31. Development hereby permitted within the East West Rail safeguarded area (as shown on East West Rail Safeguarding Map – SG-104 drawing ref 133735-EWR-ZO-XXX-PLN-LEP-00104 dated 13 November 2024) shall not prejudice the underlying objectives of such safeguarding nor the safe operation of the railway nor the safe use by pedestrians and cyclists of the Coldhams Lane cycle bridge where it crosses the Fen Line railway.



Planning Inspectorate

Report to the Secretary of State

by Jonathan Bore MRTPI

Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Date: 9 September 2025

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990

APPLICATION BY

Railway Pension Nominees Ltd (Railpen)

The Beehive Centre

Coldhams Lane

Cambridge CB1 3ET

Inquiry opened on 24 June 2025. Site visits on various occasions from 24 June to 3 July 2025.

File Ref: APP/Q0505/V/25/3360616

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

TERM	DEFINITION
APSH	Annual Probable Sunlight Hours
BRE	Building Research Establishment
BREEAM	Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
NSL	No-sky Line
VSC	Vertical Sky Component
WPSH	Winter Probable Sunlight Hours

File Ref: APP/Q0505/V/25/3360616

The Beehive Centre, Coldham's Lane, Cambridge CB1 3ET

- The application was called in for decision by the Secretary of State by a direction, made under section 77 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, on 12 February 2025.
- The application is made by Railway Pension Nominees Ltd (Railpen) to Cambridge City Council.
- The application Ref 23/03204/OUT is dated 14 August 2023.
- The development proposed is an outline application (with all matters reserved) for the demolition of existing buildings and structures and redevelopment of the site for a new local centre (E (a-f), F1(b-f), F2(b,d)), open space and employment (office and laboratory) floorspace (E(g)(i)(ii)) to the ground floor and employment floorspace (office and laboratory) (E(g)(i)(ii)) to the upper floors; along with supporting infrastructure, including pedestrian and cycle routes, vehicular access, car and cycle parking, servicing areas, landscaping and utilities.
- The reason given for making the direction was that the Secretary of State considered that the scheme gave rise to issues which, having regard to her policy on calling in planning applications, led her to conclude that the application should be called in.
- On the information available at the time of making the direction, the following were the matters on which the Secretary of State particularly wished to be informed for the purpose of her consideration of the application:
 - a) The extent to which the proposed development is consistent with Government policies for building a strong, competitive economy in NPPF (NPPF Chapter 6);
 - b) The extent to which the proposed development is consistent with Government policies for ensuring the vitality of town centres in NPPF (NPPF Chapter 7);
 - c) The extent to which the proposed development is consistent with Government policies for achieving well-designed places in NPPF (NPPF Chapter 12);
 - d) The extent to which the proposed development is consistent with the development plan for the area; and
 - e) any other matters the Inspector considers relevant.

Summary of recommendation: the application be approved.

1. PROCEDURAL MATTERS

- 1.1 The Core Documents can be found here: [Beehive Centre Public Inquiry](#)
- 1.2 The CD1 series of Core Documents contains the original application of August 2023 and its accompanying documents, and it includes an Environmental Statement.
- 1.3 The application was revised in August 2024 in response to feedback on the original application from the local planning authority, statutory consultees, stakeholders, design review and public consultation. The CD2 series of Core Documents contains the revised application and accompanying documents and includes an Environmental Statement Addendum. The description of development did not change.
- 1.4 The Inquiry and this report considered the revised application.
- 1.5 The officer's report to the Council's Planning Committee of 12 February 2025 contained a recommendation of refusal which, in summary, stated that that the scheme's maximum building parameters would have an adverse effect on neighbours' living conditions, in respect of daylight, sunlight, overshadowing and outlook.¹ Had the proposal not been called in for determination by the Secretary of State, this would have been the Council's sole reason for refusal, and it was the Council's position at the opening of the inquiry.²
- 1.6 The application was accompanied by an Illustrative Scheme.³ This did not form part of the application itself but was intended to show how development could take place on the site. The Illustrative Scheme generally showed reduced daylight, sunlight and overshadowing impacts compared with the maximum parameters. But the Council was firm that the scheme should be determined on the maximum parameters, not the Illustrative Scheme.⁴
- 1.7 On Day 2 of the inquiry (25 June 2025), the Council submitted a Position Statement which established an agreed position between itself and the Applicant.⁵ It stated:

"The parties agree that the [daylight, sunlight and overshadowing] effects of the illustrative scheme – as set out in CD7.09⁶ - would be materially lesser

¹ CD3.01 p127

² IQ1.01

³ Details of the Illustrative Scheme and the maximum parameters are explained in this report from section 3 onwards.

⁴ IQ1.01, paragraphs 4-7

⁵ IQ1.04

⁶ The appendices to the Applicant's proof of evidence on Daylight and Sunlight

than a scheme built out to the maximum parameters shown on the Parameter Plans; and that the residual [daylight sunlight and overshadowing] harm from the illustrative scheme would be acceptable in planning terms. There would be no proper basis for a [daylight sunlight and overshadowing]-related reason for refusal for a scheme which secured [daylight sunlight and overshadowing] impacts which were no worse than those shown in CD7.08⁷ for the illustrative scheme.”

- 1.8 The main parties then came to an agreement over the wording of a condition which was aimed at ensuring that the daylight, sunlight and overshadowing effects of any reserved matters proposal would be no greater than those modelled in respect of the Illustrative Scheme. This condition is included as Condition 6 in the list of suggested conditions at Annex C to this report. The Council said that the condition was necessary to enable development to go ahead. The Applicant was content to agree the condition but maintained that it was unnecessary, for reasons explained later in this report.
- 1.9 The Council’s planning witness then gave evidence that the condition had the effect of changing the planning balance in the scheme’s favour by reducing (though not eliminating) the harm. The benefits of the scheme would now outweigh the harm. This was the Council’s position at the close of the inquiry.⁸
- 1.10 The inquiry proceeded with the Applicant calling all its intended witnesses. They gave full evidence in chief but were not cross examined by the Council. The Council did not give further verbal evidence other than that connected with the s106 agreement and conditions. The Council’s written evidence remains as in the submitted proofs of evidence except that it is modified by its Statement of 25 June 2025 and by the verbal evidence described above.

2. THE SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

- 2.1 There is a brief description of the site in the main Statement of Common Ground.⁹
- Site location**
- 2.2 The site is currently a retail park known as the Beehive Centre. It has a total area of 7.58 hectares and is irregular in shape, broadly forming a J-shape.

⁷ The Applicant’s proof of evidence on Daylight and Sunlight

⁸ IQ1.20 paragraphs 5-9

⁹ CD6.03 p2

- 2.3 It is about 1.5km to the east of Cambridge city centre, which is about a 10 minute bicycle ride or a 20 minute walk, and 1km from Cambridge railway station, which is about a 5 minute bicycle ride or a 15 minute walk.¹⁰
- 2.4 There is one point of vehicular access to the site, which is via a roundabout on Coldhams Lane. This is included within the application site boundary. In addition, there are existing pedestrian and cycle access points into the site via St Matthew's Gardens to the north, York Street to the west and Sleaford Street to the south.
- 2.5 Coldhams Lane forms the northeastern boundary of the site. It connects with Newmarket Road (A1134) which is a main vehicular route into the city centre. Newmarket Road also provides a link westwards via the A603 to the M11, and eastwards via the A1303 to the A14.

Current character and uses on the site

- 2.6 The Beehive Centre contains a number of modern large format single storey buildings typical of a retail park, amounting to some 24.000 square metres of retail space, and some 885 ground level parking spaces. Most of the buildings are utilitarian but the Porcelanosa building, with its attractive curved timber structural frame, is of a higher quality. Ground level conditions are illustrated on pp 24-25 of the 2023 Design and Access Statement; aerial views are on pages 9 and 10 of the Applicant's Masterplanning proof of evidence.¹¹
- 2.7 There are 17 different business outlets, one of which is an Asda superstore. Other units sell flooring, kitchens, homeware, furnishings, clothing and pet products; there are cafés and there is a private gym and swimming pool.¹²
- 2.8 The Beehive Centre is a busy retail park which attracts a substantial amount of vehicular traffic, and there is a great deal of vehicle movement within it.

Nearby residential properties

- 2.9 An accurate and uncontested description of the conditions at each of the site boundaries, with photographs, is included in the Applicant's Masterplanning proof of evidence.¹³
- 2.10 The site is bounded by Coldham's Lane to the north east and the railway line to the south east. Residential streets adjoin the site on its northwestern, western and southern boundaries. The residential streets are as follows.

¹⁰ CD1.02A, the 2023 DAS, contains an accessibility map at p13

¹¹ CD1.02A; CD7.12

¹² CD6.03 p3

¹³ Ibid

- 2.11 Silverwood Close lies towards the northern end of the application site and is an inter-war development of mostly two storey houses arranged in short terraces. Some have rear extensions and some have rooms in the roof. The houses at 28-33, 34-39, 40-45, 46-51, 52-55, 56-59, 60-61 and 62-65A are nearest to the application site. The boundary between Silverwood Close and the application site is marked by a brick wall of around 1.5 metres.
- 2.12 34-39 and 40-45 Silverwood Close, with their moderate to short gardens, back directly on to the site. Some of the gardens have mature trees and shrubs, and there are some substantial deciduous and evergreen shrubs close to the boundary. However, there are some gardens and boundaries that are more open with less planting. Behind these properties, within the application site, are a footway, bicycle path, a busy access drive and an extensive area of parking. The retail units themselves are relatively distant from these houses and their gardens.
- 2.13 47-51, 52-55, 56-59, 60-61 and 62-65A Silverwood Close, again with moderate to short rear gardens, back on to the single storey Porcelanosa building within the retail park, or its car park. There is substantial deciduous planting along the boundary.
- 2.14 28-33 Silverwood Close have longer gardens and are further from the site boundary and at an oblique angle to it.
- 2.15 St Matthew's Gardens is a relatively modern development of homes in traditional style, situated north of the western part of the application site. The homes nearest the site are 157-221. The development contains mostly three storey town houses, with some maisonettes in two storey blocks to the northwest, although 177-201 in the centre of the terrace consists of a four storey block of flats with a lower ground floor. At the rear of 177-201 is a very small, lower level back yard.
- 2.16 These houses have been built very close to the boundary with the application site and they have short gardens which are at a lower level than the application site. Their boundary with the application site is defined by a strong line of deciduous hedging and trees. The gardens at the western end of the terrace back on a footway behind which is the long flank wall of a single storey retail unit. The remainder of the terrace backs on to the car park of the application site.
- 2.17 York Street, which is to the west of the application site, consists mostly of two storey traditional Victorian terraced houses with some more modern infilling. Many of the houses have rear extensions. Gardens are short, and at the end of the gardens is a concrete service road which serves the properties. The site boundary lies to the east of the service road and is lined with mature deciduous hedging. Beyond the boundary are the long rear elevations of a line of retail units. The ground level of the application site in this location is slightly lower than that of the houses and gardens of York Street.
- 2.18 Sleaford Street is to the south of the application site and consists of modern two storey houses, some designed with rooms in the roof. The flank walls of three short rows of houses face the application site which at this point contains the rear elevation of a long set of retail units. The ground level of these units is lower than the ground level of the houses and their gardens.

- 2.19 On the other side of the railway are The Terrace, Pym Court and Hampden Gardens, blocks of residential flats of three, four and five storeys. These are considerably further from the site than the houses described above.

The wider surroundings

- 2.20 South and west of the application site is a traditional densely built, low rise residential area with shops and businesses, centred on Mill Road.
- 2.21 To the east of the site, the buildings on the other side of the railway are generally larger in scale and footprint. Beyond these, for example along Cromwell Road and Coldham's Lane, are low rise mostly 20th Century houses.
- 2.22 North and north west of the site is a mixed area of large format retail premises, businesses and educational uses and housing of various periods and typologies with notable juxtapositions of buildings of different scale, character and use. There are several recent large scale commercial, hotel and education-related buildings of 4, 5 and 6 storeys.
- 2.23 Open spaces near the site include, to the west, St Matthew's Piece, a green which serves the local residential and business community; and to the east, Coldham's Common, a large area of grazed meadow land which is designated Green Belt.

Other retail premises in the area

- 2.24 Just to the north of Coldham's Lane lies the Cambridge Retail Park, which is in the same ownership as the application site.¹⁴ It contains several large single storey retail outlets including a Lidl foodstore as well as other units selling furniture and homeware, electricals, motoring and bicycle products, sports goods, and there are cafes and a gym.
- 2.25 Not far to the north of the Cambridge Retail Park, across Newmarket Road, are a Tesco superstore and an Aldi store.
- 2.26 The Grafton shopping centre and Burleigh Street with a range of traditional high street-type shops and other businesses is a short walk or bicycle ride to the west of the site.

Heritage assets in the area

- 2.27 The Heritage Assessment which accompanied the planning application describes the historical development of the area, identifies relevant heritage assets and

¹⁴ Shown outlined in blue on the site location plan, CD2.23

includes an impact assessment.¹⁵ Heritage assets are also mapped and illustrated in the 2023 Design and Access Statement.¹⁶

- 2.28 Topic Paper 2 “Heritage Assets” contains an agreed and illustrated list of the heritage assets that the parties consider would be affected by the proposals.¹⁷ The impact of the scheme on the identified heritage assets in both lists, as assessed by the Appellant and the Council, is set out on pages 53 and 54 of the Topic Paper. There are differences between the parties as regards the degree of impact, but in no instance is significant harm identified. This is dealt with in further detail below under “Agreed Matters”.

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

- 3.1 The agreed planning history is described in the main Statement of Common Ground.¹⁸
- 3.2 The site has been the subject of many planning applications since the 1970s for a variety of uses including warehousing, garden centre, storage and distribution, petrol station, retail, car showroom, supermarket, and offices. Further retail uses were added in the 1980s and 1990s. The site has been in its present format as a retail park since the early 2000s.

4. THE PROPOSAL

- 4.1 The description of the proposal that follows in this section is agreed between the Applicant and the Council.

General character of the scheme

- 4.2 The scheme would involve the total redevelopment of the site. All the existing buildings forming the Beehive Centre retail park, comprising 22,637 square metres gross internal area (24,382 square metres gross external area) would be demolished. The Retail Planning Statement contains a list of the existing retail occupiers.¹⁹ The Design and Access Statement shows the existing building footprints plotted against the proposed scheme.²⁰

¹⁵ CD2.40A

¹⁶ CD1.02A pp18-21

¹⁷ CD6.17 pp7-27

¹⁸ CD6.03

¹⁹ CD1.19 p6 Table 2.1

²⁰ CD2.01B p4

- 4.3 The proposed development would be a street-based mixed use scheme which could deliver a theoretical maximum gross external floor area of 166,685 square metres. It would consist of ten multi-storey buildings. These are on plots labelled 1 to 10 on all relevant drawings and the numbering is used in this report. Nine would be commercial buildings for office, laboratory or local centre use, and one a multi-storey car and cycle park.
- 4.4 There would be ground floor accommodation for a local centre including shops, cafes, businesses and community uses. Although the scheme is in outline, the Retail Planning Statement of August 2023²¹ was based on a retail centre of 5,131 square metres, consisting of 1,542 square metres of convenience floorspace, 795 square metres of comparison floorspace and 2,794 square metres of restaurants and cafes.
- 4.5 The scheme would create various areas of pedestrian- and cycle-friendly public realm.

Control over future reserved matters applications

- 4.6 The scheme would be controlled by five parameter plans which are part of the planning application.²² The parameter plans would address land uses on ground and upper floors²³, access and circulation²⁴, landscape and open space²⁵, and maximum building heights and plots.²⁶ The intention of the parameter plans, given that this is an outline application, would be to provide greater certainty as to the general arrangement of the layout and the volumetric maximums for each individual building within its own defined building plot.
- 4.7 The scheme would also be governed by a Design Code.²⁷ The Design Code should be read with the parameter plans. It would be used to assess reserved matters applications for the site. It covers overall aims and values, principles for layout and character, site wide codes, codes for key character areas and building specific codes. A planning condition would require each reserved matters application to demonstrate compliance with the design code.

²¹ CD1.19

²² The parameter plans are described in CD6.03 pp6-7, the main Statement of Common Ground, and are explained in more detail in CD6.16, Topic Paper 1 on Design, Scale and Massing.

²³ CD2.20 and CD2.19

²⁴ CD2.17

²⁵ CD2.16

²⁶ CD2.18

²⁷ CD2.64, A to E.

- 4.8 There is also an Illustrative Scheme.²⁸ The components of the Illustrative Scheme are listed in the main Statement of Common Ground.²⁹ It is described in more detail in the Applicant's Masterplanning proof of evidence, which contains the relevant illustrative plans.³⁰
- 4.9 The Illustrative Scheme includes the eb7 Daylight and Sunlight reports which are image extracts of the 3D model, and a calculated assessment of the impacts of the Illustrative Scheme.³¹ These are relevant to the assessment of impacts later in this report and is referred to in Condition 6.
- 4.10 The Illustrative Scheme was developed as part of the application and was revised to support the formal application amendment in August 2024. It is not part of the application but has been submitted to demonstrate how a scheme might be developed to accord with the parameter plans and the design code. It represents one way in which the development could come forward at reserved matters stage within those controls.

Layout and land uses

- 4.11 The parameter plans set out the basis of the layout and land use pattern.³² The scheme has been designed in such a way that it would deliver a range of floorplate sizes, between 1,193m² and 5,247m² gross external area. Each building could be subdivided at each floor into a number of tenancies, offering flexibility to accommodate tenants of all sizes, from start-up and scale-up to large global firms.
- 4.12 The Illustrative Scheme takes forward land uses and building floorspaces in more detail.³³ Wet laboratory space³⁴ would be accommodated on Plots 2, 3, 5 and 6, office space on Plots 1, 4, 7, 8 and 10 and local centre uses on Plots 4 to 10. Plot 10 would be a multi storey car park. Covered cycle parking would be located next to Plot 1.

²⁸ Sometimes referred to as the Illustrative Masterplan

²⁹ CD6.03, pp7-8

³⁰ CD7.12 Section 9

³¹ CD7.09

³² The parameter plan governing ground floor land use is shown on CD2.20 (Drawing PO - LDA - ZZ - XX - DR - A – 08004 REV P2) and that for the upper floors is on CD2.21 (Drawing PO - LDA - ZZ - XX - DR - A – 08005 REV P2).

³³ CD7.12 pp 52-53.

³⁴ A wet laboratory facilitates physical, chemical or biological analyses and experiments, in contrast to a dry laboratory, where research is primarily computational and theoretical and is less easy to distinguish from offices.

- 4.13 Buildings, streets, spaces and entrances would aim to create an active mixed-use local centre within the streets south of Plot 3. This would comprise some 5,178 square metres of space which would be available for a supermarket, community uses, a gym, and restaurant and café uses. A dedicated community space and a science, technology, engineering and mathematics education centre would be included within Plot 10. Externally there would be greenspace, community space and playspace, and a skating area would be located between Blocks 5 and 6. These parts of the Illustrative Masterplan have been informed by community consultation.³⁵

Access and circulation

- 4.14 The Beehive Centre currently takes vehicular access from the southern arm of a four-arm roundabout with Coldhams Lane.
- 4.15 The proposed scheme would still take vehicular access from Coldhams Lane but the existing roundabout would be replaced by a new junction. This would be in the form of a Cycle Optimised Protected Signals (CYCLOPS) junction which would prioritise pedestrian and bicycle movements over car movements. The junction would fit within the existing roundabout footprint. It would provide sufficient capacity to accommodate trip generation from the scheme.³⁶
- 4.16 A primary vehicle route carrying two way traffic would lead into the site from the Coldhams Lane junction. It would align broadly with the northern boundary of the site and would provide access to Plot 10, the multi-storey car park. It would loop round Plot 8 at its western end. This route would accommodate buses, service vehicles and private motor vehicles. A spur from this route would take service vehicles to the service yard adjacent to the railway. There would be a further service yard to the west near York Street. Vehicle movement would be monitored and controlled by an ANPR scheme and appropriate signage.³⁷
- 4.17 A number of pedestrian and bicycle routes would be created. There would be a main spine from northeast to southwest, linking Coldhams Lane with Sleaford Street, serving Plots 2-7 and 9-10 with a spur to Plot 1 and pedestrian loops around Plots 8, 9 and 10. The spine would pass through several different spaces as discussed below.³⁸
- 4.18 A total of 395 car parking spaces would be provided, of which 374 would be within Plot 10, the multi-storey car park. This would include accessible spaces (10%) and spaces for rapid EV charging (5%). There would be a passive allowance for 100% of spaces to accommodate EV charging. In addition to the

³⁵ CD7.12 pp 35-36 and pp 55-56.

³⁶ CD2.47A Transport Assessment Part 1, pp27-28

³⁷ CD2.47A, pp29-35

³⁸ CD2.47A, p29

accessible spaces within the multi-storey car park, there would be 21 disabled spaces at-grade close to the buildings.³⁹

- 4.19 The proposed scheme would have 490 fewer parking spaces than the existing Beehive Centre.
- 4.20 A total of 4,593 bicycle parking spaces would be provided within the site. This would exceed the Cambridge City Council cycle parking standards which would require 3,126 or 3,968 spaces, depending on how measured.⁴⁰
- 4.21 The scheme would include a number of off-site walking and cycling and public transport improvements. These are set out in Schedule 10 of the s106 Agreement⁴¹

Placemaking, landscape and open space

- 4.22 The proposal contains considerable detail about placemaking and the public realm. Much of this is contained in the Design Code. There is also a Benefits Delivery Plan.⁴²
- 4.23 Part 1 of the Design Code⁴³ contains the overall vision and place principles for the scheme.
- 4.24 Part 2 of the Design Code⁴⁴ contains the Masterplan Framework. This includes codes for the spatial hierarchy and active frontage; legibility; inclusive design; active travel; ground floor organisation to create active spaces; servicing, access and car parking strategy; character areas; street typologies; landscape vision; the tree strategy; ecology and biodiversity enhancement; the water framework; a play and leisure strategy; and lighting, wayfinding and security. Its section on street typologies contains a series of cross sections, not only across the proposed streets, but also between the proposed development and adjacent homes. It demonstrates the urban, street based nature of the scheme and the sense of enclosure within the streets.
- 4.25 Part 3 of the Design Code⁴⁵ includes the design principles for built form including the provision of active street frontages, together with a section on street typologies. It stipulates that the upper Above Ordnance Datum level for each

³⁹ CD2.47A, p31

⁴⁰ CD2.47A, p32

⁴¹ CD7.25

⁴² CD2.11A

⁴³ CD2.64A

⁴⁴ CD2.64B

⁴⁵ CD2.64C

building is that measured at parapet level and must include all building elements including roof top plant, lift overrun and PV. It requires buildings to create a coherent place, respond to adjacent buildings in scale and character, complement each other, break down large masses and introduce variations in heights. It states that buildings should use setbacks, stepped plans and angled facades to reduce the visual impact of mass and break down bulk.

- 4.26 Part 4 of the Design Code⁴⁶ establishes character areas for different parts of the development and sets out the design codes for them. These are:
- Abbey Grove, the entry and gateway space into the scheme, with significant tree planting
 - Garden Walk, a pedestrian-priority linear space with pedestrian and segregated cycling routes
 - Maple Square, a civic space at the centre of the development, containing existing and new trees and gardens, forming the centre of the development and being designed to host events
 - Hive Park, a green space with large tree planting at the southern entry point of the site that would have an active role with parkside cafes and restaurant
 - The Lanes, a new street network with active retail and mixed uses, which would provide access to buildings and would connect York Street and St Matthew's Gardens into the development
 - Railway Corridor, a private servicing area along the boundary with the railway.
- 4.27 The Parameter Plan "Landscape and Open Space"⁴⁷ shows the parameters for different types of space, including publicly accessible green areas, publicly accessible hard landscape areas service or access areas, green planted edges and hard landscape streetscape areas.
- 4.28 Part 5 of the Design Code⁴⁸ provides detailed codes for each of the proposed building plots.

Building heights and massing

- 4.29 Agreed Topic Paper 1 "Design Scale and Massing" provides a brief explanation of this subject.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ CD2.64D

⁴⁷ CD2.16

⁴⁸ CD2.64E

⁴⁹ CD6.16. Note: some of the plans in the Topic Paper have not reproduced clearly in electronic form. However, the submitted plans themselves, as referred to in this report, are clear.

- 4.30 The scheme aims to vary building height and footprint, and to concentrate taller buildings towards the centre of the site and the railway, with reduced building heights or footprints towards residential boundaries.
- 4.31 Parameter plan “Maximum Building Heights and Plots”⁵⁰ defines the maximum parameters for building floor coverage and heights (shown as Above Ordnance Datum). The plan allows for a degree of flexibility in the siting of buildings at reserved matters stage, within the defined maximum parameters. Each plot is defined by a zone. A maximum development footprint is set for each area as a percentage of the total plot area.
- 4.32 The Illustrative Scheme takes these parameters into account. It shows building dimensions which are moderately reduced from the maximum building envelopes shown on the parameter plan, representing the control exerted by both the requirements of the parameter plans and the design code over the maximum plot coverage and minimum separation between buildings. The footprints of the buildings in the Illustrative Scheme are shown as dotted lines on the parameter plan CD2.18. A comparison of the maximum parameter envelope with the Illustrative Scheme is included in Topic Paper 1.⁵¹ A graphic illustration which compares the massing of the existing development, the massing of the proposed development in the parameter plans and that of the Illustrative Scheme, and the massing of surrounding development, and includes rounded Above Ordnance Datum building heights, is set out in the Appendices to the Appellant’s Daylight, Sunlight and Overshadowing proof of evidence.⁵²
- 4.33 Flues are subject to their own maximum heights. The parameter plan CD2.18 defines areas, shown hatched, where fume extraction flues would be located. They would be a maximum addition of 25% of the maximum height of the host building measured from ground level. Part 3 of the Design Code⁵³ contains more detailed requirements for the design, location and grouping of flues.
- 4.34 It can be seen from the parameter plan CD2.18, and from the Illustrative Masterplan material described above, that the upper floors of several of the buildings would be set back where they are near to residential properties. The Design and Access Statement contains an axonometric massing diagram which demonstrates this design approach.⁵⁴ It can also be seen in plan form on CD7.12 p59 and p60, in Topic Paper 1⁵⁵ and in CD7.09 pp2-7.

⁵⁰ CD2.18

⁵¹ Ibid

⁵² CD7.09 pp2-7

⁵³ CD2.64C pp80-81

⁵⁴ CD2.01B p36

⁵⁵ CD6.16 p15

- 4.35 The Applicant's Masterplanning proof of evidence⁵⁶ sets out the building heights within the Illustrative Scheme and the number of storeys of each building. Maximum building heights and storeys are also listed adjacent to the axonometric diagram on p36 of the Design and Access Statement and, as discussed above, in the Appendices to the Appellant's Daylight, Sunlight and Overshadowing proof of evidence.
- 4.36 Appendix A to the Applicant's Masterplanning proof of evidence⁵⁷ contains further detail about the relationship of the scheme to nearby residential properties, including dimensioned cross sections and indicative views for the parameter plans and the Illustrative Scheme. It also tabulates this information and includes comparator relationships.
- 4.37 The following table (which I have compiled) brings the information together.

Plot	Max no of storeys	Max height, metres (rounded figures)	Number of storeys nearest to residential properties	Height near residential properties, metres	Distance to nearest residential property
1 (Facing Silverwood Close)	3	15.9	1	10.8 (parameter plans), 5.6m (Illustrative Scheme)	18.5m (nearest) 21.5m (main rear wall)
2 (No direct facing condition with Silverwood Close)	5	25.4 (31.8 with flue)	5	25.4 (31.75 incl flue zone)	39m – 42m
3 (Facing Silverwood Close)	4	20.8 (26.0 with flue)	4	20.75m (26m incl flue zone)	39m - 41m (parameter plans), 44m (Illustrative Scheme)
4	6	30.1	n/a	n/a	n/a

⁵⁶ CD7.12 p60 and p52

⁵⁷ CD7.13

(No direct facing condition)					
5 (No direct facing condition)	7	35.7 (44.6 with flue)	n/a	n/a	n/a
6 (Adjacent to Sleaford Street)	6	31.1 (38.9 with flue)	2/3	11.18 (but ground level 2.2m lower)	3m (parameter plans) 6m (Illustrative Scheme)
7 (Facing York Street)	6	28.7	3	15.09 (but ground level 2.2m lower)	32m (parameter plans) 33m (Illustrative Scheme) (35m – 36m to main back wall)
8 (Facing York Street)	6	28.7	3	15.09 (but ground level 2.39m below York Street)	33m (parameter plans) 34m (Illustrative Scheme) (37-38m to main back wall)
8 (Facing St Matthew's Gardens)	6	28.7	3	15.09	20m-23m (parameter plans) 23m-26m (illustrative Scheme)
9 (Facing St Matthew's Gardens)	7	32.9	3	15.09	33.5m
10 (Facing Silverwood Close)	8	25.1	8 (but lower storey heights)	25.09	27m-32m

5. THE ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT

- 5.1 The development is of a type and scale that falls within Schedule 2(10) (b) of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (England) Regulations 2017 as an 'Urban Development Project'. Significant environmental

effects are considered likely in the absence of measures to reduce those effects. An Environmental Statement was submitted in support of the original outline planning application in 2023⁵⁸ and an Environmental Statement Addendum was submitted in support of the revised application in 2024.⁵⁹

- 5.2 The Environmental Statement Addendum is intended to be read in conjunction with the originally submitted Environmental Statement. It covers methodology; site context; a description of the proposed development including an assessment of alternatives; planning policy; air quality; cultural heritage; flood risk, drainage and water resources; ground conditions and contamination; townscape and visual matters; noise and vibration; socio-economic matters; transport; cumulative effects; conclusions and a summary of mitigation measures and residual effects. Any information that was not altered from the original Environmental Statement is not included in the Addendum and remains valid and unchanged.
- 5.3 The Environmental Statement and Environmental Statement Addendum are a comprehensive assessment of environmental effects and meet the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations.

6. POLICY AND GUIDANCE

- 6.1 The adopted development plan comprises the Cambridge Local Plan (adopted October 2018)⁶⁰ and the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Local Plan (adopted July 2021).
- 6.2 The site is within the Cambridge urban area but does not have a specific policy designation.⁶¹
- 6.3 The development plan policies that specifically relate to the matters identified by the Secretary of State are listed in the agreed Statement of Common Ground and in Topic Paper 5, "Development Plan Policies".⁶² To avoid repetition they are not elaborated on here, but this report assesses the scheme against the relevant policies under Matter d).
- 6.4 Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council are jointly preparing the Greater Cambridge Local Plan which will cover both administrative

⁵⁸ CD1.05A to 05H

⁵⁹ CD2.36A to 36G

⁶⁰ The Cambridge Local Plan is CD4.04 and the Policies Map is CD4.05

⁶¹ CD2.03A p12, CD4.05

⁶² CD6.03 pp11-12, CD6.20

areas.⁶³ The site is included as an Opportunity Area in the draft plan.⁶⁴ The plan has reached Regulation 18 stage and is therefore at an early stage of preparation. Section 6 of the main Statement of Common Ground includes an overview of the draft plan. The parties agree that it therefore carries very limited weight in decision-making.⁶⁵

- 6.5 The publication “Site Layout Planning for Daylight and Sunlight: A Guide to Good Practice” (2022) published by the Building Research Establishment (BRE) (the “BRE Guidance”) is a material consideration.⁶⁶
- 6.6 The Council has adopted several supplementary planning documents which are relevant to the application. These are listed at paragraph 3.17 of the Council’s Planning proof of evidence.⁶⁷ and cover Planning Obligations, Public Art, Open Space and Recreation, Flood and Water, Sustainability Design and Construction, Biodiversity, and Health Impact Assessments. They are included in the list of Core Documents.⁶⁸
- 6.7 Other relevant documents and studies are listed in 3.19 of the Council’s Planning proof of evidence. These are referred to in various proofs of evidence and are included in the CD9 section of the Core Documents list.

7. AGREED MATTERS

- 7.1 As almost all the factual evidence is now agreed between the Applicant and the Council, this section incorporates key agreed evidence from the main parties’ proofs and appendices as well as from the Statements of Common Ground and Topic Papers and relevant technical reports. The remaining differences of interpretation and impact are covered in the cases for the parties – these include the parties’ analysis and commentary on daylight, sunlight and overshadowing. There are still objections to the scheme from local residents and councillors, and these are set out in Section 10 of this report.
- 7.2 This section is structured on the lines of the matters which the Secretary of State particularly wishes to be informed about.

⁶³ CD5.01 and CD5.02

⁶⁴ CD2.03A p13, CD6.03 p13

⁶⁵ CD6.03

⁶⁶ CD8.01

⁶⁷ CD7.02 p12

⁶⁸ CD4.01 to CD4.03 and CD4.06 to CD4.09

Sources

7.3 The sources for the agreed matters are as follows.

- Statement of Common Ground: this contains points of agreement between the parties in respect of the site description; planning history; the proposed development and all its components; inquiry documents; the development plan and relevant policies and the emerging local plan.⁶⁹
- Supplementary Statement of Common Ground: this covers the subjects of Daylight, Sunlight and Overshadowing.⁷⁰
- Agreed Topic Paper 1: Design, Scale and Massing. This includes agreed facts on maximum building heights and plots, land uses, access and circulation, landscape and open space. ⁷¹
- Agreed Topic Paper 2: Heritage Assets. This sets out agreed methodology and identifies where there is agreement and disagreement over the impact on heritage assets.⁷²
- Agreed Topic Paper 3: Business Needs. This establishes agreed matters in respect of business needs, floorspace supply and economic benefits. ⁷³
- Agreed Topic Paper 4: Daylight, Sunlight, Overshadowing and Outlook. This contains an agreed technical and policy background which among other things explains the methodologies and guideline target criteria in document BRE209: Site Layout Planning for Daylight and Sunlight – A Guide to Good Practice (June 2022) (the BRE Guide).⁷⁴ It also identifies the key properties for daylight and sunlight assessment. ⁷⁵
- Agreed Topic Paper 5: Development Plan Policies. This has already been referred to above in the section on the Development Plan.⁷⁶
- Agreed evidence in proofs and appendices: key pieces of agreed evidence are referred to as appropriate and are referenced in the footnotes.

⁶⁹ CD6.03

⁷⁰ CD6.06

⁷¹ CD6.16

⁷² CD6.17

⁷³ CD6.18

⁷⁴ CD8.01

⁷⁵ CD6.19

⁷⁶ CD6.20

Agreed evidence in respect of Matter a): The extent to which the proposed development is consistent with Government policies for building a strong competitive economy

- 7.4 The proposed development would create a new research and innovation employment quarter on a site that comprises previously-developed land in a well-located, accessible edge of centre location within the city.
- 7.5 The Greater Cambridge area is a strategic location for life science and technology research sectors, in both national and international terms.⁷⁷
- 7.6 The Greater Cambridge Growth Sectors Study (“the Iceni study”) of September 2024⁷⁸ looked in depth at the location, land and accommodation needs of the life science and information and communications technology sectors. In section 8 the study analyses demand and supply. The tables in that section show a surplus of commitment over demand for dry labs and offices and a deficit for wet lab space. However, the report states that some of the theoretical committed supply in planning terms is not readily deliverable. There may remain a shortfall in scale-up space and a shortfall in wet lab commitments towards the end of the local plan period.⁷⁹
- 7.7 Moreover, for the life science sector, the study reported that there is a trend towards demand for integrated place-based locations that encompass quality premises with amenities and public transport connectivity and a critical mass to create a community. As regards information and communication technology space, there is a focus on premium locations with good public transport, incubator and start up space and clustering. High quality start-up space and scale-up space will remain in demand.
- 7.8 Against this background it is agreed by the main parties that the need for additional office and lab floorspace in the city area has been demonstrated and that it is crucial that adequate supply continues to meet the evolving requirements of the life sciences and information and communication technology sectors. The scheme would make a significant contribution to the Cambridge knowledge-based research and development cluster, reflective of the demand trends described above, whilst also allowing sustainable change and efficient renewal of previously developed land to be embraced. Its large flexible-plate laboratory space would contribute towards meeting the current identified need for employment floorspace, including wet and dry laboratories and offices.

⁷⁷ CD7.16 p21

⁷⁸ CD9.18

⁷⁹ There is a difference of opinion between the Council and the Applicant about the quantitative need for offices and labs and this is addressed below under the case for the Applicant.

- 7.9 The recent speech made by Rt Hon Rachel Reeves (Chancellor of the Exchequer) on 29 January 2025 in respect of 'kickstarting economic growth' has reaffirmed the national importance of the Oxford - Cambridge Growth Corridor and in particular the opportunity to harness the potential for growing its reputation for science and technology, research and development.⁸⁰
- 7.10 The scheme would create an estimated 6,445 direct jobs comprising 905 entry level, 1,225 mid-skilled and 4,315 high skilled workers. Overall, the development would deliver around 7,130 net additional jobs (6,480 full time equivalent).⁸¹
- 7.11 There are about 855 (670 full time equivalent) existing jobs at the Beehive Centre.⁸²
- 7.12 The scheme would deliver an estimated £660m in Gross Value Added annually in economic output. The site currently generates £60m resulting in a net increase of £600m.⁸³
- 7.13 Annual tax revenues would be an estimated £180-240m. Additional business Rates would amount to an estimated £8.5m. There would be an additional estimated £9.6m worker expenditure in the local economy.
- 7.14 The scheme would deliver an Employment and Skills Strategy including outreach programmes for apprenticeships focused on identified and deprived areas in Cambridge, the targeting and training of local people, targets for diversity and inclusion, and working partnerships with other organisations. It would include dedicated education space and a commitment to work with other bodies and local schools to improve pathways to the life sciences sector.
- 7.15 The development would be compliant with Local Plan Policy 2 (Spatial strategy of the location of employment development) and Policy 40 (Development and expansion of business space). It would also accord with the objectives of NPPF Chapter 6 (Building a strong, competitive economy), particularly: paragraph 86 part (c): "pay particular regard to facilitating development to meet the needs of a modern economy, including by identifying suitable locations for uses such as laboratories, gigafactories, data centres, digital infrastructure, freight and logistics"; and paragraph 87 part (a): "clusters or networks of knowledge and data-driven, creative or high technology industries; and for new, expanded or upgraded facilities and infrastructure that are needed to support the growth of these industries (including data centres and grid connections)".

⁸⁰ CD9.28

⁸¹ The overall figure is for net additional employment, taking into account both displacement and the multiplier effect. The FTE equivalent is 6,480. For a detailed breakdown, see CD7.16 pp 11-15, particularly Tables 3.1 and 3.4.

⁸² For a detailed breakdown, see CD7.16 p12.

⁸³ CD7.16 pp 16-17

Agreed evidence in respect of Matter b): The extent to which the proposed development is consistent with Government policies for ensuring the vitality of town centres

- 7.16 The scheme would contain a local centre. The proposed town centre uses would form part of a wider masterplan vision for the application site.
- 7.17 A Town Centre Use Retail Planning Statement dated August 2023⁸⁴ was submitted with the original application. This stated that the intention was to create a high-quality local centre for future employees on the application site as well as for existing local residents in the local catchment area, and in part it would replace some of the lost retail floorspace that is currently provided on the site. For these reasons it would not be suitable or viable to locate it any other centre outside of the application site.
- 7.18 The Statement continued that, given the site-specific nature of the proposed retail/town centre use floorspace, a sequential assessment of sites outside of the application site should not be required; and given the reduction in retail floorspace, a retail impact assessment was also not technically required. Nevertheless, the statement included both a sequential assessment and a retail impact assessment. These assessments concluded that the employees on the application site and the residents within the catchment area would be able to support the retail and town centre use floorspace and that the scale of retail floorspace was appropriate. There was no evidence that local centres were vulnerable to impact.
- 7.19 A critique of this statement, commissioned by the Council and dated 8 December 2023,⁸⁵ concluded that there was no site-specific need or policy support for a new centre in this location and that the sequential test or retail impact test had not been passed. However, the Statement of Common Ground⁸⁶ records the agreement of the Applicant and the Council to the passage in the committee report⁸⁷ which states that the supporting retail statements have adequately demonstrated that the proposed development passes the sequential and retail impact tests and would not give rise to any unacceptable impacts on local centres or the city centre.
- 7.20 The site is not the subject of protective retail or town centre policies in the adopted plan, and therefore the loss of the retail provision from the site gives rise to no concerns in policy terms. The Cambridge Local Plan does not include the Beehive Centre within the existing hierarchy of shopping centres, and it does not provide policy protection for the retail quantum or type/mix of spaces. There is no

⁸⁴ CD1.19

⁸⁵ CD2.29

⁸⁶ CD6.03 paragraph 7.16

⁸⁷ CD3.01 paragraphs 13.20 to 13.42

restriction on the current use of the site under Class E. The scheme would result in a move from large-format retail units to smaller units within a local centre.⁸⁸

- 7.21 As regards the potential loss of local facilities, there is a range of alternative retail outlets in the area.⁸⁹ The work of relocating occupiers from the Beehive Centre and creating possible floorspace at the Cambridge Retail Park is ongoing⁹⁰. The Cambridge Retail Park is not at capacity as retailers are looking for less space when their rental terms come to an end. The likely way forward is a combination of sub-division, refurbishment and some potential new space to accommodate some facilities displaced from the Beehive Centre. Some elements of this would require planning permission in due course.
- 7.22 Insofar as food retailing is concerned, the scheme would bring with it options for food retailing, including small convenience shopping. There is no reason to conclude at this stage that major convenience shopping would not be retained since it might be relocated to the Cambridge Retail Park. But even if that were not to happen, there is a substantial range of food retailing (including discounters Aldi and Lidl as well as Tesco's superstore) within easy travel distance from the residential areas around the site.⁹¹ There is therefore no evidential basis for concluding that the scheme will leave local people without food shopping resources close at hand.
- 7.23 The scheme would not replace the swimming pool associated with the gym. There would thus be a partial conflict with Local Plan Policy 73 resulting from the loss of an existing leisure facility on the site and the absence of a like-for-like replacement. However, it is not a public pool, being accessible only to those with membership of the gym. There are public pools in this part of Cambridge including that at Parkers Piece. The Council does not object to the loss of the pool and there is a financial contribution in the s.106 obligation, reflective of additional potential upkeep of alternative pools in the area.
- 7.24 To conclude, the proposed quantum and potential mix of retail and town centres uses would be acceptable having regard to the nature of the development, including its out of centre location and the potential for it to impact upon other local centres. The scheme would be in accordance with the requirements of Policy 6 of the Cambridge Local Plan and would be consistent with national planning policies set out in NPPF Chapter 7.⁹²

⁸⁸ CD6.03 paragraph 7.15-16

⁸⁹ CD7.17 pp 4-6

⁹⁰ Table 3.2, page 12 and 3.17 referring to relocations.

⁹¹ CD7.17 pp4-6

⁹² CD6.03 paragraph 9.2 b)

Agreed evidence in respect of Matter c): The extent to which the proposed development is consistent with Government policies for achieving well-designed places

- 7.25 There is residual disagreement between the parties on the issues of impact on neighbouring properties and on heritage and townscape impacts. Other than these, the parties agree that the proposed development would be compliant with Local Plan Policy 56 (Creating successful places), Policy 57 (Designing New Buildings), and Policy 59 (Designing landscape and the public realm), and would accord with the objectives of NPPF Chapter 12 (Achieving well-designed places) in respect of making efficient use of land and being sympathetic to local character and history.

Daylight, sunlight and overshadowing

- 7.26 Appropriate research has been undertaken into the use and layout of neighbouring properties to inform the technical analysis and ensure an acceptable level of accuracy in the modelling.
- 7.27 The appropriate technical assessment methodologies and guideline target criteria are those set out in document BRE209: Site Layout Planning for Daylight and Sunlight – A Guide to Good Practice (June 2022) (the BRE Guide).⁹³
- 7.28 In respect of daylight within buildings, the primary concern relates to main habitable rooms of bedrooms, living rooms, kitchens and dining rooms. Non-habitable and secondary spaces are considered less relevant. In respect of sunlight within buildings the effects to main living rooms and conservatories are most relevant.
- 7.29 The technical assessment of daylight / sunlight reductions is the first stage in a two-stage approach to the acceptability of the effects as confirmed in *Rainbird, R (on the application of) v The Council of the London Borough of Tower Hamlets* [2018] EWHC 657 (Admin).⁹⁴ Where the daylight, sunlight and shading effects of the proposal meet the numerical criteria set out in the BRE guidelines they are considered to be acceptable. Where they are not met, the second stage is to consider whether the identified impacts would be "unacceptable". This second stage of the test requires the consideration wider factors. This may be informed by the guidance within Appendix F and Appendix H of the BRE document in respect of alternative targets and assigning significance to the effects. Other relevant factors may relate to the site context, relevant comparative typologies, special circumstances, consideration of alternative targets, and any other applicable source documents.
- 7.30 The numerical targets within the BRE document are not mandatory and should be interpreted flexibly. Given the nature of the pre-existing site, it is to be anticipated

⁹³ CD6.06

⁹⁴ CD10.03

that meaningful redevelopment may lead to the potential for some reductions in daylight and sunlight which may not meet the BRE target criteria. The questions to be addressed under this two-stage approach are a) whether or not the proposals would result in a "material deterioration" of daylight and sunlight conditions b) whether or not any such deterioration would be "unacceptable".

Efficient use of land

- 7.31 The current site represents an inefficient use of previously developed land in a highly sustainable location. The site would represent a major opportunity to accommodate some of the sector's identified current and long-term needs, whilst also allowing sustainable change and efficient renewal of previously developed land to be embraced. It would comply with Local Plan Policy 2 (Spatial strategy of the location of employment development) and Policy 40 (Development and expansion of business space). The absence of a residential component within the Proposed Development does not conflict with the spatial strategy or policies contained within the Local Plan.

Design quality

- 7.32 The scheme would transform an outdated retail park dominated by parking into an accessible, inclusive and landscaped public realm. Its quality would be assured by the Design Code and parameter plans.
- 7.33 There would be a Greenway (strategic cycle route) connecting through its spine and significant civic spaces provided including Hive Park (7,000 square metres), a size equivalent to nearby St Matthews Piece, a space for leisure and amenity which would be delivered in the first phase of the development. 2.6 ha of open space would be provided across the wider site, including other landscaped areas. The open spaces would bring positive health benefits.
- 7.34 The provision of active ground floor small format retail, service provisions and leisure space and a dedicated youth and community space in the centre of the site, of about 5,100 square metres, would animate the frontages and spaces.

Heritage

- 7.35 Topic Paper 2: Heritage Assets sets out agreed and non-agreed heritage matters.⁹⁵ It is agreed that the scheme would affect the significance of 6 heritage assets. These are:
- Mill Road Conservation Area, which adjoins the south western side of the site;
 - Christ Church in Newmarket Road, Grade II listed
 - Jesus College Chapel, Grade I listed
 - All Saints Church, in Jesus Lane, Grade I listed

⁹⁵ CD6.17

- Castle and Victoria Road Conservation Area, to the north of central Cambridge
 - Central Cambridge Conservation Area
- 7.36 The significance of these heritage assets is fully described and illustrated in the Topic Paper.
- 7.37 The Topic Paper also contains a further list of heritage assets which the Council considers to be affected by the scheme but which the Applicant considers are not affected.⁹⁶ These include
- Mill Road Cemetery (Registered Park and Garden)
 - Kings College Chapel
 - St Mary the Great Church
 - St John's College
 - University Library
 - Kite Conservation Area
 - Riverside and Stourbridge Common Conservation Area
- 7.38 The Council and the Applicant agree that the public benefits of the application scheme would collectively be sufficient to outweigh the identified harm to the significance of all the heritage assets.

Other agreed matters

Sustainability

- 7.39 The development is supported by strategies relating to energy, water, urban heat island effect and wider human health and wellbeing.⁹⁷ There is also a Benefits Delivery Plan.⁹⁸ The development would achieve an Outstanding BREEAM (Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method) rating for all office buildings. All other buildings would achieve a minimum rating of Excellent. The scheme would have embodied carbon targets of less than 600kg CO2/square metre for office and 750kg CO2/square metre for laboratories. There would be a strategy for sustainable construction sourcing. Electric vehicle charging points would be provided. Water consumption would be limited through BREEAM Wat 01 credits and a push target for Exemplary Performance.

⁹⁶ CD6.17 pp28-52

⁹⁷ CD2.33, CD2.34

⁹⁸ CD2.11A

- 7.40 The proposal would thus deliver a highly sustainable development in accordance with Local Plan Policy 28 and 29, and the Council's Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Document.

Ecology and biodiversity

- 7.41 The proposals target over 100% biodiversity net gain. The Council's aspirational target is 20%.

Trees

- 7.42 60 individual trees and part of a tree group would be removed including two trees subject to a Tree Preservation Order. 58 trees, groups of trees and hedgerows would be retained and protected.

- 7.43 At least 290 new trees would be planted, resulting in a net increase of 230 trees. The development complies with Local Plan Policy 59 (Designing landscape and the public realm) and Policy 71 (Trees).

Flood risk

- 7.44 The Lead Local Flood Authority has raised no objection on flood risk and surface water drainage matters, subject to conditions. Anglian Water has raised no objection on foul water and trade effluent matters.

- 7.45 The mitigation and management measures in the Flood Risk Assessment would adequately address any potential flood risk and drainage impacts. The scheme would comply with Local Plan Policies 31 and 32 relating to water management and flood risk.

Water resources

- 7.46 The effects of the scheme on the local water supply network and associated ecological and environmental receptors are predicted to be negligible following implementation of mitigation. The mitigation is set out in the Sustainability Strategy.⁹⁹ The scheme complies with a range of Local Plan policies in this regard including Policies 28, 31 and 70 and the Council's Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Document.

Environmental issues

- 7.47 There are no unacceptable impacts in respect of soil, air, water, wind and noise pollution that could not be controlled through planning conditions. The scheme complies with Local Plan Policy 33 (Contaminated land), Policy 34 (Light pollution control), Policy 35 (Protection of human health and quality of life from noise and vibration), Policy 36 (Air quality, odour and dust), Policy 37 (Cambridge Airport Public Safety Zone and Air Safeguarding Zones) and Policy 38 (Hazardous installations).

⁹⁹ CD2.34; see also Chapter 8 of the Environmental Statement, CD1.05c

*Transport, highways and parking*¹⁰⁰

- 7.48 On site parking would drop from 885 to 395. Bus services to the site are planned to be increased to 15 per hour at peak times. There would be estimated reductions in two-way car trips from the site of 10,000 per weekday and 12,000 per weekend day. Through the s106 Agreement the scheme would make financial contributions towards bus service improvements, the costs of implementing additional resident parking schemes and strategic transport schemes including Eastern Access and a Monitor and Manage Fund.¹⁰¹
- 7.49 The scheme complies with Local Plan Policy 80 (Supporting sustainable access to development), 81 (Mitigating the transport impact of development) and 82 (Parking management). The local highway authority and Active Travel England have raised no objections to the proposals.

Public art

- 7.50 The application is supported by a Public Art Strategy¹⁰² which includes the delivery of permanent and temporary art-based projects, including community engagement. In this regard it would comply with Local Plan Policy 56 (Creating successful places) and Policy 59 (Designing landscape and the public realm).

8. THE CASE FOR RAILWAY PENSION NOMINEES LTD (RAILPEN)

General points

- 8.1 The main parties now agree that permission should be granted for the application scheme, subject to conditions and s.106 obligations.
- 8.2 That position arises as set out in the Council's Position Statement of 25 June 2025¹⁰³ and is covered in its closing submissions, but clearly it is a matter of some importance that the Council has effectively withdrawn its one putative reason for refusal (relating to residential amenity) on the basis that the matter can be covered by condition and on the basis that other harms are outweighed by scheme benefits.

¹⁰⁰ See CD2.47A, the Transport Assessment. Section 7 deals with trip generation.

¹⁰¹ CD7.25

¹⁰² CD2.65

¹⁰³ IQ 1.04

- 8.3 The Applicant's evidence was called without cross-examination by the Council on the basis that the Council considers that any remaining difference of opinion is immaterial to the overall outcome.
- 8.4 The Applicant has undertaken very careful work over some years with the officers of the Council and other stakeholders. The scheme is a high-quality proposition brought forward by a team exceptionally well versed in Cambridge and in the development sectors it is intended to serve.
- 8.5 The provision of considerable life sciences floorspace and offices in a City location – not on the fringes of the urban area – would meet key national targets for economic growth in one of the most important places in the country.
- 8.6 From its current retail park use, the application scheme aims to transform the site into a rich mix of research and development labs, offices and local facilities.
- 8.7 The drawings are listed in the draft conditions and comprise the red line location drawing, five Parameter Plans and Design Code.
- 8.8 There is also a set of drawings and images which show the Illustrative Scheme. This played an important role in the Council's revised position on the modelled daylight, sunlight and overshadowing results relating to the Illustrative Scheme; but it also plays an important role in showing the likely quality of design and sense of place that the scheme will have, and also the way that it will fit into the surrounding area and Cambridge as a whole.
- 8.9 Unlike in many outline proposals, the cross-cutting stipulations in the parameter plans and the Design Code mean that the Illustrative Scheme is, effectively, a detailed representation of the parameter plans or outline version of the scheme. It would not be possible to bring forward a scheme at reserved matters stage which filled in the maximum parameter plan boxes. That is principally because of the stipulation in the parameter plans that only a certain percentage of each of the ten plots may be developed (averaging around 80%, though it varies plot to plot), but it also stems from the overlaid requirements for minimum distances between buildings and areas reserved for open space and circulation.
- 8.10 The upshot is that the Illustrative Scheme can be relied on in massing, height and daylight, sunlight and overlooking terms as tantamount to the scheme for which permission is sought in outline.
- 8.11 The controls over the outline permission would be:
- A condition controlling the form of the development by requiring reserved matters to conform to the five approved parameter plans
 - A condition controlling the form of the development by requiring the reserved matters to abide by the terms of the Design Code.
 - The Design Code containing mandatory requirements: see lists in the Applicant's Masterplanning Appendices, particularly Appendix B which collates all the references in the Design Code to way that residential amenity is protected by the Code's stipulations.

- 8.12 There is no specific control over the balance between the amount of lab space and office space, but the parameter plans identify which have been designed (in outline) to cater for labs. There is some overlap between the idea of lab and office because some life science and research and development is primarily information technology or artificial intelligence based and wet lab space is not required. However there is a clear market demand (and premium in rent) for wet labs, and therefore office space in the traditional sense is unlikely to represent the majority of the floorspace in due course. If anything, it is likely to be predominantly labs both wet and dry and related office space.
- 8.13 The Applicant's planning evidence¹⁰⁴ sets out the way that the application scheme came about. That narrative is relevant to how and why the scheme aligns with policy objectives at the local and national level.
- 8.14 Railpen purchased the site in September 2012 with the intention of operating the retail park as part of its wider property portfolio. However, changes in the retail market have led to a portfolio review of the site, and the identification of the opportunity to redevelop it. The site is all under Railpen's single freehold ownership. It is large and well located in a city that has a strong enough context in which to have commercial confidence to redevelop at scale.
- 8.15 The uses in the scheme have emerged from the commercial and policy context. A large and resilient component of the Cambridge economy is its life science and knowledge industry sector. The site provides the ability to shape a scheme with sufficient critical mass to create excellent facilities and amenities within a city location and thereby create a rare, city centre commodity within the Cambridge commercial environment.
- 8.16 Railpen has the commercial understanding and confidence borne of its track-record in development delivery and management, including within Cambridge. It owns further land and property interests in the City including: Devonshire Gardens 'Mill Yard' (a development under construction a short walk from Cambridge Railway Station), for homes and workspace; and Botanic House (under construction for a major new office research and development building adding to the Railway Station high-tech cluster).
- 8.17 The delivery strategy is to deliver the scheme in phases. Railpen acquired nearby Cambridge Retail Park in November 2020. Whilst the changing retail market cannot not support two adjacent retail parks, it could support one. So, while there is no planning policy requirement to replace the floorspace to be demolished or to relocate the retailers from the Beehive Centre, it makes commercial sense to relocate retailers, where possible and practical, on to Cambridge Retail Park. That would bolster the Retail Park's retail resilience and support investment in it as a shopping destination. Discussions to relocate important existing food and non-food retailers from the site to Cambridge Retail Park are well advanced.

¹⁰⁴ Proof pages 5-6 and in the Presentation (Day 1) CD7.10.

- 8.18 There has been a very extensive programme of work, including all the usual technical assessments as well as engagement with local stakeholders. The process was highly collaborative until the very end when the issue of residential amenity, including the way that planning conditions and the Illustrative Scheme were viewed, led the officers to recommend refusal. However, the key points set out in the Planning Performance Agreement¹⁰⁵ capture the essence of why the scheme brings such overall benefits, notably the joint agreed 'Vision and Objectives' between the Applicant and the Council. These points are as follows.
- 8.19 The site represents a sizeable piece of land adjacent to the city centre currently given over to large format retail units. The redevelopment of such a site provides a rare opportunity to create a new and meaningful piece of urban design with a positive contribution to the city.
- 8.20 There is an identified need for high quality purpose-built technology and life science workplace buildings within Cambridge and the city centre. Located between the two railway stations and adjacent to the city centre, this site represents an ideal location to bring forward an urban scale proposal that would ensure the long-term sustainable use of the site.
- 8.21 Sustainability is a key driver for the project with aspirations for exemplar environmental credentials including all buildings achieving at least BREEAM Excellent, a substantial biodiversity net gain and the adoption of an energy strategy that utilises a fabric first approach, to enable a holistic response to climate emergency.
- 8.22 The key objectives for the site set out in the Planning Performance Agreement include:
- Deliver an exemplar of sustainable development and help the city meet its climate change objectives;
 - Repair the urban fabric of this part of the city, integrate it into its surroundings; "green" the site and provide substantial areas of high quality, multifunctional public realm;
 - Deliver an accessible, exceptional quality cycle and pedestrian environment;
 - Optimise development on this brownfield site and deliver high quality buildings and spaces for the knowledge industry in a town centre environment; and
 - Enhance and diversify the range of employment opportunities on site.
- 8.23 These aims and objectives are fully secured through the application scheme, which went through several key stages including a major review in 2024 leading to an amended application.

¹⁰⁵ CD1.00 and 2.00

8.24 The officers' report to committee¹⁰⁶ stated that the amendment to the scheme had taken significant strides to address masterplan, massing and height issues including reductions in the height and modulation of buildings, the provision of better defined and larger open spaces and improved walking and cycling routes. Concerns regarding matters of townscape and heritage remained, but it was recognised that to accommodate the aspirations of Government policy to deliver meaningful growth, particularly in economic terms on brownfield sites such as this, a significant degree of change and densification of the site would be inevitable. Officers were of the view that the overall public benefits of the scheme outweigh the heritage and townscape harms identified.

8.25 Turning to the matters the on which Secretary of State particularly wishes to be informed.

Applicant's case in respect of Matter 1: Building a strong competitive economy

8.26 The principle of development is agreed between the main parties, including the comprehensive redevelopment of the site and the mix of uses set out in the outline scheme. It is agreed that the scheme complies with policies aimed at building a strong competitive economy. The proposals are consistent with national planning policies set out in NPPF Chapter 6.¹⁰⁷ They would meet identified needs and give rise to a very substantial range of economic benefits locally and nationally.

8.27 There is agreement between the main parties that the scheme would meet unmet needs in Cambridge. The committee report says this, and it is also set out in the Statement of Common Ground.¹⁰⁸

8.28 As set out in the Applicant's Planning Rebuttal document¹⁰⁹, the way that the scheme would meet unmet needs should be accorded great weight. The scheme is targeted at, and would meet, specific identified needs in Cambridge.

8.29 There is a minor difference of opinion between the Council and the Applicant about the quantitative need for offices and labs when comparing the recent Iceni reports in Cambridge. The Iceni report is probably over-conservative when assessing the quantitative need for offices and labs. Iceni predicts¹¹⁰ office need to 2041 at 289,700 square metres, research and development at 600,000 square metres and industrial/warehousing at 200,000 square metres. However, this does

¹⁰⁶ CD3.01 paragraph 30.34.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid paragraph 9.2(a).

¹⁰⁸ Ibid paragraph 7.20.

¹⁰⁹ CD 7.21, page 17.

¹¹⁰ CD9.12.

- not account for the scale of the Government's ambitions over the same period, for growth in these sectors in Cambridge.
- 8.30 The underlying job forecast, which is a major driver of the floorspace estimates, appears conservative. The Cambridge and Peterborough Independent Economic Review was for growth of 115,500 jobs over the period 2021-2041; but Iceni only expect 63,800, a number that the University of Cambridge's Futures Modelling team felt to be modest.¹¹¹
- 8.31 The higher prediction is corroborated by the University's Centre for Business Research which indicates an annual job growth rate of 4% between 2018 and 2024, significantly higher than the 1.5% prediction by ONS, on whose work Iceni relies, since it forms a key calibrating input into the Cambridge Econometrics work Iceni uses¹¹².
- 8.32 The Iceni work does not account for suppressed demand. That there is such demand is undisputable on the data¹¹³.
- 8.33 The need to replace stock is not taken into account to the extent that would properly reflect the need to incorporate a replacement allowance¹¹⁴.
- 8.34 On the supply side, the pipeline is overstated because the numbers relied on by Iceni¹¹⁵ do not adequately consider practical delivery challenges. The data shows a large gap between permissions and sites which are being built out. Of the space with full reserved matters consent, only 19% was under construction in March 2024; over-reliance on consented floorspace is even more precarious, when the pipeline contains so many very large sites.
- 8.35 The Applicant's approach to the quantitative need for the scheme should be preferred to the figures from Iceni that are quoted by the Council. The officers' report notes that there is a shared understanding between Council and Applicant that there are, and will continue to be, significant challenges in achieving a balance between the needs of the life science and information and communications technology sectors and the relative availability of suitable sites that can be delivered across the Cambridge region. Therefore, adopting a flexible approach to decision making on a case-by-case basis will be necessary so that a resilient and flexible supply pipeline can be provided throughout the different economic cycles.

¹¹¹ CD7.16 paragraph 5.24 page 24.

¹¹² Ibid paragraph 5.26.

¹¹³ Ibid paragraph 5.29

¹¹⁴ Ibid paragraph 5.32 and Table 5.

¹¹⁵ Ibid Table 5.2 page 28

- 8.36 The officers' report accepted that demand for high quality office space would be likely to outstrip short-term supply in the city; that lab space availability is currently underprovided in the city; and that start-up and scale-up space remains acutely underprovided across the Cambridge region. It also recognised the inherent challenges in delivering physically available and viable floorspace in the short to medium to maintain the Cambridge region as a national and global destination for life sciences and information and communications technology research in the longer term.
- 8.37 There is very little if any difference between the main parties on the extensive benefits that the scheme would bring in economic terms.
- 8.38 The scheme would secure investment and talent. Providing high quality, well located research and development spaces will enable Cambridge to continue to attract global businesses, supporting local and national economic growth.
- 8.39 The dedicated Employment and Skills Strategy, featuring a dedicated Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics educational space, proactive local outreach, Real Living Wage commitments where practicable, and an Employment and Skills Coordinator, will significantly enhance local employment and training, especially benefiting disadvantaged residents.
- 8.40 The scheme would directly meet unmet need for office and research and development in an excellent, accessible location. It would broaden genuine market choice and explicitly support start-ups and scale-ups, aligning with NPPF priorities for knowledge-intensive sectors.
- 8.41 It would inject competition and optionality into the Cambridge market by adding a highly accessible, mixed-use research and technology hub that aligns more closely with the qualitative demand than many pipeline schemes thus offering a preferable and deliverable choice for occupiers. This competition between locations keeps the market fluid, accelerates delivery and reduces the risk that foot-loose firms divert investment overseas. Accordingly, the quantitative targets and Iceni analysis should be viewed not as caps but as reference points within a dynamic economy, where a diversity of site, location and offer combinations is essential to satisfy demand and maximise job creation.
- 8.42 The development would reinforce Cambridge's status as a globally significant innovation ecosystem, directly enhancing productivity through network effects and knowledge spillovers. It would secure investment and global talent that would otherwise be attracted to international competitors such as Boston and the Bay Area, fully supporting the government's ambition for growth in the Oxford–Cambridge innovation corridor.
- 8.43 The development would bring considerable economic and fiscal benefits by delivering approximately £600 million annually in additional Gross Value Added and £180m to £240m in tax revenue.
- 8.44 Life science and technology sectors are key priorities identified in the Government's 2024 Industrial Strategy. The Proposed Development strengthens the UK's position at the forefront of these critical, high-growth industries, which

- not only creates immediate economic impacts but supports long-term innovation capacity and global competitiveness.
- 8.45 The scheme would deliver social value; the local community would benefit from substantial social infrastructure improvements, including youth facilities, inclusive open spaces, active community hubs, and initiatives designed with local stakeholders, enhancing social cohesion.
- 8.46 These points all affect the local area first and should be given substantial weight overall.¹¹⁶
- 8.47 However, they are also important in national planning and the achievement of wider NPPF goals. Cambridge is one of the few places in the UK which is net positive in Gross Value Added terms, contributing £1bn more than it absorbs per year. This is important because the UK has struggled with poor productivity growth since the 2008 financial crisis. The Resolution Foundation found that in the 12 years following the crisis, labour productivity grew by just 0.4% per year in the UK, less than half the average rate of 0.9% in the richest OECD countries. The productivity gap between the UK and France, Germany and the US has doubled since 2008, reaching 18%, costing the UK £3,400 in lost output per person annually¹¹⁷.
- 8.48 Productivity growth is key because it is a primary driver of long-term economic growth and improvements in living standards. As productivity increases, society can produce more goods and services with the same amount of work, leading to higher incomes and enhanced quality of life. It is no surprise therefore that economic growth is the number one mission of the Government¹¹⁸. The government is aiming for the highest sustained growth in the G7, supporting more people in good jobs, higher living standards and driving productivity growth in every part of the UK.
- 8.49 Investing in economic growth in Cambridge is therefore likely to maximise the chances of successful economic outcomes. Greater Cambridge is one of the UK's most vital economic assets, home to the largest life sciences cluster in Europe, world-class research institutions, and emerging sectors like artificial intelligence, genomics, and semiconductor design¹¹⁹. The Greater Cambridge economy generates over £50bn annually, represents Europe's fastest-growing technology sector, and supports vital enabling industries, including manufacturing, data storage, and logistics. The economy is a net contributor of

¹¹⁶ CD7.21, page 17

¹¹⁷ CD7.16 page 6

¹¹⁸ CD9.29

¹¹⁹ CD9.14

£1bn to the Treasury, making it a global hub of innovation and a cornerstone of the UK's growth strategy¹²⁰.

8.50 The Government reaffirmed on 28 August 2024 that Greater Cambridge has a vital role to play in this Government's mission to kickstart economic growth. The Cambridge Growth Company has been tasked with identifying the growth capacity of the city region¹²¹.

8.51 It is agreed with the Council that there is no policy basis for requiring residential development on the site. Furthermore, given the very substantial residential growth being planned for around Cambridge both in the emerging plan and the Cambridge Growth Company direction of travel, there is no economic or planning issue relating to the jobs that would be created by the application scheme detrimentally affecting the City or region's housing targets or provision.

8.52 For these reasons, the scheme represents a clear, substantial positive contribution to the local and national economy in line with chapter 6 of the NPPF.

Applicant's case in respect of Matter 2: Ensuring the vitality of town centres

8.53 The scheme would not harm the vitality of any town centre. Retail matters are all agreed with the local planning authority and are included above under the heading "Agreed Matters".

Applicant's case in respect of Matter 3: Creating well designed places

8.54 This topic includes townscape and making best use of previously developed land, heritage effects and the issue of neighbouring living conditions.

Townscape and making best use of previously developed land

8.55 The current Beehive Centre is a series of utilitarian retail sheds fringing a large car park. The Council itself considers that the overall vision of transforming an underutilised, car park dominated retail park into an accessible, inclusive, place-based innovation cluster, which incorporates a network of public open spaces and connectivity routes, is positive and supportable.¹²²

8.56 The Council's reservations on design were very largely related to the objection on residential amenity grounds, which it would no longer maintain if the condition as discussed at the inquiry was imposed. In its statement and evidence the Council has acknowledged that paragraphs 135(c) and (f) of the NPPF – those dealing with living conditions and residual townscape effects – would be adequately met based on the Illustrative Scheme condition. The up to date position is therefore one of unanimity in relation to main issue 3. Issues remain between the parties

¹²⁰ CD9.30.

¹²¹ CD9.19.

¹²² CD7.02 paragraph 4.165.

over the extent of harm to living conditions based on the parameter plans and townscape, although the Council have never claimed that the residual townscape effects as they saw them were sufficient for permission to be refused.¹²³

- 8.57 The design of the scheme would achieve a transformational change in placemaking on the site.
- 8.58 There would be a very significant change in quality at the Coldham's Lane entrance to the site, where a new, pedestrian and cycle friendly roundabout junction would replace the rather unpleasant junction that occupies that space at the moment. There would be well designed buildings on Plots 1 and 2, with a large space heavily planted with trees entirely changing the experience of entering the site for the better.
- 8.59 At ground floor, the public realm would be interesting, varied, much greener, and with active frontages along each building. Even the mobility hub would offer a range of visual and function interaction with the public realm, due to the space reserved there for community uses. The larger spaces, Hive Park and Maple Square would become genuine city spaces, with shops and other ground floor uses around attractive civic spaces for those in the wider locality to use and enjoy. Threading through these spaces would be routes for pedestrians and cyclists which would all comply with guidance on separation, safety and useability.
- 8.60 The buildings themselves, whilst larger and more imposing than the sheds of the current Beehive Centre, would be of exemplary quality due to the requirements of the Design Code. The Illustrative Scheme gives an accurate impression of the kind of environment that would be created. It would achieve the full set of design policy requirements set out in NPPF paragraph 135.
- 8.61 Paragraph 135(e) of the NPPF requires decisions to ensure that developments "optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks". The idea of optimisation has a particular force when sustainable, previously-developed land is the subject of consideration. There is a direct connection between NPPF paragraph 135(e) and the new (December 2024) paragraph 125(c), which provides (in relevant part) that decisions should "give substantial weight to the value of using suitable brownfield land within settlements for homes and other identified needs, proposals for which should be approved unless substantial harm would be caused."
- 8.62 The Council considers that with the daylight, sunlight and overshadowing condition in place the scheme would meet paragraph NPPF 125(c) because there would not be, in the Council's judgement, "substantial harm". That was an

¹²³ IQ.1 paragraph 2.

important clarification because it explains why the Council now considers that permission should be granted.

- 8.63 It also explains why the Council considers that (again, subject to the condition), the scheme would optimise the re-use of the site. The Council's planning witness gave evidence that, with the condition in place, the additional sense of enclosure or over-dominance that residents might experience in their gardens, did not amount to sufficiently negative effects to alter the overall view that permission should be granted.
- 8.64 The scheme would strike a balance between the buildings and the spaces between them, and also between the proposed buildings and existing neighbours. A great deal of work has gone in to calibrating that balance between best use of the site and sufficient distances, intervening planting and angles. The Illustrative Scheme is tantamount to the fullest manifestation of the scheme in any event, and there is no residual point to be made by way of distinction between the parameter plans scheme and the Illustrative Scheme. The development would be a very high-quality new piece of townscape in Cambridge.
- 8.65 There would be only two instances of townscape harm, both relatively minor.¹²⁴ Firstly, the view from the middle of Coldham's Common looking towards the City, and secondly for nearby residents. The basis for this harm is the additional mass and height, causing a slightly more urban experience from the middle of Coldham's Common and a slightly more intense form of urban scene for those living in the nearby housing.
- 8.66 The harm is judged minor because the site is generally recognised to constitute poor townscape at the moment, and the additional mass or height would be perceived as part of the layered townscape of the City's urban area. The layered effect of smaller two storey housing on the edge of Coldham's Common with the more urban part of the City lying behind and above that housing might be thought appropriate to a compact city as sought by the Council in its vision for Cambridge in the adopted plan.
- 8.67 There is no harm to the townscape of wider Cambridge. Visibility does not amount to harm. The amended scheme as it emerged in mid-2024 made a concerted effort to modulate overall heights and to create a composition which gathered perceptible height in the centre of the site and avoided an unrelieved flat topped mass. The visualisations from Castle Hill Mound, from Redmeadow Hill and from Lime Kiln Road all show the same effect – an additional feature, on the periphery of urban Cambridge, which in some views would be seen to break the skyline but which would hardly stand alone in doing so.
- 8.68 The Cambridge skyline only really manifests itself from those same three viewpoints, one of which, Redmeadow Hill, is a very long way away. The scheme would not dominate the view from those locations, or occupy anything more than

¹²⁴ CD7.18 p45, Table AM7 Summary of Visual Effects.

a clear position on the periphery of the city, where new development is already clearly perceived.

- 8.69 Of huge importance is the quality and distinctiveness of what would be seen. Here the Design Code is critical, and the way that the flues are grouped and designed. They are the marker of the Life Sciences nature of the scheme, and of 21st Century Cambridge – several notable examples already exist in Cambridge. To the extent that the scheme would be perceived in the wider views, the flues and the massing of the buildings would clearly announce the nature of the scheme, reinforcing the legibility of the City and its special identity (and value to the country). It is a good example of why the visibility of new development is not always to be treated as an adverse impact, even where there is a change to existing character.¹²⁵ Here, it is not the case that Life Sciences buildings with larger mass and a characteristic skyline would be new and alien to Cambridge; they are already part of its character.
- 8.70 The scheme would comply with paragraph 135 of the NPPF¹²⁶, which requires development to be sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities).
- 8.71 The proposals would accord with Policy 57 of the adopted Local Plan¹²⁷, since the scheme would have an overwhelmingly positive effect on its setting in terms of height, scale and form, materials and detailing, ground floor activity and wider townscape and landscape impacts. Policy 60 of the adopted plan would be met because the scheme would meet the policy criteria for tall buildings, including location and context, impact on the historic environment, scale, massing and architectural quality, amenity and microclimate, and public realm.¹²⁸ Policy 67, mentioned in the putative reasons for refusal, concerns the protection of open space, but the scheme would provide a range of new open spaces, so that policy does not apply at all.

Heritage

- 8.72 As regards heritage, the Council's and Applicant's heritage assessments are very similar. There would be a set of very low less than substantial harms¹²⁹ to six assets.

¹²⁵ CD7.18 paragraph 3.2.11

¹²⁶ CD7.18 pp36-37, Table AM4.

¹²⁷ Ibid, p38 paragraphs 5.3.1-2.

¹²⁸ Ibid, Table AM5, beginning on p38

¹²⁹ CD7.06, p31, Table 6

- 8.73 The only near-at-hand heritage impact would be to the Mill Road Conservation Area.¹³⁰ Historically, the character of the site has always been different from that of the conservation area and the wider historic core of Cambridge. It has never aesthetically integrated with it and has always been an island site on the edge of the city core. As it stands, the site makes a negligible adverse contribution to the setting of the conservation area, as a result of its limited-quality buildings, which relate poorly to their context in style, materials and orientation.
- 8.74 The scheme makes the most of the opportunity to masterplan the site to form a development that relates more positively to its surroundings. The scale of the proposed buildings would be greater than that of the existing buildings, which would result in a partial reduction in openness from some vantage points, but it should be noted that as one moves around the conservation area, views of the site differ and, in many cases, the view is not apparent.
- 8.75 The south-western boundary of the site has a more direct visual relationship with the conservation area. Here, the scheme would replace the two large units located on the south-western boundary of the site with new buildings, of varying height and set behind a green buffer, and a large park. The landscaping would create a buffer between the conservation area and the proposed development and would result in the proposed built form sitting further back from the York Street junction. This would ensure that there was a clear spatial definition between the scheme and the conservation area as seen from the junction of York Street and Ainsworth Street.¹³¹ Two or three of the proposed buildings would be seen in this one view. They would be very largely invisible from the majority of the conservation area.¹³² The new buildings would not overtop the roofs of the housing but would occupy an area which is relatively recessive. The impact on the setting of the Mill Road Conservation Area would be negligible adverse, and the impact on significance would be at the lowest level of less than substantial harm.
- 8.76 The other five instances of very low or negligible less than substantial harm all arise in views from Castle Hill Mound. The reason for the harm relates to the intrusion of the scheme into views in which the asset in question also appears. The view from Castle Hill Mound is a large panorama in which the majority of the heritage assets lie straight ahead in the view, whilst the scheme lies to the left, in a peripheral position. The scheme would be clearly distinct from the assets, and legible as a piece of 21st Century Cambridge. If there is harm, it is at the very lowest end of the spectrum, hardly interfering in any perceptible way with what is of value, or significance, in those assets.

¹³⁰ CD7.06 pp20-22

¹³¹ CD7.07 Appendix 3, p6, Figure 8.

¹³² CD7.07 Appendix 3, p6 Figure 9 shows a distant view looking from the edge of the conservation area over the top of St Matthews' Gardens, which is not itself in the conservation area.

- 8.77 In each of these five instances, the effect on the Cambridge Central Conservation Area, Castle and Victoria Road, All Saints Church, Jesus College Chapel and Christ Church would be negligible adverse, with the lowest level of less than significant harm to the heritage asset.¹³³
- 8.78 The Applicant does not agree with the Council that the degree of harm to the above six identified assets would be slightly greater than this. The Council's evidence in this regard was not capable of being tested through cross-examination and in any case the Council found less than substantial harm and did not maintain an objection to the scheme.
- 8.79 In addition, the Applicant does not agree with the Council that more assets would be harmed. These assets are Mill Road Cemetery, King's College Chapel, St Mary the Great, St John's College, the University Library, Kite Conservation Area and Riverside and Stourbridge Common Conservation Area. The Applicant maintains that in each of these instances the scheme would have a neutral effect upon the setting and significance of the asset. The Appellant does not accept the Council's position that there would be "cumulative" harm.¹³⁴
- 8.80 Therefore, whilst the conservation of the significance of these highly-graded designated assets is something to which great weight should be given, the degree of harm here would be at worst very low indeed in the less than substantial harm spectrum. It is agreed between the parties that it would be outweighed by the scheme's public benefits.¹³⁵
- 8.81 There is no non-designated Heritage Asset identified by the Council in any list. The Porcelanosa building, whilst having a certain idiosyncratic charm, is a recent commercial building without identifiable design or heritage significance, in that there is nothing to set it apart in terms of architectural quality, history, materials or technique. Even if it were treated as a non-designated heritage asset, it would go into the balance of considerations.

Daylight, sunlight, overshadowing and outlook

- 8.82 The Daylight and Sunlight Report dated August 2024¹³⁶ carried out a detailed assessment of the potential daylight and sunlight effects of the current application scheme on neighbouring properties. An Addendum Report was produced in November 2024¹³⁷ which responded to queries raised by the Council in respect of potential effects to properties at Silverwood Close and St Matthews Gardens. The Daylight and Sunlight Report and the Addendum Report and Appendices

¹³³ CD7.06 p22

¹³⁴ CD7.06 pp22-29

¹³⁵ CD6.03 paragraph 7.39

¹³⁶ CD2.31

¹³⁷ CD2.63

summarise the impacts of the parameter plans and Illustrative Masterplan on a case-by-case with illustrations and technical appendices.

- 8.83 Relevant information from these reports is included in the Applicant's proof of evidence¹³⁸ and Daylight and Sunlight Appendices.¹³⁹ These provide a clear and accessible summary of the technical evidence. This evidence was not cross examined by the Council or any interested party during the inquiry.¹⁴⁰
- 8.84 The BRE guidance outlines two detailed methods for calculating daylight within properties neighbouring a proposed development: the Vertical Sky Component (VSC) and the No-Sky Line (NSL) tests.
- 8.85 The VSC test measures the amount of sky that is visible on the outside face of the external walls, usually at the centre point of a window. Where a room is served by multiple windows, an 'area-weighted' Vertical Sky Component may be derived for the room based on the size of each window, subject to the methodology within the BRE Guide.
- 8.86 The NSL test calculates the distribution of daylight within rooms by determining the area of the room at desk / work surface height (the 'working plane') which can and cannot receive a direct view of the sky and hence 'sky light'.
- 8.87 Accurate calculation of the NSL requires an understanding of the room layouts whereas VSC requires modelling only of the window position (although VSC on a 'room weighted' basis does require provision of further details).
- 8.88 For the above methods, the guidance suggests that existing daylight may be noticeably affected by new development if:
- windows achieve a VSC below 27% and are reduced to less than 0.80 times their former value (para. 2.2.7); and / or:
 - levels of NSL within rooms are reduced to less than 0.80 times their former value (para 2.2.11).
- 8.89 Bandings of numerical loss and are commonly applied in respect of environmental impact assessments¹⁴¹. The significance of banding relates solely to the extent of numerical reductions and provide no indication of the quality or adequacy of the retained amenity levels.

¹³⁸ CD7.08

¹³⁹ CD7.09

¹⁴⁰ However, neighbouring residents maintain their concerns over the degree of harm arising from the proposals. There is also a difference between the Applicant and the Council in respect of the degree of harm arising from the parameter plan scheme and the Illustrative Masterplan scheme.

¹⁴¹ CD7.08 pp18-19

- A 0% to 20% reduction, or where BRE absolute targets are met, may be reported as either BRE compliant or a negligible effect;
 - a 20.1% to 30% reduction is reported as a minor adverse effect;
 - a 30.1 to 40% reduction is reported as a moderate adverse effect; and above
 - a 40% reduction is reported as a major adverse effect.
- 8.90 Appendix H of the BRE Guidelines gives further advice on significance where the loss of skylight or sunlight does not meet the guidelines.¹⁴² It states that factors tending towards minor impact include situations where:
- only a small number of windows are affected;
 - an affected room has other sources of skylight;
 - the affected room has only a low level requirement for skylight; or
 - there are other reasons why an alternative, less stringent guidelines should be used, for example an overhang to a window, or where a window is unusually close to a boundary.
- 8.91 Factors tending towards a major impact include:
- where a large number of windows are affected;
 - the loss of light is substantially outside the guidelines;
 - all the windows of a particular property are affected; or
 - where the affected space has a particularly strong requirement for skylight or sunlight.
- 8.92 There are precedents in planning appeals for accepting alternative lower figures for retained VSC. Some appeal decisions have adopted alternative benchmarks of 16% for bedrooms and 18% for living rooms.¹⁴³ There are local examples of figures considerably below the BRE Guidelines.¹⁴⁴
- 8.93 As regards sunlight, the Annual Probable Sunlight Hours (APSH) test calculates the percentage of probable hours of sunlight received by a window or room over the course of a year. In assessing sunlight effects from the proposal to neighbouring buildings, the review relates to windows facing within 90 degrees of south with focus upon main living rooms and conservatories. The BRE guide provides an annual target of 25% APSH with at least 5% achieved between 21st

¹⁴² CD7.08 pp19-20

¹⁴³ CD7.08 9.1.7 to 9.1.20

¹⁴⁴ CD7.08 paragraphs 9.1.21 to 9.1.51

Sept and 21st March ('winter sun'). Occupiers may notice the loss of sunlight if the APSH, is reduced below 25% APSH and less than 0.80 times former value and for 'winter sun', if reduced below 5% of APSH and less than 0.80 times former value; and also having a sunlight reduction for the whole year greater than 4% APSH (para. 3.2.7).

- 8.94 As regards amenity areas, a 2-hour 'sun on ground' test is recommended for quantifying sunlight availability with a decrease in available sunlight indicating greater shading from development. The guidelines suggest that if at least 50% of an amenity area receives at least 2hrs of sun on 21st March, then it is likely to be adequately lit throughout the year. If open space receives less than 50%, then the guidelines suggest that the loss in sunlight may be noticeable if it is reduced below 0.80 times its former value.
- 8.95 The properties that are regarded as most sensitive are discussed below.
- 8.96 157-161 St Matthew's Gardens: these are the ground and first floor flats to eastern end of St Matthew's Gardens terrace. Under the parameter plans, 157 would experience a minor VSC deviation to a single ground floor living space and no material effect on NSL. 161 would experience a moderate VSC deviation to a single first floor living space. There would be no material effect on NSL. Retained amenity levels of over 25% VSC would be very good. All other rooms would meet the absolute target of over 27% VSC. Overall use and amenity of the space would not be materially impacted. Trees / bushes to the boundary would reduce the perception of light loss. Not all rooms to this property would experience change since the northern elevation would be unaffected. Sunlight levels would fully meet the APSH sunlight test. Retained amenity resulting from the parameter scheme is considered to be adequate.
- 8.97 As regards the Illustrative Scheme, there would be no material harm.
- 8.98 Flats at 163-165 St Matthew's Gardens: these are ground and first floor flats to the eastern end of the St Matthew's Gardens terrace. The properties enjoy higher existing VSC levels due to the relationship with the open car park, with the result that they would experience more significant numerical reductions to VSC. Under the parameter plans, the retained amenity levels of c.20% - 23% to living / kitchen / dining space would still be appropriate and would not affect their use. There would be only minor shifts in NSL to the living spaces. The retained VSC to the ground floor bedroom would remain good at c.20% and it is a less sensitive room use. The retained VSC to the first floor bedroom would be lower at 14.4%, but this would be a single less sensitive room use and is more likely to register a lower figure because it is closer to a deep eaves above. Not all rooms to this property would experience change as a result of the proposals since the northern elevation would be unaffected. Retained levels would be adequate such that the use of spaces would be unlikely to be materially affected. Sunlight levels would fully meet the APSH sunlight test. Mature trees and bushes to the boundary would reduce the perception of light loss and limit the effect on the pattern of use of these properties.

- 8.99 Under the Illustrative Scheme there would be retained levels of c.24% VSC for living space and c.19% for bedroom space. These are appropriate and demonstrate the effectiveness of design controls in further minimising effects.
- 8.100 Townhouse at 167 St Matthew's Gardens: this is a two-storey house to the eastern end of the St Matthew's Gardens terrace. The property currently enjoys higher existing VSC levels due to the relationship with the open car park. As a result, it would experience greater numerical reductions to VSC from this higher starting point. VSC and NSL changes may be noticeable. Under the parameter plans, a retained amenity level of c.20% to the kitchen space would be good and would not affect the use of the spaces. The retained VSC to the bedroom would be lower at 14.1% but this would be a less sensitive room use. The first floor bedroom window is closer to a deeper eaves above. It is also in close proximity to boundary vegetation which would reduce the perception of light loss and limit the effect. The northern elevation, including the main living space, would be unaffected. Sunlight levels would fully meet the APSH sunlight test. Retained amenity resulting from the parameter scheme is considered to be adequate.
- 8.101 Under the Illustrative Scheme, the corresponding retained levels would be over c.24% VSC for living space and c.18.4% for bedroom space. These are appropriate and demonstrate the effectiveness of the design controls in further minimising effects.
- 8.102 Townhouse at 169 St Matthew's Gardens: this is another two-storey house to the eastern end of the St Matthew's Gardens terrace. Again, the property enjoys higher existing VSC levels due to the relationship with the open car park and experiences moderate to major numerical reductions to VSC as a result of this higher starting point. Under the parameter plans, VSC shifts may be noticeable but retained amenity levels of c.18 – 21%% would be good for the habitable room uses and would not affect the use of the spaces. There would be no material change to daylight penetration to the bedroom spaces and limited impact to the living room. Mature trees / bushes to the southern and eastern boundary would reduce the perception of light loss and limit the effect on the pattern of use of this property. Not all rooms to this property would experience change as a result of the proposals with the northern elevation being unaffected. Sunlight levels would fully meet the APSH sunlight test.
- 8.103 The Illustrative Scheme would have less impact with higher retained levels of c.22% VSC and above.
- 8.104 Townhouses at 171-175 St Matthew's Gardens: these have a sunken lower ground floor adjacent to the retaining wall of the Beehive Centre car park. The rooms currently enjoy higher existing VSC levels, particularly to the upper floors, due to the relationship with the open car park. They would therefore experience moderate to major numerical reductions to VSC as a result of this higher starting point. The lower ground floor level of 175 has been altered following construction to provide a dual aspect combined living / kitchen / dining space. Whilst VSC shifts may be noticeable the NSL changes only affect the lower ground floor sunken levels with the upper floor living spaces and bedrooms fully meeting the BRE targets. Retained amenity levels of c.19% - c.20% under the parametet

plans are good for the main living rooms at ground floor and would not affect the use of the spaces. There would be no material change to daylight penetration to the living room or bedroom spaces. The lower ground level dining rooms / kitchens would experience moderate effects to VSC but would retain similar VSC levels to the pre-existing conditions in the neighbouring lower ground floor living space at 177 /179 St Matthew's Gardens (c.12 – 13% VSC) as well as other examples of lower pre-existing levels around the application site and elsewhere in Cambridge.¹⁴⁵ Mature trees / bushes to the boundary and the level change / enclosure to the lower ground floor space would reduce the perception of light loss and limit the effect on the pattern of use of these properties. Not all rooms to any one property would experience change as a result of the proposals, with the northern elevation being unaffected. Sunlight levels would fully meet the APSH sunlight test. Retained amenity resulting from the parameter scheme is considered to be adequate.

- 8.105 The Illustrative Masterplan scheme would result in minor or moderate VSC changes to the constrained lower ground rooms. For all the indicated rooms retained VSC would be between two and four percentage points better than under the parameter plans.
- 8.106 177-201 St Matthew's Gardens: these flats are positioned to the centre of the terrace. They have a sunken lower ground floor with the living space of 177 and 179 facing into this sunken terrace. The upper floor flats have bedrooms, but no main living rooms, facing the site. The lower ground floor living spaces already experience lower VSC levels of between 12% and c.13%. The additional VSC reductions resulting from the scheme are negligible. NSL changes are exacerbated in percentage terms by this lower starting point and the sunken position of these rooms. The bedrooms at ground floor and above have higher pre-existing amenity and so experience greater and more noticeable potential change to VSC and NSL levels. Retained amenity levels of c.18% and higher are appropriate for the bedroom uses at ground floor and above. Whilst there would be NSL changes to these bedrooms, they are a more secondary space and this would not affect the enjoyment / pattern of use of these rooms. The lower ground floor rooms are already somewhat compromised both in outlook and quality. Further VSC changes are compliant with BRE base targets and would be unlikely to have a material effect on the use of these spaces. The mature trees and structures bin stores / structures within the terrace limit outlook from these lower ground floor units which would reduce the perception of light loss and limit the effect on the pattern of use of these properties. The majority of sunlight levels fully meet the APSH sunlight test (see 14 below). Retained amenity resulting from the parameter scheme is considered to be adequate.
- 8.107 The Illustrative Masterplan scheme would reduce the impact on retained VSC and NSL in a number of instances from major to moderate or from moderate to minor, with gains in retained VSC of 2 to 3 percentage points.

¹⁴⁵ CD7.08 paragraph 9.1.47 and Table 1

- 8.108 203 St Matthew's Gardens: the VSC impacts would be minor in nature. The retained VSC levels of over 20% under the parameter scheme would be acceptable for the specific room use. The lower ground floor would have a lower retained VSC of c.17% but the reduction to this room would fully meet the BRE guidance so is not considered to be material. Mature trees and bushes to the boundary and the level change and enclosure to the lower ground floor space would reduce the perception of light loss. Not all rooms would experience daylight loss to this property. Sunlight levels would fully meet the APSh sunlight test. Retained amenity resulting from the parameter scheme is considered to be adequate.
- 8.109 The impact of the Illustrative Masterplan on VSC would be negligible.
- 8.110 As a general comment on the impacts on St Matthew's Gardens, the greatest effect of the proposals would be to the properties between 163 and 201 St Matthew's Gardens. These properties currently adjoin the open car park of the Beehive Centre. However, there are also mature trees and bushes to the boundary which would limit the perception of light loss.
- 8.111 A number of the St Matthew's Gardens properties have sunken lower ground floor levels as a result of the level change to the Beehive Centre car park and the retaining wall. The numerical VSC effects to these lowest floors are generally lower than those to the ground floor rooms due to the more limited sky view from these sunken spaces. Retained VSC levels are also reduced given the lower starting point and more constrained position of these windows.
- 8.112 The ground floor spaces to these properties experience generally the largest numerical change as a result of their currently more open aspect. This affects a mix of bedrooms to the flats at 177 – 201 St Matthew's Gardens and living rooms to the townhouses at 167 – 175. Despite this change the retained VSC levels are 19-20% VSC or above for the living spaces.
- 8.113 The only main living rooms that would experience lower retained VSC levels are the lower ground floor flats at 177 and 179 St Matthew's Gardens but the change here would be limited. The VSC reductions would meet the BRE targets although there would be more significant NSL deviations under the parameter plans. The dining and combined dining / kitchen spaces at 171, 173 and 175 St Matthew's Gardens are within the more constrained lower ground floor terraces and are limited by both the existing garden fences and retaining wall to the application site. These areas already have lower existing VSC levels which increases the subsequent percentage VSC reduction. The impacts of the parameter scheme are 'moderate' in terms of the VSC reduction significance. The retained values of between c.12.5% - 15% VSC under the parameter plan fall below the alternative levels of 16% - 18% and may be noticeable to the residents. These impacts are however very localised affecting three rooms and resulting from the specific constraints to the sunken windows. There are similar pre-existing VSC levels to the properties at 177 / 179 St Matthew's Gardens and other precedents identified around the site and in Cambridge. Other areas of greater numerical impact include the upper floor bedrooms of 165 and 167 St Matthew's Gardens which retain VSC of c.14%. These windows have a more direct view of the Beehive

Centre and are somewhat sensitive due to the design of these properties which positions the windows closer to the overhanging eaves which blocks some sky visibility due to the proximity to the roof soffit above.

- 8.114 34-39 Silverwood Close: these are two and three storey houses. The properties have an existing view to the open car park and would experience predominantly minor to moderate numerical reductions to VSC as a result of the higher starting point. The properties at 38 and 39 Silverwood Close have extended living / kitchen / dining space at ground floor. Whilst individual windows would experience change, the spaces are heavily glazed and include rooflights such that overall amenity remains high. 36 Silverwood Close would experience major impacts to NSL, moderate VSC impacts to kitchen and bedroom and major VSC impacts to a dining room but retained VSC would still be between 17.8% and 21.7%. The changes would affect windows that are alongside an extension or are NSL changes within the deeper plan extension itself. These would be appropriate for use of these spaces. Main living rooms would retain compliant VSC in excess of 27%. Mature trees to the boundary would reduce the perception of light loss and limit the effect on the pattern of use of this property. There are fewer trees to the boundary of 39 Silverwood Close, but this property has a larger garden enjoying light and outlook from multiple aspects. Not all rooms to the properties experience change as a result of the proposals with the northern elevation, including main living spaces, being unaffected. Sunlight levels would fully meet the APSH sunlight test and the majority of gardens would meet the 2+ hours sun on ground test. Retained amenity resulting from the parameter scheme is considered to be adequate.
- 8.115 Under the Illustrative Scheme, retained VSC would generally be in the mid 20%s (albeit with the kitchen of 36 having a retained VSC of 18.7%). This illustrates the effectiveness of design controls in further minimising effects under future reserved matters applications.
- 8.116 As a general commentary on the impacts on Silverwood Close, the majority of the Silverwood Close properties face the undeveloped open car park element of the existing Beehive Centre, or the car park adjacent to the Porcelanosa unit. A degree of change is to be anticipated in respect of the currently open site, but the shift in daylight levels would generally be limited. The vast majority of the numerical effects to VSC at Silverwood Close would be negligible, with only localised minor or moderate deviations from the numerical targets. NSL changes may be more noticeable to the central units between 34-39 Silverwood Close. However, whilst the changes may be perceptible, the retained amenity levels of c.18% VSC or over are adequate and will not materially impact the use of the spaces. The majority of rooms would retain VSC levels of c.25% or above and main living spaces in particular would either meet the BRE targets or retain VSC levels close to the 27% target.
- 8.117 In considering the acceptability of the proposals in respect of Silverwood Close there are several other relevant factors. None of the affected properties experiences changes to all of their windows. All units have a front elevation and main living spaces that are not affected by the proposals. The relationship to the boundary trees would limit the perception of light loss to a number of properties.
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There is also very high compliance in respect of both direct sunlight to main living spaces and the 2+ hour sun on ground targets.

- 8.118 The additional articulation of the Illustrative Scheme would result in reduced technical effects and a high number of properties would fully meet the BRE targets.
- 8.119 49-50 Silverwood Close: these extended houses are situated to the rear of the Porcelanosa Building, which would be redeveloped to form Plot 1. The effects on daylight for the parameter plans and the Illustrative Scheme would be limited except for an internal dining room window that borrows light from an extension. The fact that this is an internal window exaggerates the apparent impact.
- 8.120 Sleaford Street: the 3-storey properties at Sleaford Street are situated to the south-west of the site and contain windows to their eastern elevations that have an oblique view of plot 6 of the proposals. Under the parameter plans two properties show a degree of deviation from the BRE targets. The affected space at 148 Sleaford Street ground floor is a bedroom. This would maintain a VSC of c17% which is considered to be adequate for a bedroom use. The window is positioned close to the site boundary alongside the extended porch of the property, increasing sensitivity. The main living room window at ground floor would maintain an excellent VSC of 31.5%.
- 8.121 A first floor window would be affected at 150 Sleaford Street, but this serves a small “non-habitable” galley kitchen and is more sensitive to change because of overhanging eaves. The room would maintain a good VSC of 20% and would fully meet the NSL targets.
- 8.122 Overall the proposals would maintain adequate daylight to the Sleaford Street properties with only localised adverse effects. The changes would be perceptible, but the overall use and amenity of the spaces would not be materially affected. No properties suffer reductions to all of their rooms / windows.
- 8.123 The Illustrative Scheme would show a reduction in impacts with the kitchen at 150 becoming fully compliant with the guidance and a higher level of retained VSC to the bedroom at 148.
- 8.124 York Street: the 2-storey Victorian terraces on York Street are located directly to the west of the site. 37 of the 49 assessed properties are fully compliant with the BRE daylight targets in respect of both VSC and NSL. 12 properties would experience some shifts in NSL outside of the numerical targets but meet the VSC target. Where deviations from the NSL targets exist, these solely affect spaces where the design of neighbouring properties increases sensitivity due to the depth of the rooms and / or windows that are inset between neighbouring extensions. The changes may be slightly perceptible but would be unlikely to affect the use of the spaces.
- 8.125 Under the Illustrative Scheme the reduced height of plots 7 and 8 and the greater articulation of the upper floor setbacks would further reduce the NSL effects. Impacts would remain to four properties but the only ‘major’ adverse reduction appears to serve a non-habitable space lit by a small window at 74 York Street.

- 8.126 Other properties: Pym Court, Hampden Gardens and 11-17 The Terrace are all separated from the site by the railway line and are a substantial distance from the scheme. Regarding Pym Court, there would be no deviations from the BRE targets in respect of daylight, sunlight or overshadowing effects. Four windows in the upper floors of Hampden Gardens would experience minor deviations from the VSC targets and two spaces would be affected by minor NSL reductions. Overall the changes would be slightly perceptible. The Illustrative Scheme would achieve full compliance with the BRE targets. In respect of 11-17 The Terrace, there would be no adverse effect in respect of the VSC metric and 6 windows would experience minor NSL effects with one room experiencing a moderate effect. The Illustrative Scheme would be fully compliant in respect of both VSC and NSL criteria.

Summary on daylight, sunlight and overlooking

- 8.127 The Beehive Centre proposals are considered to be successful in limiting potential daylight effects. Whilst a degree of change from the pre-existing condition is inevitable, the majority of effects to neighbours under the maximum parameter scheme would be unlikely to be perceptible to the occupiers. More noticeable changes would be limited to the north of the site at St Matthew's Gardens and Silverwood Close, which are in close proximity to the boundary and predominantly face the existing open car park. Whilst a number of reductions exceed the base BRE targets, retained amenity remains generally high for the specific room uses. Lower retained values affect 5 rooms to St Matthew's Gardens but this is similar to pre-existing levels in close proximity to the site and evidenced in other local and appeal precedent. The Illustrative Masterplan scheme would result in more limited reductions to daylight and further increases to retained amenity of the more affected properties. This demonstrates that the effects would be successfully managed as a result of the design controls within the application. Overall the effects of the scheme are considered to be acceptable
- 8.128 When one looks at the low number of results in the Illustrative Scheme modelling that would fall below the BRE figure, it is no surprise that the Council now take the view that they would be acceptable. It is clear that the modelled results of the Illustrative Scheme would be acceptable in residential amenity terms and has been obvious since before the committee.
- 8.129 In January 2025 the Applicant had suggested that a condition could be attached to the planning permission which in effect would limit daylight, sunlight and overshadowing impacts to those of the Illustrative Scheme.¹⁴⁶ The Council by letter rejected the idea of such a condition because it said those effects were still unacceptable¹⁴⁷. Yet the Council's daylight and sunlight expert witness stated in this proof that he had not assessed the acceptability of the Illustrative Scheme.

¹⁴⁶ CD11.01

¹⁴⁷ CD11.02 p2 bullet 1

- 8.130 The Council's position statement of 25 June has radically altered things. The Council has now withdrawn its daylight, sunlight and overshadowing case and its entire objection to the scheme on the basis of the condition which, in essence, is exactly the same as the one which the Applicant proposed to it before the committee in January 2025.¹⁴⁸
- 8.131 The Council's acceptance of the condition at the inquiry did not proceed from any change to the evidence but was prompted by the question that was put by the Inspector to the planning committee councillor who spoke on Day 1. The councillor confirmed that the councillors had not looked at the merits of the Illustrative Scheme in respect of the daylight, sunlight and overshadowing results, because they believed it not to be that to which permission would attach.
- 8.132 It is now agreed between the Applicant and the Council that the effects of the Illustrative Scheme on neighbours in terms of daylight, sunlight and overshadowing would be acceptable. The modelling of the effects is all now agreed between the Applicant and the Council in terms of numerical values. The vast majority of windows, rooms and gardens tested do not give rise to effects which go beyond the BRE default values (and therefore by definition would not require further examination, let alone justification).¹⁴⁹ The proposed condition regarding daylight, sunlight and overshadowing removes this as an issue.
- 8.133 In the Applicant's view there should not be a daylight, sunlight and overshadowing objection even without the condition.
- 8.134 It is agreed that the site should be optimised for re-development. That is a crucial aspect of context for the daylight, sunlight and overshadowing judgement. It is not reasonable to treat the site as part of a suburban area where a mirror massing exercise with two to two-and-a-half storey housing is the correct comparator. The character work adopted by the Council does not treat the relevant area of St Matthews Gardens or Silverwood Close as "suburban" areas – indeed, it changed its character work from such a label to "railway corridor".
- 8.135 It is also not reasonable to reject the examples given by the Applicant of retained VSC values in areas of the City where optimised relationships between buildings have been achieved. That leads to the quite untenable judgement that one should apply to this site, in urban Cambridge, the default BRE figure of 27% VSC as the indicator of acceptability.
- 8.136 The Applicant's approach is in line with some recent considerations of this issue.¹⁵⁰ At Harleyford Road, the benchmarks of 16% VSC for a bedroom and 18% for a living room, kitchen and dining room were found acceptable. Against

¹⁴⁸ CD11.01

¹⁴⁹ The tabulated results are set out in full in CD7.08 from p32 onwards.

¹⁵⁰ See the case studies at 10.01 to 10.20

those benchmarks the vast majority of windows would be acceptable and the handful that did not meet the BRE guidelines are subject to particular constraints.

- 8.137 The Applicant's approach should be adopted and a finding made that the parameter plan scheme effects would be acceptable.
- 8.138 As regards outlook, Appendix A of the Applicant's Masterplanning proof of evidence¹⁵¹ contains an analysis of building heights and separation distances, including visuals. It demonstrates that there are comparable building to building relationships in Cambridge. The buildings in the proposed scheme would be clearly visible from the backs of houses in Silverwood Close, St Matthew's Gardens, York Street and Sleaford Street, but over a significant distance, with stepping at the higher levels controlling the way that the height would be perceived. There would be a good degree of existing tree screening (some within the control of the neighbours themselves) and the ability through the reserved matters landscape details to add more. The effect would be more urban, and in some cases there would be a reduction in what is at the moment a relatively unobstructed outlook; but the scheme would not be over-dominant, or unacceptable in an urban area. The report to committee¹⁵² recognised that to accommodate the aspirations of Government policy to deliver meaningful growth, particularly in economic terms on brownfield sites such as this, a significant degree of change and densification would be inevitable. Outlook has not been maintained by the Council as a reason for dismissing the appeal.
- 8.139 For these reasons the NPPF policy on residential living conditions¹⁵³ would be complied with, as would the relevant adopted local plan policies. The residual outcome overall, bearing in mind the fact that the living conditions of those nearby would be enhanced in real terms by the proximity of the facilities and amenities of the scheme, would be at the lower end of limited harm¹⁵⁴.
- 8.140 The overall conclusion on this main issue is that the Government's policy on placemaking and design would be met by the application scheme.

Applicant's case in respect of Matter d): compliance with the development plan

- 8.141 The development plan is generally up to date. The full list of relevant policies is in the Statement of Common Ground. The plan's Vision, and Policies 2, 40, and 55, 56, 57 and 60 are the most important in the context of this scheme. Each one would be complied with for the reasons given in the Applicant's planning proof of

¹⁵¹ CD7.13

¹⁵² CD3.01 paragraph 30.34

¹⁵³ NPPF paragraph 135(f) in particular.

¹⁵⁴ Policy 60 of the adopted plan refers to 'no adverse impact'.

evidence. The appendices to the Applicant's Planning proof of evidence contains a full list of development plan policies and assesses the scheme against them.¹⁵⁵

- 8.142 It is now agreed between the parties that the development plan as a whole is complied with. The only caveat before related to the key issue of daylight, sunlight, overlooking and outlook, but the Council now takes the view that, if the relevant condition is imposed, the development plan would be complied with. The Applicant's view remains that the parameter plan scheme also complies with the development plan.

Other issues included in the Applicant's case

Sustainable transport

- 8.143 The effect on private car use stemming from the use of the car would be hugely positive. The Transport Assessment shows that on a weekday, the flows to the Site would fall by over 10,000, and over 12,000 on a Saturday.
- 8.144 There would by contrast be enhanced pedestrian and cycle connectivity through the site and the site is already well-connected to the central station and to the City Centre by those means.
- 8.145 There would be enhanced bus provision which would run into and through the Site itself and which would be secured through the s.106 obligation.
- 8.146 All this is agreed with the Council who have always acknowledged the sustainable credentials of the site. It is also agreed by the relevant statutory consultees. Full details are in the Applicant's planning evidence.

Opportunities for the community

- 8.147 The scheme has been designed not just to attract world-leading life science occupiers and practitioners, but to provide real benefits to those who live in the area already. Cambridge has areas of real deprivation as well as its global University and life sciences developments; Discussions with stakeholders in the area have informed certain aspects of the scheme – the science, technology, education and mathematics facility, community space, skateable route, better pedestrian and cycle route in the Beehive greenway, as well as the detailed provisions of the s106 on skills and job opportunities, which go as far as Railpen reasonably can to ensure that the scheme brings opportunity throughout its life and not just at the beginning.
- 8.148 Those who might be described as suffering from socio-economic disadvantages will be benefited by the scheme, as will those with mobility issues. The scheme would make movement through the areas easier and safer, and would not make life for the mobility impaired in any way more difficult. The site would be much safer, better designed for the elderly, women and girls, those with mobility or

¹⁵⁵ CD7.11 pp3-5

disability issues and the neurodivergent. The arrival of many more jobs on a well-connected urban site near the City centre, rather than on a fringe site near the edges of the City, is also a powerful aid to better and more sustainable living for those seeking work.

- 8.149 Other points are not identified as main issues but are covered in the evidence: include water efficiency, for which there is no objection from the water companies or the Environment Agency, and biodiversity net gain, which would be 20% minimum but up to 100%,

Conditions and s106 Agreement

- 8.150 The contents of the conditions and the s106 Agreement ensure that the scheme is acceptable and complies with the development plan. There are no areas of disagreement on those matters as between the Council and the Applicant.

Applicant's case: conclusions

- 8.151 NPPF paragraph 125(c) is engaged and the harm caused by the scheme would not be substantial. It is therefore agreed that permission should be granted in accordance with Government policy. There is no other identified harm in relation to townscape, heritage, or outlook that would be such as to prevent (either individually or cumulatively) permission being granted.
- 8.152 With the condition on daylight, sunlight and overshadowing in place, the parties agree that there is no objection to the grant of permission. On that basis the parties agree that the scheme complies with the development plan and the NPPF.
- 8.153 Even without that condition, the Applicant considers that the evidence is very clear that permission should be granted. The objection to the parameter plan version of the scheme is weak because it is based on a very difficult proposition: that an urban previously developed site recognised as a key opportunity to optimise a sustainable site for uses which would inevitably have the effect of reducing daylight levels below BRE default guidance to some extent should be judged by reference largely to the default 27% VSC, as if it was a suburban site where only other suburban housing was appropriate. To find that only 27% VSC or something very close to it is acceptable on sites in Cambridge would be wrong, as well as sending a dubious message to policy makers and decision takers in this critical place.
- 8.154 The parameter plan scheme would have an acceptable effect on residential amenity, bearing in mind the context. The scheme as a whole has been designed and amended with great care and significant engagement with local stakeholders and would create a wonderful new piece of Cambridge. It would (including in its parameter plan form) comply with the adopted plan and the NPPF and would represent another tangible step toward the growth in Cambridge that the Government wishes to see.
- 8.155 For these reasons, subject to the conditions and section 106 obligation, the Applicant asks for the application to be approved.

9. THE CASE FOR CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL

- 9.1 The principle of developing this site is accepted. There would be no unacceptable highways impacts. Notwithstanding some disagreements over the extent of the heritage, townscape and visual harm which will be caused by the development, it has always been agreed that these harms in and of themselves would be outweighed by the scheme's benefits.

Council's case: daylight, sunlight, overshadowing, outlook

- 9.2 Had the Secretary of State not called in this application shortly before the planning committee meeting that was set to determine it, the Council was minded to refuse it for the single putative reason for refusal recorded in the committee minutes¹⁵⁶ concerning the impacts of the proposals on the amenity of those existing residential properties which surround the appeal site, primarily in terms of daylight, sunlight and overshadowing but also from overbearing and visual enclosure giving rise to an oppressively enclosed outlook.
- 9.3 The Committee's deliberations and the Council's case in preparing for the Inquiry focused on the scheme as implied by the suite of parameter plans which would, if outline permission were granted, secure the acceptable maximum parameters for the development.¹⁵⁷ The impacts of any proposed development must be assessed on the basis of the worst-case scenario, as represented by the application plans before the Inquiry. As this is an outline application, the worst-case scenario is that represented by the maximum parameters scheme. The local planning authority has maintained in its evidence that the worst-case scenario would give rise to unacceptable neighbouring amenity impacts.
- 9.4 Alongside the application, illustrative material, in the form of a masterplan, cross sections, views from neighbouring property gardens, and technical visualisations, were submitted to show one possible way in which reserved matters could come forward. This Illustrative Scheme is summarised in section 4 of Topic Paper 1 on Design, Scale and Massing.¹⁵⁸ Crucially, however, none of this material was proposed to be approved as part of any planning permission. The Council therefore took (and retains) the view that the Illustrative Scheme, while helpful and relevant, was (and is) not a proper basis upon which to judge the effects of the development on the amenity of neighbouring occupiers.

¹⁵⁶ CD3.04 p8

¹⁵⁷ CD2.16-2.20

¹⁵⁸ CD6.16

- 9.5 Now the position has changed. In response to the Inspector's steer¹⁵⁹ on the opening day of the Inquiry, the Council and the Applicant revisited discussions about the potential for a condition securing the limitation of the daylight, sunlight and overshadowing effects of the scheme to those implied by the Illustrative Scheme, to overcome the bulk of the Council's concerns and lead to a joint recommendation from the parties in favour of the grant of permission.
- 9.6 The Council had commissioned independent consultants at the time it was considering the application to review the submitted Daylight and Sunlight Report and addendum and this identified that the Illustrative Scheme was generally more favourable than the parameter plans. At the time the Council was not sufficiently confident that the effects of the Illustrative Scheme would be acceptable, but modelling later provided by the Applicant has provided that confidence.
- 9.7 The parties agree that the daylight, sunlight and overshadowing effects of the Illustrative Scheme as set out in CD7.09 would be materially less than a scheme built out to the maximum parameters shown on the parameter plans; and that the residual daylight, sunlight and overshadowing harm from the Illustrative Scheme would be acceptable in planning terms. This is something which can be included in a condition.
- 9.8 The Council's planning witness explained that he had always considered the scheme to be relatively finely balanced and, with the reduction of the daylight, sunlight and overshadowing harm to the levels experienced under the Illustrative Scheme, that fine balance is now tilted in favour of permission being granted. That is not to say that all of the harms of the scheme have disappeared; merely that the imposition of a condition is capable of ensuring that they can be limited to a level which is such that it does not outweigh the benefits.
- 9.9 The effect of the proposed condition would be that that any reserved matters application would need to be accompanied by a Daylight and Sunlight Report demonstrating, on a window-by-window, room-by-room, or receptor-by-receptor basis, that no individual VSC, NSL, APSH, winter sunlight hours or BRE 2-hour sunlight test (on 21 March) measurement would be any worse than the comparable effect as modelled in respect of the Illustrative Scheme. Overall, it would secure that none of the effects of the final scheme could be worse for any neighbouring resident than the effects of the Illustrative Scheme, which the Council finds to be acceptable overall. It would not require the delivery of the Illustrative Scheme per se: it would simply secure that any scheme that is delivered would be no worse than the Illustrative Scheme.
- 9.10 On the basis that the condition is agreed between the parties, the main parties to the Inquiry agree that the planning balance points to a grant of permission. For that reason, it was agreed that cross-examination and ventilation of the various

¹⁵⁹ Inspector's note: this is the Council's word, but it was not a steer as such: it was a set of questions as to whether the committee had considered the Illustrative Scheme and whether the condition referred to was, or was not, being put forward.

differences in the journey to that destination were not a good use of inquiry time and did not require adjudication.

- 9.11 The Council considers that Local Plan policies 55 and 56, which require among other things that the siting and massing of development should respond positively to and integrate with its context, are relevant to the amenity of neighbouring residents. Equally it considers Policy 60, which takes in the daylight and sunlight effects of tall buildings, is relevant. These policies are in conformity with paragraph 135(f) of the National Planning Policy Framework. The consideration of neighbouring residential amenity is a vital part of achieving well designed developments which integrate with and respond positively to their setting. Even a scheme which is well designed in its own terms must still respond appropriately to its context and not have unacceptable effects on neighbouring residents. The re-use of brownfield land does not give carte blanche to justify any level of harm.
- 9.12 The Council's planning witness accepted that the proposed limiting of the daylight, sunlight and overshadowing harm to that implied by the Illustrative Scheme, by way of the proposed condition, meant that his assessment of the overall harm dipped below the level of 'substantial' for the purposes of NPPF paragraph 125(c), supporting his conclusion that permission should, on the basis of that condition, be granted.
- 9.13 The Applicant has repeatedly sought to suggest that even without the condition, the functional worst-case scenario on neighbouring properties is represented not by the maximum parameter plans, but by the Illustrative Scheme. The Council does not accept that. While it may well be that a scheme like the Illustrative Scheme is likely to come forward, the Applicant seeks outline approval for the maximum parameters set out in the parameter plans.
- 9.14 The parameter plans could lead to greater impacts on residential amenity than the Illustrative Scheme. For example, while the parameter plans show a spatial arrangement that incorporates fixed minimum distances between new buildings, there are no comparable minimum distances between new buildings and neighbouring properties. Thus a scheme could come forward within the confines of parameter plan CD2.18 which could concentrate built development towards the outer edges of plots 8 and 9, next to sensitive residential boundaries, while increasing the space between buildings in the interior of the site. Likewise, built development on plot 10 could extend the full width of the northern edge of the envelope adjacent to Silverwood Close. Such an arrangement of buildings could maintain overall compliance with the plot coverage percentages and minimum interior building separation distances secured by the parameter plan, but it would lead to greater impacts on residential amenity than the Illustrative Scheme.
- 9.15 The Applicant's reliance upon the Design Codes in this regard is a red herring because the Design Codes do not secure the dimensions of the illustrative scheme or require development to come forward on a footprint which is any smaller than the maximum parameters secured by the parameter plans.
- 9.16 The Illustrative Scheme represents an overall 2.7% reduction in the footprint area for Plots 2–10 relative to the maximum plot coverage that would be permissible for each plot under the maximum parameters, when accounting for the

requirements of the Maximum Building Heights and Plots parameter plan.¹⁶⁰ The differences between the parameter plans and the Illustrative Scheme are clearly visible in Appendix A of the Applicant's masterplanning witness's proof.¹⁶¹

- 9.17 The Council therefore maintains that imposition of the condition is necessary. It is agreed its effects are less than those modelled for the parameter plans.
- 9.18 The BRE guidance is of general application and is not in any way limited to suburban or non-urban situations. If the reduction in VSC is greater than 20% and the residual VSC less than 27%, occupants of the building will notice the reduction in the amount of skylight. The area lit by the window is likely to appear gloomier and electric lighting will be needed more of the time. If the reduction in daylight distribution is more than 20%, this will be noticeable to the occupants, and more of the room will appear poorly lit.¹⁶²
- 9.19 The improved effects of the Illustrative Scheme are clear from the Applicant's Daylight Sunlight and Overshadowing proof of evidence.¹⁶³
- Table 2 on p.32 shows that under the parameter plans, 9 properties on St Matthews Gardens were found not to experience any deviations from the BRE targets, whereas under the Illustrative Scheme that increased to 11;
 - For 167 St Matthews Gardens, the retained VSC in the kitchen under the Illustrative Scheme increases from 19.8% to 24.2%, with the NSL impact reducing from 'major' to 'minor', a completely different proposition for the resident of that property – see Table 5 on p5. It is worth noting that under the parameters scheme this property would experience effects below even Mr. Lonergan's alternative targets for VSC,; 14.1% retained VSC in the 1st floor bedroom (down from 30.5% presently).
 - For 177-201 St Matthew's Gardens, the NSL impacts change considerably: 3 major impacts become minor under the Illustrative Scheme, one reduces to moderate, and two moderate impacts become negligible (i.e. compliant) – see Table 8 on pp.37-38.
 - The sunlight issues are removed altogether for 177 St Matthew's Gardens under the Illustrative Scheme: Table 17, p.59.
 - For Silverwood Close, the number of properties suffering no effects beyond the BRE guidelines increases from 20 to 28 under the Illustrative Scheme (paragraph 12.1.7).

¹⁶⁰ CD2.18

¹⁶¹ CD7.13A

¹⁶² CD8.01, paragraphs 2.2.7, 2.2.11

¹⁶³ CD7.08

- The worst affected properties in Silverwood Close all experience a lessening of overall effects under the Illustrative Scheme: Tables 11-13 on pp.45-49.
 - The effects on the properties in Sleaford Street are all materially reduced under the Illustrative Scheme: (paragraph 13.1.11).
 - The effects on properties in Hampden Gardens are fully resolved under the Illustrative Scheme: proof at 13.1.24
- 9.20 The Council's position is that the difference between the parameter plans and the Illustrative Scheme amounts to a material and significant differential effect: a lessening of the harm. It is why the condition is necessary and is a game-changer for the planning balance.
- 9.21 There has been some discussion about alternative targets to those in the BRE Guidance. The danger about alternative targets is that the effects on real people can get lost. The residential streets near the site have a suburban character characterised by low rise properties with very good levels of existing daylight and sunlight. The Council's daylight and sunlight witness has pointed out that the majority of VSC values for St Matthew's Gardens and Silverwood Close are over 30% for ground floor rooms, while for daylight distribution, rooms typically have over 90% of the room area at working plane able to receive direct sky light. The Applicant's focus on, for example, inherently constrained VSC values for lower ground floor windows on St Matthew's Gardens, and certain other windows with inherent sensitivities, such as those on rear extensions to properties on York Street and Silverwood Close, obfuscates the generally well-lit character of most existing properties adjacent to the site.
- 9.22 The Applicant's daylight and sunlight witness suggests that retained VSC targets of 18% for living rooms and 16% for bedrooms would be appropriate, with scant justification for the choice of figures. Overall, the Applicant has failed to provide any compelling evidence to support the adoption of alternative targets below BRE guidelines. Even if alternative targets were adopted, the practical effects of the scheme remain the same. An alternative approach referred to by the Council's daylight and sunlight witness is the mirroring approach, the theoretical placement on the site of buildings which match the scale and massing of the surrounding properties – not as a potential alternative option but to provide a baseline for what fair and equitable daylight and sunlight levels might look like.¹⁶⁴ This shows that a contextual approach would suggest that 27% should be an appropriate target for retained VSC for most properties and 20% for 177-201 St Matthew's Gardens.
- 9.23 The BRE Guidance refers to alternative target values being appropriate in some cases where they are justified by special circumstances in respect of the development or its location. For example, "in a historic city centre, or in an area with modern high-rise buildings, a higher degree of obstruction may be unavoidable if new developments are to match the height and proportions of

¹⁶⁴ CD7.01 p20-23

existing buildings”. Those circumstances do not apply here, and there is no other justification for applying alternative targets. Overall the neighbouring properties enjoy very good levels of daylight and sunlight, and where constraints do exist, it becomes more important to maintain light. Moreover, the existing buildings on the Beehive site are relatively low rise; this is not a location with a prevalence of historic or high rise buildings which would require a different approach. The site is in a small city and the Applicant’s examples of locations in Lambeth and Tower Hamlets are not comparable to the present circumstances.

- 9.24 The local comparators mentioned by the Applicant were not similar.¹⁶⁵ For example, at 137 and 143 Histon Road¹⁶⁶ and at the Grafton Centre¹⁶⁷ only a small minority of windows failed to meet the BRE guidance and at Pembroke College¹⁶⁸ the development was in the historic core.
- 9.25 The policy support found in paragraph 125(c) of the NPPF for the reuse of suitable brownfield land, and in paragraph 129 for planning decisions which make efficient use of land, are not an automatic justification for accepting a high quantum of harm where new development does not match scale of surrounding development (Rainbird at §97)¹⁶⁹. As paragraph 006 of the NPPG on “Effective use of land”¹⁷⁰ explains, even when planning for higher density development it is still necessary to consider whether the proposed development would have an unreasonable impact on the daylight and sunlight levels enjoyed by neighbouring occupiers.
- 9.26 The fact that the site will inevitably be subject to densification and additional height in order to optimise its re-use, does not make these daylight, sunlight and overshadowing effects ‘inevitable’ – these effects are hugely sensitive to relatively modest setbacks as can be seen in the differences between the parameters and the Illustrative Scheme here. The site is deep and large, with a non-sensitive railway line to its eastern edge. It is only the ‘edge conditions’ to the residential neighbours which are really in play here.
- 9.27 To conclude on daylight and sunlight, the maximum parameters development would result in noticeable, significant, and unjustified reductions in daylight to habitable rooms, making them feel gloomier, darker, and more poorly lit, and in some cases, leaving gardens feeling less inviting and less enjoyable. These

¹⁶⁵ CD10.01 to CD10.20

¹⁶⁶ CD10.10

¹⁶⁷ CD10.11

¹⁶⁸ CD10.06

¹⁶⁹ CD7.01 p11, CD7.02 paragraphs 3.11-3.15

¹⁷⁰ CD9.43

losses would be evident and materially detrimental to the day-to-day living conditions of affected residents.

- 9.28 The Illustrative Scheme would be significantly less harmful. While some retained VSC and NSL figures would still fall below BRE target values and indeed below the contextual values identified by the Council's daylight and sunlight witness, and while a small number of properties would still experience major adverse effects, especially 36 Silverwood Close, the effects on most of the properties identified by the Council's witness as experiencing major adverse effects under the maximum parameters scheme would be materially reduced under the Illustrative Scheme. The residual effects of the Illustrative Scheme would no longer be unacceptable overall or justify withholding permission.
- 9.29 In respect of visual enclosure and outlook, the Council's planning witness considered there to be harm from the parameter plans to nos. 167 to 175 (odd), 185, 189, 191, 195, 197, 201, and 203 to 209 (odd) St Matthew's Gardens; nos. 34 to 45 (inclusive odd and even) and 49 to 58 Silverwood Close and 138 to 150 (even) Sleaford Street.¹⁷¹ The outlook effects of the maximum parameters scheme on these properties would introduce an oppressive sense of visual enclosure to these neighbouring properties. This forms part of the overall harm to residential amenity which should carry substantial weight.
- 9.30 However, the proposed condition limiting the daylight, sunlight and overshadowing effects to those of the illustrative scheme would also have a positive effect on visual enclosure.
- 9.31 Indeed, while the condition would not secure the specific dimensions of the Illustrative Scheme per se, a sense of how it might serve to reduce visual enclosure impacts can be gained by looking at the images in Appendix A to the Applicant's masterplanning proof of evidence,¹⁷² showing the modelled Illustrative Scheme dimensions with the dotted line of the maximum parameters scheme overlaid.

Council's case: other matters

- 9.32 It has always been accepted by the Council that the other harms identified as arising from the development, namely in terms of townscape and visual impact and heritage, were not sufficient to form the basis for a reason for refusal in their own right, although they need to be weighed in the planning balance.
- 9.33 There was some concern that these impacts had been assessed by the Applicant on the basis of the Illustrative Scheme rather than the maximum parameters. The condition on daylight, sunlight and overshadowing should go some way towards ensuring that the townscape, visual impact and heritage impacts of the scheme

¹⁷¹ CD7.02 paragraph 4.83

¹⁷² CD7.13A

would be close to those assessed in the Applicant's Environmental Statement Addendum.

- 9.34 On townscape and visual impact, there is a difference between the parties, with the Council concluding following a peer review¹⁷³ that there would be a low level of residual harm in townscape and visual impact terms, while the Applicant considers the effects of the scheme to be negligible or neutral with some receptors experiencing beneficial effects. Specifically, the Council's peer reviewer found moderate adverse effects on the setting of public rights of way on views from Coldham's Common and York Street because the scheme would be more overbearing than the current low rise structures which are largely surrounded by trees. The Council considers that this should have slight weight in the planning balance.
- 9.35 As regards heritage, it is agreed between the parties both that the application would cause less than substantial harm to a number of heritage assets by virtue of its impact on their settings, and that this harm would be outweighed by the public benefits of the scheme for the purposes of the heritage balancing exercise required by paragraph 212 of the NPPF. Topic Paper 2¹⁷⁴ provides an overview of the heritage assets in the immediate and wider context of the site. The Council's peer review¹⁷⁵ of the Heritage Impact Assessment identified less than substantial harm to four more heritage assets than those referred to by the Applicant – Kite Conservation Area, West Cambridge Conservation Area Custodian's House and Great St Mary's Church, and found slightly greater levels of harm than the Applicant to a range of heritage assets. Overall the peer review considered that there would be a moderate level of less than substantial harm, compared with the Applicant's view that it would be negligible. Heritage harm must be given considerable importance and weight in the planning balance.

Benefits

- 9.36 Most of the benefits claimed by the Applicant are uncontroversial. The Council's planning witness gave significant weight to benefits from boosting employment and the economy, great weight to the cluster effect of supporting additional lab and office space near other centres of innovation, moderate weight to a range of social benefits, substantial weight to the re-use of previously developed land, significant weight to the site's sustainable location and transport options and its sustainable design, and moderate weight to biodiversity net gain.¹⁷⁶ The Council has some reservations concerning how fully the benefits of the employment and skills strategy and scale-up space strategy would be realised in the operational

¹⁷³ CD7.04

¹⁷⁴ CD6.17

¹⁷⁵ CD7.04 Appendix 2

¹⁷⁶ CD7.02 paragraphs 5.9-5.50

phase as these are based on encouragement and the use of reasonable endeavours. Care should also be taken not to double count the benefits, which overlap, or to ignore counter-effects: for example in respect of increased business rates there would be a corresponding increase in the call on services.

- 9.37 It is also the case that data from Bidwells' own February 2025 Cambridge Offices and Labs Arc Market Databook¹⁷⁷ indicates that the situation in terms of office and lab space supply and demand in Cambridge has actually improved over the past year. This does not materially affect the Council's assessment of planning balance, but it is a factor to consider.

Planning balance

- 9.38 Paragraph 125(c) of the NPPF provides that substantial weight must be given to the re-use of previously developed land to meet an identified need, which applies here. There is also a range of other benefits as described above.
- 9.39 The Council takes the view that the daylight, sunlight and overshadowing and outlook effects of the parameter plans together with the other harms identified would amount to substantial harm which would justify the refusal of planning permission notwithstanding the identification of the benefits.
- 9.40 However, the securing of reduced impacts through the use of the daylight, sunlight and overshadowing condition would lessen the harm to residential living conditions and the planning balance shifts towards the grant of planning permission. Subject to that condition, the Council recommends that planning permission should be granted.

10. THE CASES FOR INTERESTED PARTIES APPEARING AT THE INQUIRY¹⁷⁸

The case for Sarah Nicholas, on behalf of Cambridge Past, Present and Future¹⁷⁹

- 10.1 The evidence about the need for the office space is questioned. The Greater Cambridge Growth Study states that the supply of office space is healthy.¹⁸⁰ In addition, large amounts of dry lab space have planning permission and are due to be delivered. There will be an oversupply for the period up to 2041 on the Council's own evidence. This kind of speculative development is likely to give rise

¹⁷⁷ CD9.40

¹⁷⁸ Interested persons appeared at the Inquiry on Day 1, before the Applicant and the Council had come to an agreed position on the proposed condition relating to daylight, sunlight and overshadowing.

¹⁷⁹ See IQ1.06 for a written version of Ms Nicholas's representation to the Inquiry

¹⁸⁰ CD9.20 paragraphs 8.8-8.26

to vacant plots and empty buildings. It will fuel the need for more greenfield housing and encourage in-commuting. An element of residential development should therefore be provided on the site. The site is well located for such development as part of a mixed use scheme.

- 10.2 The scale of the proposed development is inappropriate. From a distance the buildings will create the effect of a large, amalgamated block, especially in conjunction with the Grafton Centre. The scheme would be prominent from Castle Hill Mound, Redmeadow Hill, Lime Tree Hill and Lime Kiln Road. It would have a direct visual relationship with the historic city core, detracting from views of King's College Chapel and the University. It would appear overpowering when seen from Coldhams Common.
- 10.3 The scheme is therefore out of scale and there is no demonstrable need for it. Future development here should take place through a plan-led system

The case for Mr Ball on behalf of the Better Beehive Group¹⁸¹

- 10.4 The Group fully understands the need to accommodate Cambridge's growth and the wealth it generates. However, there could be a better outcome for the site, one that would provide greater benefits to the local population than that provided by the application scheme. If the scale of the scheme could be reduced, the proposal would be acceptable.
- 10.5 There is a disproportionate difference between the scale of the scheme and the surrounding housing. The scheme would create overshadowing and would be overbearing. For example, Plot 10 would cast a large shadow over Silverwood Close, whilst Plot 6 would be very close to the Sleaford Street properties. The BRE guidance is not met. The assessment of the impact on residential amenity has not been adequate. The final design could be based on the maximum parameter scheme: it would be a mistake to grant outline planning permission that could give the Applicant the opportunity to build to the maximum.
- 10.6 The scheme would also harm the historic skyline and the panorama of the city. It would appear as a large cluster of boxy buildings seen adjacent to King's College Chapel and St Mary the Great. Together with the Grafton Centre it would appear too dominant.
- 10.7 The development would draw in more skilled workers and pull in more traffic. There are also concerns about its effect on water consumption. Future non-household growth will have to be water neutral. The scheme could also exacerbate the urban heat island effect, and although the best way to deal with

¹⁸¹ See IQ1.10 for a written version of Mr Ball's statement to the Inquiry. See also IQ1.08, the Better Beehive Group's written representation to the Council dated 28 October 2024, and IQ1.09, the Better Beehive Group's supplementary comment to the Council of 13 January 2025. These latter two documents are referred to again in the section below on written representations submitted to the Council.

this would be through planting large species trees, there would not be enough space in the scheme to provide them.

- 10.8 The site has not been identified in the current or emerging Local Plan as a potential site for office, information and communications technology or laboratory use. The proposals would establish a speculative, high-density employment site in a suburban and Conservation Area setting, isolated from any other research facility and with poor transport links
- 10.9 An alternative scheme should be brought forward that would have a greater mixture of uses, including housing, and its scale should fit in with its surroundings.

The case for Martin Lucas-Smith (resident living adjacent to the site)¹⁸²

- 10.10 There is no love for the existing use and the quality of the development that is now on the site is poor.
- 10.11 However, the proposed scheme is too massive with dominant buildings facing into private bedrooms and bathrooms.
- 10.12 The scheme is also too biased towards providing large amounts of employment space when it should be balanced with housing. The creation of 6,000 jobs would give rise to a greater need for housing in a situation where there is already a shortage of housing.
- 10.13 The site seems an unlikely place for science-related development. It does not benefit from any cluster or agglomeration effect. It would be better to accommodate such development in a science park to the north of the city.
- 10.14 The loss of the local shops would be disadvantageous; they are heavily used. Care would need to be taken to move the shops to the Cambridge Retail Park given the level of demand for them. The loss of the swimming facility would be unfortunate because there is a shortage in the city. A gym with a swimming pool should be required by condition.
- 10.15 As regards the cycling and walking routes, much is good about the scheme, but the pedestrian/cycle path needs to be 4-5m wide because it is heavily used.

The case for Cllr Richard Robertson

- 10.16 The application is in outline, and too much is reserved for future consideration. The Design Code might not be enough to achieve the necessary design quality. A great many people walk or cycle through the streets south of the site and the scheme would be very noticeable. The flues would be too high, given the site's proximity to residential property. The scheme should have accommodated a swimming pool.

¹⁸² See IQ1.05 for a written version of Mr Lucas-Smith's representation to the Inquiry

The case for Mark Rison (local resident)¹⁸³

- 10.17 Coldhams Lane in Romsey and the adjacent network experience a lot of congestion and pollution and are hostile to active travel. The proposed development could therefore be beneficial in encouraging active travel, but it would depend on how it was implemented.
- 10.18 Residents in Coldhams Lane in Romsey would like to request management plans for the construction traffic route, with explicit restrictions on Coldhams Lane and a clear enforcement mechanism; and for the operational stage, which should explicitly prohibit the use of Coldhams Lane for delivery and servicing traffic. There should be stronger measures than “travel plans” to discourage the use of Coldhams Lane Romsey for car access to the site, and there needs to be a parking management plan which would only allow bona fide employees and blue badge holders on the site. There should be a guarantee of funding towards the introduction of controlled parking zones if needed.

The case for Nicholas Richardson (local resident)

- 10.19 The scheme would be unattractive when seen from Castle Mound.
- 10.20 The scheme would not do anything for the people of Cambridge. The existing shops are very useful. If they are removed, it will be necessary to drive to other retail parks and out of town shopping facilities, putting extra traffic on already over-subscribed roads.
- 10.21 The future of the site needs to be considered against a wider understanding and modelling of the city.

The case for Cllr Katie Porrer (a member of the Planning Committee that considered the application)¹⁸⁴

- 10.22 The Planning Committee did not object to the change of use. There is a clear demand for science-based development in Cambridge and the benefits are recognised and welcomed.
- 10.23 The scheme that was considered by the Committee was the parameter plan scheme, not the Illustrative Scheme. The parameter plan scheme would have major adverse effects on neighbouring residential properties. As things stand, the development could proceed on the basis of the maximum parameters which would cause harm to many neighbouring properties. It would be possible to bring the scheme into line with the BRE Guidance, but not as presented. The proposal should therefore come back in a revised form.

¹⁸³ See IQ1.12 for a written version of Mr Rison’s representation to the Inquiry

¹⁸⁴ See IQ1.11 for a written version of Cllr Porrer’s representation to the Inquiry

The case for Cllr Naomi Bennett (Abbey Ward)

- 10.24 There is much to praise about the scheme and the way in which it has been brought forward in consultation with the Council. The roads in this area are congested, not everyone wants to use a bicycle, and bus journeys to Cambridge Station and Cambridge North Station can be very slow. The Applicant listened to the Council's concerns about traffic and a great deal of traffic and drainage modelling has been carried out.
- 10.25 There is also cautious optimism about the quality of the development and the spaces it would create. But there is concern about loss of daylight and privacy and a great many people have responded to the application proposals, including people for whom English is not their first language.
- 10.26 It is important to consider the distribution of growth and employment. Cambridge is an unequal city with pockets of local deprivation, unemployment, low levels of educational achievement, low incomes and poor health outcomes. Some major employers are relocating or shedding staff. People currently working in the Beehive Centre are worried about losing their jobs.
- 10.27 The scheme offers a lot of promises for a genuinely inclusive workspace. It is recognised that the Applicant has plans to encourage local access to jobs. Neurodiverse people are valuable in IT and research. The provision of entry level and intermediate level jobs in the scheme is important.
- 10.28 However, not all the jobs in the scheme will be taken by local residents. Many of the new employees will require housing, putting pressure not only on the need for new homes, but also on transport infrastructure and medical services. The scheme will also have effects on water and sewerage.
- 10.29 For these reasons, the scheme would bring both benefits and threats. High tech schemes like this should come forward as part of a bigger plan.

11. WRITTEN REPRESENTATIONS

In favour

Form the Future CIC:

- 11.1 The proposed redevelopment of the Beehive Centre into a state-of-the-art science park in central Cambridge is strongly supported. The project has the potential to provide transformational benefits for the city and its residents, particularly in addressing critical issues related to employment, inequality, and access to opportunity.
- 11.2 Cambridge is one of the most unequal cities in the UK, with a growing divide between wealth and opportunity. This project offers a unique chance to bridge that gap by creating sustainable, high-quality employment opportunities for residents across all levels of skill and experience. Through our ongoing work with young people in the community, we are acutely aware of the challenges many face in accessing stable and rewarding careers, especially in science,

technology, education and mathematics related industries. This science park has the potential to change that.

- 11.3 The science park will provide a wide range of job opportunities, from entry-level roles to highly specialised positions in science, technology, and innovation. Crucially, the project aligns with our mission to support young people with careers advice and employment preparation. By working with local schools, colleges, and other stakeholders, we aim to ensure that residents, especially those from underrepresented backgrounds, have clear pathways to careers in science, technology, education and mathematics and other growth sectors.
- 11.4 Through collaboration with the developers, we have secured a shared commitment to create a hub for learning and employment. This will include initiatives such as work experience and apprenticeships, mentoring programmes, skills workshops, and outreach events designed to connect local people with opportunities within the science park. This project is not just about building new facilities; it is about building futures.
- 11.5 We understand that many residents currently value the convenience of access to retail services at the shopping centre. For some, there may be concerns about how a science park would fit into their daily lives. We understand that retail services will not disappear but instead be relocated nearby, ensuring that shopping convenience is maintained.
- 11.6 Additionally, we believe that a well-planned science park can offer new amenities and benefits for residents. Modern science parks are no longer isolated corporate campuses; they are vibrant, multi-use spaces designed to serve both businesses and the surrounding community. Through public engagement, we will work with the developers to ensure that local residents feel connected to and can benefit from these new facilities, whether through learning opportunities, access to events, or the creation of shared spaces.
- 11.7 This project represents a significant opportunity to address Cambridge's growing inequality. By investing in skills development, offering accessible career pathways, and integrating community needs into the science park's design, we can begin to close the wealth gap and promote greater social mobility. Our organisation is fully committed to playing an active role in these efforts.
- 11.8 The redevelopment of the Beehive Centre is a vital step toward creating a more inclusive, prosperous, and equitable future for all residents of Cambridge.

Opposed

Farrer & Co on behalf of Porcelanosa:

- 11.9 The Porcelanosa building was constructed in 2002 and was designed by international award winning architects Benoy. Situated to the northwest of the site, it is a unique and imposing building with a distinctive architectural style. It is an exception to the norm of commonplace retail buildings. Glulam timber beams allow a curved form, and the roof, which follows the curve of the beams, is patinated copper.

- 11.10 The Porcelanosa building makes a significant contribution to its setting, and as such it complies with the relevant policies of the Local Plan, in that it is development that responds positively to its context (Policy 55) and creates a 'successful place' using design that is attractive and high quality (Policy 56). It also complies with Local Plan policies relating to sustainable development (Policy 1), carbon reduction and sustainable design (Policy 28) and designing high quality new buildings (Policy 57).
- 11.11 None of the existing planning policies refer to the Beehive Centre as an area for demolition and redevelopment. Granting planning permission would result in the demolition of a superbly constructed and relatively new, design focused and sustainable development. Demolition would be contrary to the objectives in Chapter 12 of the NPPF for achieving well-designed places. The Applicant and the Council have failed to take account of a material consideration, in failing to address the design concerns arising from the demolition of the building.
- 11.12 The Porcelanosa building is separated from the remainder of the Beehive Centre by the roundabout and is a distinct 'unit' in terms of architectural style, access (direct from the roundabout) and parking (which it does not share with other units in the Beehive Centre). It can thus be considered adjacent to the Beehive Centre, rather than a part of it. The retention of the Porcelanosa building would lead to a better planning outcome, in protecting an iconic building that has been recently constructed, sustainably designed, and makes a significant contribution to the built environment of the local area.

Individual written objections

- 11.13 The new buildings would loom over neighbouring streets and would block light from properties and gardens. At the scale and height proposed they would cause a significant loss of daylight and sunlight currently received into habitable rooms including dining room/kitchen, home office, conservatory, and bedrooms. Sky views from these would be lost. There would also be significant loss of sun from homes and gardens. Proper access to daylight and sunlight is vital to the mental and physical health of the community. The effects of the scheme could include stress, anxiety, and other health issues. Addressing these concerns requires thoughtful urban planning that considers the balance between development and the preservation of residential amenities to ensure the well-being of communities.
- 11.14 The office blocks are up to 35m tall (at least eight commercial storeys equivalent to at least ten residential storeys) with potential for an additional 10m for flues, and yet the surrounding area to the north and west is a neighbourhood of predominantly two and three storey homes, many covered by conservation area status. The purpose of the development is not appropriate in a quiet historic area. Its height and scale are disproportionate to the mostly two-storey residential buildings in the locality.
- 11.15 The Applicant has underplayed the severity of these issues. The visuals of the scheme and its relationship to the surrounding area are inadequate and it is unclear why the scheme has not been presented in a 3D model.

- 11.16 The scheme proposes a high density office and laboratory development, seen as being of national and European significance, in an inappropriate off-centre suburban location that is poorly served by public transport. It would employ over 6,000 people, yet it is remote from high quality regional scale public transport. It is simply the wrong location for this scale and intensity of development. A coherent growth structure is emerging in Cambridge around Cambridge station, Cambridge North station, Cambridge Science Park, the Biomedical Campus and Addenbrooke's Hospital, East West Rail and the expansion of Cambridge University into west Cambridge. The Beehive Centre scheme would be an unwelcome disruptor to this pattern, poorly located in relation to good quality public transport. Employment development of regional scale and significance should be located where there is frequent and convenient access by public transport from the wider region. The future of the site should be determined through the upcoming joint local plan.
- 11.17 For years, the Beehive Centre has acted as an important amenity for the local community, providing the goods and services that residents need to go about their day-to-day lives. People travel to the site from all across Cambridge, with many even coming from outside of the city to visit it. It is absolutely essential that key shops are kept. The Beehive is busy and well-loved for all its faults. The scheme would result in a lack of retail provision for local people.
- 11.18 The development would displace local businesses and cause significant local disruption. It would increase traffic and water supply problems and have an adverse effect on air quality. There are more suitable places for a development of this kind. There is already plenty of space for science and business to grow elsewhere in the city. While the development of the local economy and the Oxford-Cambridge corridor are supported, these larger goals should not be used to justify low quality planning that fails to strike an appropriate balance between broader development objectives and the welfare of the local community.

Representations made to the Council at the time it was considering the planning application¹⁸⁵

- 11.19 At the time of the officer's report to committee, 367 representations in total from interested parties and individuals had been made over the three different rounds of public consultation.
- 11.20 No objections were raised (subject in certain instances to suggested conditions) by Anglian Water, Active Travel England, Cambridge City Airport, Cambridge Fire and Rescue Service, the County Archaeological Team, County Highways, the Designing Out Crime Officer (Cambridge Constabulary), the Environment Agency, the Health and Safety Executive, Historic England, the Lead Local Flood Authority, the MoD Infrastructure Safeguarding Team, and Natural England. Cam

¹⁸⁵ See CD3.01 Section 8, pp17-37

Valley Forum submitted a neutral representation, expressing the need to avoid water pollution and control surface water through the imposition of conditions.

- 11.21 Abbey People supported the application, citing positive community engagement, the reduction in the number of car journeys and the promotion of active travel, the retention of key retailers, the proposed skills partnerships, improved public realm, the large increase in jobs, increased biodiversity, substantial improvements in the built environment, improved transport and economic benefits.
- 11.22 Adams Hendry on behalf of the East West Railway Company made a representation to the Council on 12 January 2025¹⁸⁶ and a further representation dated 30 June 2025.¹⁸⁷ These are considered later in this report in the section on conditions.
- 11.23 The Better Beehive Group submitted a extensive written representation to the Council, dated 28 October 2024, together with a supplementary representation dated 13 January 2025.¹⁸⁸ In summary, it stated that this is a speculative planning application for yet more high tech and research laboratory space which, by the Council's own evidence as set out in the Iceni report commissioned by Greater Cambridge Shared Planning, is not currently needed. Despite this being a revised scheme, the revised building blocks remain extremely substantial. The Group is particularly mindful of the effect of the combination of building height, mass, number of blocks, the unremitting boxy form and the closeness of the blocks to each other. The scale of development proposed is far too substantial for the surrounding area to accommodate comfortably. It would have an overwhelming effect on the Mill Road Conservation Area, and on neighbouring properties. This is demonstrated by the community visualisations in the Better Beehive representations.¹⁸⁹ The scheme would also have a harmful effect on Coldhams Common, the surrounding suburban area, the city skyline and important heritage assets. The scheme would set a precedent for other clusters of tall bulky developments in the vicinity. The site is currently poorly served by public transport connections. Concern is also expressed about the impacts on water scarcity, air quality, and the urban heat island effect. It would be far better that further developments of this type were brought forward as part of a plan-led approach.
- 11.24 Other objections were received from CamCycle, Cambridge Living Street, Cambridge Past, Present and Future, and Friends of St Matthew's Place, and from a number of individuals. Those who objected raised generally the same matters as the individual objectors at the Inquiry, which are set out above.

¹⁸⁶ CD11.11

¹⁸⁷ IQ1.16

¹⁸⁸ IQ1.08 and IQ1.09

¹⁸⁹ IQ1.08, Figures 1 and 2, p5 and IQ1.09 p2

12. CONDITIONS AND PLANNING OBLIGATION

Planning Conditions

- 12.1 In the event that the Secretary of State decides to grant planning permission, I recommend that the conditions set out in Annex D to this report should be attached to the permission.
- 12.2 With certain amendments, discussed below, these conditions broadly follow the final list of suggested conditions agreed between the Council and the Applicant dated 3 July 2025,¹⁹⁰ but I have re-ordered them, removed lengthy over-prescription and altered wording in the interests of clarity and in the light of guidance in paragraphs 56 and 57 of the NPPF and Planning Practice Guidance.
- 12.3 Conditions 1 and 2 control the framework for reserved matters applications. The scheme is in outline and given its size and the fact that it is a phased development, Condition 2 allows a period of 10 years for applications for reserved matters to be submitted. Condition 3 defines the approved drawings, which include the parameter plans and Design Code, Condition 4 the maximum floorspace and Condition 5 the phasing of the scheme. Conditions 1 to 5 are all necessary to control the parameters of the development.
- 12.4 Various conditions are necessary to protect the living conditions of neighbouring residents and the character of the area. These include Condition 6, which is the condition that was agreed by the parties on Day 2 of the Inquiry as a mechanism for limiting the daylight, sunlight and overshadowing effects of the scheme. It requires each reserved matters application to be accompanied by a daylight, sunlight and overshadowing report to establish the impacts on specific identified windows, rooms and gardens, and requires the daylight, sunlight and overshadowing effects to be no greater than those identified in the eb7 Appendices in respect of the Illustrative Scheme.
- 12.5 Other conditions necessary to protect the living conditions of neighbouring residents and the character of the area are Condition 7, which is a pre-commencement condition that establishes ground levels and floor levels; Condition 8, which requires the submission of a demolition and construction environmental management plan for each phase (which should include materials management, so the planning authority's separate condition on this subject is unnecessary); Condition 9, which limits the hours for demolition and construction and related deliveries; Conditions 10 and 11, which control noise generation; Condition 12, which is necessary to control light pollution; and Condition 13, which addresses fumes and odours from commercial premises.

¹⁹⁰ IQ1.17

- 12.6 Necessary controls over ground works and drainage are exercised by Condition 14, which seeks details of surface water drainage; Condition 15, which is designed to ensure that any site contamination is identified and appropriate remediation measures agreed in the interest of environmental and public safety in accordance with Local Plan policy 33; and Condition 16, which requires an archaeological investigation.
- 12.7 Conditions 17 to 20 address the need to submit details in respect of landscaping and biodiversity net gain.
- 12.8 Regarding sustainability, Conditions 21 and 22 require details to be submitted of energy and water use and rainwater and grey water management and re-cycling in the interests of reducing carbon dioxide emissions and addressing the serious water stress facing the area.
- 12.9 As regards necessary environmental controls, Condition 23 exercises control over back-up generators; and Condition 24 seeks details of on-site commercial waste storage, recycling and collection.
- 12.10 Vehicle management is important on this urban site and is addressed by Condition 25, which controls delivery, servicing and collection, Condition 26, which requires details of the management of car and bicycle parking for each phase and Condition 27 which requires facilities for electric vehicle charging.
- 12.11 Conditions 28 to 30 are necessary to safeguard external infrastructure operations and proposals. In respect of Cambridge Airport, Condition 28 requires the submission of a navigational aids impact assessment; Condition 29 requires a management plan to deal with potential bird hazards; and Condition 30 requires a glint and glare assessment.
- 12.12 Finally, Condition 31 concerns the need to safeguard land for East West Rail. Adams Hendry on behalf of the East West Railway Company made a representation to the Council on 12 January 2025¹⁹¹ and suggested a draft condition as follows:
- “Prior to the submission of any reserved matters, details of any development of land within the East West Rail safeguarded area should be agreed in writing with East West Railway Company. The agreed reserved matters details should be submitted for approval by the local planning authority and the development should be implemented in accordance with the approved details.”
- 12.13 East West Rail wrote further to the Council on 30 June 2025. It highlighted the potential for an interface between the applicant’s proposed development, and the draft Order Limits for the East West Rail project.¹⁹² It also stated that it may

¹⁹¹ CD11.11

¹⁹² IQ1.23

require access over the applicant's land in order to access railway land adjacent to the application site and wanted this put into a condition. This land is a triangle outside the safeguarding area behind Units 1 and 2.¹⁹³ East West Rail put forward draft wording (which had also been agreed with Network Rail) as follows:¹⁹⁴

"Vehicular and pedestrian access to Coldham's Lane road and cycle bridges over the Fen Line, via the Railway Bridges Access Zone (as shown on drawing number EWR/1708/RAZ/01/REVA), must be maintained at all times for the safe operation of the railway and the safe use of the bridges. Vehicular and pedestrian access to the Railway Working Area (as shown on drawing number EWR/1708/RAZ/01/REVA) via the land to the south of Coldham's Lane, must be maintained at all times to enable construction of East West Rail, the safe operation of the railway and the safe use of the Coldham's Lane cycle bridge. Condition XXX addresses safeguarded land for East West Rail."

- 12.14 At the Inquiry the Applicant objected to East West Rail's suggested condition, and the Council did not demur from the Applicant's position. The Applicant stated that the application scheme itself was designed not to impinge on the safeguarding area. East West Rail's suggested condition sought to secure access for a variety of purposes across the application site, which was not part of the safeguarding area, through to the Railway Working Area at the back, which was also not part of the safeguarding area. The Applicant considered that it was not appropriate for a condition to try to create a right to East West Rail to gain access across the Applicant's site to that land.
- 12.15 I consider that neither of East West Rail's suggested conditions are appropriate. The condition put forward on 12 January 2025 wrongly requires the Applicant to get agreement from a body other than the local planning authority in order to gain an approval under the planning acts. The condition put forward on 30 June 2025 wrongly attempts to use a planning condition to enable East West Rail to gain access across the Applicant's land. Planning conditions may require a developer to undertake actions which (among other things) are reasonable, relevant to planning and relevant to the development¹⁹⁵ but they are not a mechanism for addressing land ownership and access issues and the suggested condition is not relevant to planning or to the proposed development. In the Safeguarding Direction itself there is a requirement for exchange of information between the Secretary of State and East West Rail as part of a separate process.
- 12.16 Recommended Condition 31 therefore simply states that development within the East West Rail safeguarded area shall not prejudice the underlying objectives of

¹⁹³ This is shown hatched on Figure 1 of CD1.11 and in blue on the Railway Working Area Plan, IQ1.22.

¹⁹⁴ IQ1.16

¹⁹⁵ NPPF paragraph 55, PPG 21a-003-20190723

such safeguarding nor the safe operation of the railway nor the safe use by pedestrians and cyclists of the Coldhams Lane cycle bridge where it crosses the Fen Line railway. In my view this is sufficient to safeguard the interests of the East West Rail project whilst meeting the tests in the NPPF.

Agreement under s106

- 12.17 There is a completed s106 agreement dated 2 July 2025 between Cambridge City Council, Cambridgeshire County Council and Railway Pension Nominees Ltd¹⁹⁶ and a separate Community Infrastructure Levy Compliance Statement dated 30 June 2025.¹⁹⁷ The three signatories do not have a dissenting position on the contents of any part of the s106 agreement.
- 12.18 The s106 agreement contains the following schedules:
- Schedule 1 Employment & Skills Strategy
 - Schedule 2 Community Outreach Strategy
 - Schedule 3 Start-Up Space and Scale-Up Space Strategy
 - Schedule 4 Community Floorspace
 - Schedule 5 Public Realm & Public Realm Management Strategy
 - Schedule 6 Meanwhile Use Strategy
 - Schedule 7 Local Centre Strategy
 - Schedule 8 Biodiversity Net Gain
 - Schedule 9 Off-Site Leisure Contribution
 - Schedule 10 Travel Plan, Transport Contributions & Monitoring
 - Schedule 11 Public Art Strategy
- 12.19 Schedule 1 requires the owner to submit site wide employment and skills strategies for approval by the Council in order to secure relevant jobs during both the construction and operational phases of the development. The Council considers that this is supported by Local Plan Policies 2, 40 and 85 and the Draft Consultation Greater Cambridge Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document (Winter 2024) and would address the Council's planning objectives to strengthen and diversify job opportunities.
- 12.20 Schedule 2 requires the owner to provide a community outreach strategy which would aim to support a range of community and public programme events in

¹⁹⁶ CD7.25

¹⁹⁷ CD7.24

relation to the new public realm and community floorspace. It would build on the commitments to the local community which are identified in the Applicant's submitted Social Infrastructure Strategy.¹⁹⁸ The aim is to create a sustainable and inclusive development and the Council considers this to be an essential part of placemaking and in accordance with Local Plan policies 56 and 85.

- 12.21 Schedule 3 requires an start-up and scale-up strategy. The need for smaller lab and scale up spaces is identified in the Applicant's' market analysis.¹⁹⁹ The Council considers that this would be supported by Local Plan policies 2, 40 and 85.
- 12.22 Schedule 4 secures the provision of community floorspace in line with the Social Infrastructure Strategy which is seen by the parties and a key objective of good placemaking that would help to create sustainable and inclusive development.
- 12.23 Schedule 5 requires the delivery of "Hive Park", a new open space of about 7,000 square metres. This is a significant part of the total green infrastructure provision in the development and is an important part of the scheme's placemaking objectives. Schedule 5 also requires the owner to submit a public realm management strategy to the Council which would address future access, delivery, management and maintenance arrangements for the proposed public realm. The Council considers that this would accord with Local Plan policies 56, 59 and 85.
- 12.24 Schedule 6 requires the owner to submit a "meanwhile use strategy" which would identify how temporary uses could operate on the site during the construction phase in the interests of inclusion and sustainability. The Council considers this is supported by Local Plan policies 56, 59 and 85.
- 12.25 Schedule 7 requires the owner to submit a local centre strategy that identifies the location, size and mix of active ground floor (non lab or office) uses, and subsequently to submit a report on the centre's effectiveness. The aim is to ensure that an attractive and vibrant new local centre is created that meets the daily needs of on-site employees and local people, and complements other centres. The Council considers this to accord with Local Plan policies 40, 56, 73 and 85.
- 12.26 Schedule 8 requires the owner to make biodiversity net gain monitoring contributions to the Council for 30 years to enable the Council to recover the reasonable costs of monitoring and ensure the effective delivery and maintenance of on-site biodiversity.
- 12.27 Schedule 9 requires the owner to make a financial contribution towards the improvement of existing off-site leisure facilities at Abbey Sports Centre and Gym or Parkside Pools and Gym. This is considered necessary to address the loss of the existing on-site leisure facility. The Council considers that this approach is

¹⁹⁸ CD2.07

¹⁹⁹ CD2.28

supported by Local Plan policies 73 and 85. The parties to the s106 agreement do not consider that complete re-provision of the existing facility as sought by Policy 73 is justified given the proximity of other leisure facilities.

- 12.28 Schedule 10 contains a range of transport measures. These include financial contributions towards the delivery of new bus services. The Transport Assessment demonstrated that additional bus services would be necessary to ensure that its bus modal share targets could be achieved. The Applicant proposes a package of bus service improvements including those relating to Milton and Newmarket Park and Rides and bus services from St Neots, Huntingdon and St Ives to provide an additional 825 to 900 seats in the peak hour.
- 12.29 Schedule 10 also includes contributions to other facilities, notably to the Greater Cambridge cycle and pedestrian enhancement schemes of the Chisholm Trail, Eastern Access and Bottisham Greenway, and there are facilities for new bus stops where feasible (or alternative works) and a potential contribution towards a controlled parking zone. There would be a new crossing over Newmarket Road at its junction with Coldhams Lane. In addition, Schedule 10 requires the delivery of off-site improvement works in respect of the site accesses with Coldham's Lane Sleaford Street, York Street, St Matthew's Gardens, and the delivery of cycle routes with wayfaring signage. The requirements also cover the timing of detailed submissions and the phasing of delivery.
- 12.30 A monitor and manage scheme is required by Schedule 10 along with the establishment of a transport review group and a fund supported by contributions. This will enable modal split to be monitored and the fund will be allocated for mitigation schemes if the modal share targets are not met.
- 12.31 Schedule 10 also requires the submission and implementation of travel plan and an associated monitoring contribution in compliance with Local Plan Policies 5, 80, 81 and 85.
- 12.32 Schedule 11 requires the owner to submit a public art delivery plan for the identified public art zones together with a financial commitment toward delivering public art on-site and to manage and maintain such art, in order to create local distinctiveness and meet placemaking objectives. The Council consider that this approach is supported by Local Plan Policies 56, 59 and 85 as well as its Public Art Supplementary Planning Document.
- 12.33 There are also obligations on the City Council and the County Council in respect of the securing of monitoring fees.
- 12.34 In my view the contents of the s106 agreement are all necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms, directly related to the development and fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.

13. INSPECTOR'S CONCLUSIONS

This section takes each of the Secretary of State's identified matters in turn.

Matter a)

The extent to which the proposed development is consistent with Government policies for building a strong, competitive economy (NPPF Chapter 6)

- 13.1 Greater Cambridge is one of the UK's most vital economic assets. It is home to the largest life sciences cluster in Europe and contains world-class research institution and emerging sectors such as AI, genomics and semiconductor design. Life science and technology sectors are key priorities identified in the Government's 2024 Industrial Strategy. The Greater Cambridge economy generates over £50bn annually and represents Europe's fastest-growing technology sector. It is a net contributor to the Treasury of £1bn per annum and it also supports other enabling industries including manufacturing data storage and logistics. [7.5, 7.9, 8.44, 8.47-8.50]
- 13.2 There are challenges in the Cambridge region in achieving a balance between the needs of the life science and information and communications technology sectors and the availability of suitable deliverable sites. There is a significant level of demand for wet lab space and scale-up space that is not matched by current commitments, and the shortfall may remain until the end of the local plan period. Some have argued, with reference to the Iceni report, that there is less need for office and dry lab space. However, some of the theoretical supply may not be readily deliverable, only a small proportion is under construction and there is likely to be suppressed demand. Moreover, there is a trend in the life sciences sector towards demand for integrated place-based schemes such as the application proposal that encompass quality premises with amenities and public transport connectivity and a critical mass to create a community. The functionally interconnected nature of wet lab, dry lab and office space within these sectors suggests that it would not be helpful to place too much weight on the theoretical surplus supplies of the latter two which were identified by the Iceni report. As regards information and communications technology space, there is a focus on premium locations with good public transport, incubator and start up space and clustering. It is agreed between the main parties that high quality start-up space and scale-up space will remain in demand. [7.6-7.8, 8.26-8.36, 9.37, 10.1]
- 13.3 Against this background it is very important that adequate supply continues to meet the evolving requirements of the life sciences and information and communications technology sectors. The development would inject competition and provide new choices in the Cambridge market by adding an accessible, mixed-use research and development hub that aligns with the qualitative demand. This competition between locations keeps the market fluid, accelerates delivery and reduces the risk that foot-loose firms divert investment overseas. Accordingly, the quantitative targets including those in the Iceni analysis should be viewed not as caps but as reference points within a dynamic economy, where

a diversity of site, location and offer combinations is essential to satisfy demand and maximise job creation. [7.15, 8.27-8.41]

- 13.4 The scheme would represent a major investment in the city and the Cambridge region, providing a very large amount of additional employment floorspace on a brownfield site. Its mixture of offices, laboratories and local centre uses, and its range of floorplate sizes, would offer the flexibility to accommodate business and research tenants of all sizes, from start-ups and scale-ups to large global firms. The scheme would help to meet unmet need, would make a significant contribution to the Cambridge knowledge-based research and development cluster, and would reflect identified demand trends for the integrated place-based schemes described above. It would reinforce Cambridge's status as a globally significant innovation ecosystem, directly enhancing productivity through network effects and knowledge spillovers. It would secure investment and global talent that would otherwise be attracted to international competitors such as Boston and the Bay Area, fully supporting the government's ambition for growth in the Oxford–Cambridge innovation corridor. [4.2-4.3, 4.11-4.12, 8.5-8.6, 8.15, 8.40, 8.42]

The scheme would also provide greatly enhanced employment opportunities, creating an estimated 6,445 direct jobs comprising 905 entry level, 1,225 mid-skilled and 4,315 high skilled workers. This would be a very big increase over the Beehive Centre's existing 855 jobs (670 full time equivalent). The strategies for employment and skills, community outreach and start up and scale up, which are included in the s106 agreement, would also enhance local opportunities for employment and training. Overall, the development would deliver around 7,130 net additional jobs (6,480 full time equivalent) and would generate an estimated £660m annually in Gross Value Added compared with £60m from the Beehive Centre (£600m net). There would be significant additional returns in tax and business rates as well as an additional estimated £9.6m worker expenditure in the local economy. The scheme would also deliver significant social value. [7.10-7.15, 8.38-8.40, 8.43, 8.45, 8.147-8.148, 11.1-11.8, 12.18-12.22]

- 13.5 To conclude on this matter, the scheme would create enhanced provision for an internationally important cluster of knowledge and high technology industries. It would provide a flexible range of space including start up and scale up space in response to unmet needs and would address the qualitative trends for integrated well located accommodation. It would support economic growth in an area of high productivity and would provide a much higher level of employment including enhanced local employment and skills opportunities for local people. It would also deliver much improved social and community benefits. The proposed development would strongly support the objectives of Chapter 6 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Matter b)

The extent to which the proposed development is consistent with Government policies for ensuring the vitality of town centres (NPPF Chapter 7)

- 13.6 The scheme would involve the removal of the Beehive Centre retail park, consisting of some 24,000 square metres of large format single storey retail space. The Local Plan does not include the Beehive Centre within the existing hierarchy of shopping centres and does not provide policy protection for it. [4.2, 7.20]
- 13.7 The retail park would be replaced by a local centre of a little over 5,000 square metres, which would provide convenience and comparison floorspace and restaurants and cafes for local people and workers in the new development. The Retail Planning Statement concluded that the scale of retail floorspace was appropriate and there was no evidence that local centres were vulnerable to impact from the scheme. Despite being criticized in a Council-commissioned review, the conclusions of the Retail Planning Statement are realistic given the specific purpose of the local centre and the large reduction in retail floorspace on the site. [4.4, 7.16 to 7.20]
- 13.8 Despite structural changes in retailing and purchasing patterns, the Beehive Centre remains a busy retail park containing a good range of large format retail premises including a foodstore. The concern expressed by some interested parties about the loss of retail and leisure facilities from the site is therefore understandable. However, there are many other retail outlets near the Beehive Centre including foodstores, large format retail premises and smaller town centre type shops. In addition, some of the Beehive Centre retailers are likely to be relocated in the nearby Cambridge Retail Park, which has spare capacity and is in the same ownership as the Beehive Centre. Also, since the local centre would serve a substantial working population, it is very likely that it would provide opportunities for small convenience shopping that would also be of value to local people. [2.6-2.8, 2.22, 2.24-2.26, 7.21-7.22, 11.17]
- 13.9 The scheme would not provide a like-for-like replacement for the swimming pool on the site. However, this is a private facility, and it is reasonable to expect demand to be addressed by the market. There are public pools in this part of Cambridge and the s106 agreement includes a financial contribution towards the improvement of Abbey Sports Centre and Gym or Parkside Pools and Gym. [7.23, 12.27]
- 13.10 Taking all the above into account, the scheme would not adversely affect the vitality or viability of any town centre. It would be consistent with Government policies in Chapter 7 of the NPPF for ensuring the vitality of town centres. A good range of retail and related facilities easily accessible to local people would still exist, so the scheme would not reduce the community's ability to meet its day-to-day needs as referred to in NPPF paragraph 98(c). [7.22]

Matter c):

The extent to which the proposed development is consistent with Government policies for achieving well-designed places (NPPF Chapter 12)

- 13.11 This is a wide ranging subject and I have divided it up into the sub-topics of urban design and transport, townscape and heritage and the impact on neighbours' living conditions. The last of these is addressed in greater detail because it is the topic on which the Council intended to refuse the development had it not been called in, and it remains a subject of concern with local residents.

Urban design and transport

- 13.12 The site currently contains low rise buildings and extensive areas of hard surface. It is dominated by motor vehicles. It has little sense of place or enclosure and no local distinctiveness. It does not represent a very efficient use of urban land. The scheme would bring about a great improvement in its character, appearance and intensity of use. It would achieve the NPPF objective of optimising the potential of the site to accommodate an appropriate amount and mix of development, and it would support local facilities and transport networks. [2.6, 2.8, 7.31-7.34, 8.19, 8.22, 8.55-8.61]
- 13.13 Land uses, access and circulation, landscape and open space and maximum building heights and plots would all be effectively controlled by the parameter plans and by the Design Code, the latter being a requirement of Condition 3. The parameter plans allow for some flexibility in the detailed design at the reserved matters stage. The Illustrative Scheme is intended to be one example of how a scheme could come forward in accordance with the parameter plans and Design Code. [4.6-4.13, 8.7-8.11, 12.3]
- 13.14 The parameter plans and the Illustrative Scheme are not alternative proposals. Within the terms of the application and its controlling conditions, it would not be possible to build out everywhere to the maximum envelopes shown on the parameter plans. That is partly because the parameters themselves would only allow a percentage of the maximum envelope to be built, and partly because the Design Code would exert additional influence over design and layout, including building separation and control over the interface with neighbouring development. This is particularly important to bear in mind later when considering the daylight and sunlight effects of the proposal. [8.9]
- 13.15 The parameter plans and the Design Code are comprehensive and embody the principles of good urban design, including active street frontages, natural surveillance, legibility and accessibility, the ratio of building heights to streets, the palette of materials and landscape design. The Design Code would ensure that the buildings would be of high quality. The scheme would contain a variety of attractive, useable and inclusive spaces, including genuine city spaces, which would be animated by the local centre, by the community space and by the entrances to the commercial buildings themselves. Despite the scale of the buildings, it would be a greener site, with more planted spaces, more trees and

greater biodiversity, and more efficient energy and water usage. A great deal of attention has been paid to all aspects of the internal urban design of the scheme. This aspect of the scheme is very much in line with the National Planning Policy Framework. [4.13, 4.22-4.28, 7.39-7.43, 7.46, 8.57-8.60, 8.64, 8.154, 12.23, 12.25-12.26]

- 13.16 Transport is included under this heading because it is an integral part of the urban design for the scheme. The development would remove the current car-dominated development in favour of a scheme that would promote sustainable and active travel. There would be a considerable drop in the amount of parking on the site, and the number of motor vehicle movements to and from the site. The development would be accessed from Coldhams Lane through a new pedestrian and cycle friendly junction which would provide a better public realm. There would be a number of pedestrian and cycle routes through an attractive sequence of spaces; this would assist in integrating the development with the movement pattern of its surroundings. Parking and vehicle access would be managed and there would be improved bus services, contributions to various off site cycle and pedestrian enhancement schemes, a potential contribution towards a controlled parking zone, and a new crossing over Newmarket Road at its junction with Coldhams Lane. [4.14-4.21, 7.33, 7.48-7.49, 8.58-8.59, 8.143-8.146, 12.10, 12.28-12.31]

Townscape and heritage

- 13.17 The part of Cambridge in which the development would be located has a varied character and is not wholly suburban. There are areas of low rise housing, but the area also contains some recent larger scale commercial, hotel and education-related buildings of 4, 5 and 6 storeys and these are located in close proximity to low rise development. The scale and form of development proposed in the application, and the contrast in scale with its surroundings, would not be harmful in this context. [2.9-2.23]
- 13.18 Viewed from the public right of way across Coldham's Common the development would be seen rising up behind lower suburban homes, presenting a more dominant built up appearance on the western side of the Common. However, the attractive nature of Coldham's Common itself would be little affected and overall the level of visual harm would be small. [8.65-8.66]
- 13.19 The scheme would not harm the townscape of wider Cambridge. The parameter plan and Design Code would ensure that the development was divided visually into separate parts, that the mass was broken up through varied elevational design and material tones, and that an interesting roof profile was created, thus reducing the scheme's perceived bulk. Flues would be controlled through the parameter plans and Design Code so as to create architecturally complementary features in appropriate places within the roofscape. Elevated views of the development within the townscape would be relatively few. The scheme would break the skyline when seen from Castle Hill Mound, but not dramatically so, and there are other developments existing and proposed on the edge of Cambridge that do so. The overall impact on that viewpoint would be small. This is readily apparent from the technical visualisations in CD2.44, notably those from Castle

Hill Mound, and I verified this through my own site visits. The scheme would be seen at some considerable distance from Redmeadow Hill and Lime Kiln Road but from there the perceived impact on the townscape would be negligible. The scheme would be assimilated successfully into the wider townscape. [4.30-4.32, 8.65-8.71]

- 13.20 As regards heritage, the nearest heritage asset is the Mill Road Conservation Area. It partly adjoins the application site, but it is a well-defined area which derives its character from its history, its own densely-built fine-grained urban terraced typology and its mix of uses. It is very distinct from the site in character and appearance. There would be private views of the proposed development from the rear windows and gardens of the houses in York Street, which is in the conservation area, but from public viewpoints there is little intervisibility between the application site and the conservation area, apart from a limited view at the corner of York Street and Ainsworth Street. The new buildings would not overtop the roofs of the existing housing when seen from the streets themselves. [7.42, 8.73-8.75]
- 13.21 There would be a small degree of harm to the conservation area's significance arising from the proximity of the proposed development and the change of scale, but this would be at the lower end of less than substantial. The parameter plans and the Design Code would ensure that the proposed development would be a much better piece of urban design, and the scheme would have a greatly improved public realm, in comparison with the present condition of the site, which has a small scale adverse effect on the conservation area owing to its utilitarian buildings and large expanses of tarmac. [8.75]
- 13.22 In addition to Mill Lane Conservation Area, the Applicant's Heritage Assessment identified less than significant harm to five other heritage assets: Christ Church in Newmarket Road, Jesus College Chapel, All Saints Church in Jesus Lane, Castle and Victoria Road Conservation Area, and the Central Cambridge Conservation Area. However, the site itself is not especially physically close to any of these assets. Moreover, there are not very many places from which the application scheme and the heritage assets can be seen in the same view, the most notable viewpoint being Castle Hill Mound. There are also views from, the top of St Mary the Great Church tower, and, at a much greater distance, from Redmeadow Hill and Lime Kiln Road. [7.35-7.38, 8.76-8.80]
- 13.23 From Castle Hill Mound, Christ Church and Jesus College Chapel would appear in the same general direction as the application site, and the nearest significant skyline-breaking feature, All Saints Church, would be seen to the right. Most of the historic core of central Cambridge is in a different direction, well off to the right. The development would slightly change the distant townscape and skyline in the wider panorama within which these assets sit. The views from Lime Kiln Road and Redmeadow Hill are too distant to be able to discern a genuine impact on heritage assets from the application scheme.
- 13.24 The Heritage Assessment and the Applicant's expert heritage witness concluded that that there would have a "negligible adverse" effect on the six assets identified by the Applicant. The Council assessed the impact to be greater, though still less

than substantial, and identified further affected heritage assets. It is unlikely in my view that the minor changes described above would really represent harm to the significance of any of these assets. The effect of the proposal, such as it is, would be more akin to a minor townscape impact. Just because a development would be visible in a view that also contains heritage assets, it does not mean that it would be harmful either to the significance of any of those heritage assets. If there were considered to be harm, in my view it would be at the very lowest level of “less than significant”. [7.35-7.38, 8.76-8.80]

- 13.25 The Porcelanosa building is an interesting modern structure, but it is not listed or included on any list of non-designated heritage assets. The removal of this attractive design would be something of a loss. Nevertheless, it is still a single storey large format car-based outlet within a retail park. Its contribution to its setting, which consists of a car park, road accesses and the backs of neighbouring homes, is very limited. The application scheme demonstrates that there are more efficient ways of making the best use of the land. [2.6, 8.81, 11.9-11.12]
- 13.26 The level of harm to the Mill Lane Conservation Area (at the lower end of less than substantial) the minor changes to the context of other heritage assets (which I do not consider harmful, but which the Inquiry witnesses have judged to amount to less than substantial harm), and the loss of the Porcelanosa building, would in my assessment be heavily outweighed by the benefits of the scheme.

The impact on neighbours' living conditions

- 13.27 Good design creates better places to live and helps make development acceptable to communities. It promotes well-being with a high standard of amenity for existing as well as future users. Developments should be sympathetic to the surrounding built environment, whilst not preventing or discouraging increased densities.
- 13.28 In this case, the immediate surroundings are sensitive. The proposed development would be close to the mostly 2 and 3 storey homes of St Matthew's Terrace, Silverwood Close, York Road and Sleaford Street. Despite the Applicant's extensive community engagement and the amendment of the scheme, there continues to be concern in the community about the scale and massing of the proposal and its effect on neighbouring living conditions. [2.10-2.18, 9.2-9.15, 9.21-9.29, 10.2, 10.5, 10.11, 10.23, 11.13-11.16, 11.23-11.24]
- 13.29 The relevant factors to consider are the siting and massing of the proposed development and its effect on the outlook from and overlooking of people's homes; daylight and sunlight to people's homes; and overshadowing of gardens. The following analysis brings these factors together and considers the impact of potential buildings on neighbouring homes where the relationship is the most significant – it is recognised that some other homes would undergo smaller daylight, sunlight and overshadowing impacts but they are not included in the analysis in the interests of brevity. It is worth reiterating the point previously made that the buildings could not be built out everywhere to the maximum envelopes shown on the parameter plans and that the parameter plans and the Illustrative Scheme are not alternatives; the Illustrative Scheme is indicative of how a

scheme might come forward in compliance with the controls exerted by the parameter plans and Design Code. [8.9, 13.14]

- 13.30 References for this analysis include Appendix A to the Applicant's Masterplanning proof of evidence (CD7.13), together with the parameter plans and the material in the Design Code (CD2.64b).²⁰⁰ As regards daylight and sunlight, the key material is in CD7.08 and CD7.09, the Applicant's Daylight and Sunlight proof of evidence and appendices, together with CD2.31, the Daylight and Sunlight Report, and CD2.63a and CD2.63b, the Daylight and Sunlight Report Addendum. References to VSC and NSL within the BRE Guidelines are explained earlier in this report. [8.84-8.91] See also the description of the neighbouring houses [2.9-2.19], the summary of the Applicant's assessment [8.96-8.128] and the Council's comments. [9.26 to 9.31]

34-39 Silverwood Close

- 13.31 Plot 10, the multi storey car park, would be sited to the rear of these houses. It would be 8 storeys and just over 25 metres high. The cross section on p24 of CD7.13 shows it to be some 32 metres from the main rear wall of 36 Silverwood Close, but the house also has a rear extension. Given the scale of the proposed building, that is a close relationship. The angled orientation of the building on Plot 10 would limit its perceived bulk to a degree and allow daylight to enter around the sides of the building, but it would still present a large face towards the backs of these houses. Some, but not all, of the gardens in Silverwood Close have substantial trees, and there would also be an additional planting belt between the building and the rear of the gardens, which would help to mitigate (to a degree) its impact. The visual effect can be appreciated from the representations on pp25-26 of CD7.13.
- 13.32 There would be no difference in height between the maximum parameter plan and the Illustrative Scheme, but the latter would have a smaller plan form than that shown on the parameter plans, with a somewhat narrower elevation directly facing Silverwood Close which would assist a little in mitigating the visual impact and improving daylighting conditions.
- 13.33 As regards daylight, the biggest impacts from the maximum parameter plans would be on 36 Silverwood Close, where there would be major VSC and NSL impacts on a ground floor dining room and major NSL impacts on a kitchen and bedroom. There would also be major NSL impacts on first floor bedrooms in 34, 35 and 37 Silverwood Close and the scheme would have moderate impacts on other windows and rooms in this row of houses. Under the Illustrative Scheme the impacts would be mostly moderate or minor, with a major NSL impact confined to a ground floor kitchen in no 36, and in each case there would be better retained VSC levels, particularly to main living rooms.

²⁰⁰ The Illustrative Scheme building outlines are shown as firm lines; those that could theoretically be built under the maximum parameter plans are shown as dotted lines.

- 13.34 There is no doubt that even under the Illustrative Scheme the building on Plot 10 would have a considerable visual impact when seen from the rear of the nearest houses in Silverwood Close and from their rear gardens. The change would be very noticeable to residents compared with the current open aspect across the car park, and some rooms would have reduced daylight. However, the juxtaposition of scales, the visual impacts and the levels of daylight and sunlight under the Illustrative Scheme would not be especially unusual in a more densely built up urban area.

40-45 Silverwood Close

- 13.35 The closest building would be on Plot 3. CD7.13 pp 8-9 illustrates a 4 storey building on Plot 3 with a height of about 20.8m. At its nearest it would be about 41m from the back of properties in Silverwood Close under the parameter plans and around 44m under the illustrative scheme. These separation distances would be adequate to prevent overlooking and there would be a substantial intervening area of tree planting which would mitigate the impact. The Illustrative Scheme would present a notably less bulky outline to homes and gardens than the maximum parameter plans.
- 13.36 Under the parameter plans most windows would meet BRE guidelines for both VSC and NSL. A few windows would not meet BRE guidelines but the breaches would mostly be negligible or minor. Under the Illustrative Scheme all except one window would meet the BRE Guidelines for VSC. The one window would be a ground floor kitchen diner to No 40 but the impact would be negligible. The NSL criteria would be met in every case. Both the maximum parameter scheme and the Illustrative Scheme would meet the BRE Guidelines for sunlight and there would be almost no loss of sunlight to gardens.

49-50 and 51 Silverwood Close

- 13.37 The closest part of the scheme would be Plot 1. CD7.13 p 5 illustrates a 3 storey building on Plot 1 with the upper floors set back. The Illustrative Scheme would place a low element of one commercial storey, 5.57 metres high, nearest to the rear of the houses in Silverwood Close. In the maximum parameter plans this element is shown as 2 commercial storeys and 10.61 metres. The back to back distances of 18.5m to 23.5m for a two storey building would not be unusual in an urban area, and privacy within the dwellings would not be harmed. However, the 2 storey form in the parameter plans would be close to the rear boundary and would be likely to appear very noticeable from the nearest gardens. It could potentially have an effect on privacy; although the Design Code is intended to operate to mitigate loss of privacy through appropriate building design. The third storey of the building would rise to nearly 16 metres and would be clearly visible from the rear of the properties and their gardens. It would be 25m to 30m away from the backs of the nearest houses, which would help to reduce its impact to a degree, but the indicative view in CD7.13 demonstrates that the maximum outline would be bulky. However, the Illustrative Scheme would present a less bulky profile.
- 13.38 The VSC and NSL effects of both the parameter plans and the Illustrative Scheme would affect the ground floor dining room at no 49-50 Silverwood Close

which would undergo a major reduction in VSC such that the BRE target would not be met. However this is an internal dining room window that borrows light from an extension and this exaggerates the apparent impact. The parameter plans would also fail to meet BRE NSL guidelines to a ground floor dining room window and a first floor bedroom window in 51 Silverwood Close. However, under the Illustrative scheme these impacts would be moderate or minor. As regards sunlight impact on dwellings or gardens, there would either be no impact or negligible impact.

72-74 Silverwood Close

- 13.39 As regards sunlight to gardens, the maximum parameter plans would result in larger areas receiving less than two hours of sun on March 21st, with particular impacts on 72 to 74 Silverwood Close.²⁰¹ The Illustrative Scheme however shows a reduced impact.

St Matthew's Gardens

- 13.40 Plot 8 would be located to the south of St Matthew's Gardens. It would be a 6 storey building with the three upper floors set back. The nearest part of the building to the backs of houses in St Matthew's Gardens would be about 15m high and, in the parameter plans, about 23m from the main rear wall of the 4 storey block of St Matthew's Gardens, although the part projection of St Matthew's Gardens reduces these distances. The set back upper three floors of the proposed building would be nearly 34m away from the main rear wall of St Matthew's Gardens in the parameter plans.²⁰² The building on adjacent Plot 9 would be further from St Matthew's Gardens, at 33.5m to the 3 storey element and 45.5m to the 6 storey part.
- 13.41 In respect of daylight, the maximum parameter plan would have major VSC impacts on a ground floor bedroom in 163 St Matthew's Gardens, a first floor bedroom in 165, a ground floor kitchen and first floor bedroom in 167, a ground floor living room and first floor bedroom in 169, ground living rooms in 171, 173 and 175, and two bedrooms in 177-201. On the NSL measure there would also be several major impacts. There would also be a range of moderate and minor effects to various other rooms. In two cases where there would be major impacts the retained VSC would be less than 15%. There would be a major sunlight impact to one lower ground living room.
- 13.42 There would be greater separation in the Illustrative Scheme, the comparable distances being 26m to the lower part of Plot 9 and nearly 37m to the higher part. In consequence the Illustrative Scheme shows a reduced impact. There would still be major VSC impacts on one room in 163 St Matthew's Gardens and two

²⁰¹ CD7.09 Appendix 5

²⁰² Please note these dimensions have been accidentally transposed in the cross sections on p20 of CD7.13

rooms in no 167, but the retained levels of VSC would be much higher. The scheme would not meet the BRE Guidelines in respect of a number of other windows and rooms in St Matthew's Gardens, but without major levels of impact. Impacts would be reduced to moderate or minor. Sunlight impacts would be negligible or would not occur.

- 13.43 Plots 8 and 9 would create a more urban scale for the residents in this part of St Matthew's Gardens. The buildings would appear much larger than at present. The new buildings would appear very substantial from many of the rear windows and spaces of St Matthew's Gardens even under the Illustrative Scheme, but in my assessment the separation distances in that scheme, together with the substantial existing boundary planting, and the operation of the Design Code, would prevent the buildings from being unduly overbearing and would avoid undue loss of privacy
- 13.44 The daylight, sunlight and overshadowing impacts need to be considered against the background that this part of St Matthew's Gardens has been built very close to the boundary with the Beehive site, with buildings of up to 4 storeys, taking advantage of the current openness of the Beehive site. This results in high existing VSC levels, and proportionately greater falls in those levels from the development. The openness of outlook and levels of daylight borrowed from the Beehive site cannot be assured within a city where it is important to make the best use of open land. It is reasonable to expect the Beehive site to be used more intensively, with consequent impacts on St Matthew's Gardens. It should also be noted that the actual impacts in some instances would be likely to be less than suggested by these figures because the substantial tree and hedge planting along the boundary, which would be retained, already has an impact on daylight and sunlight in the existing condition. Taking all the above into account, the overall impacts from the development, as represented by the Illustrative Scheme, would be acceptable.

Sleaford Street

- 13.45 Plot 6 would be a 5 storey building but its upper floors would be set back so that the nearest element to 150 Sleaford Street would be of 2 storeys. In the Illustrative Scheme, this 2 storey element would be 11.16 metres tall, and 6m from the flank wall of No 150, but the perceived height from Sleaford Street would be around 9m because the ground level within the application site is lower than that of Sleaford Street. The third floor would be about 9m from the boundary and 12m from the flank wall, and the fourth and fifth floors/flue zone would be set back from the flank wall about 29m and 37m respectively. The visual impact of the scheme would be greater when seen from the garden than from the dwelling itself but the nearest part facing the garden would have a relatively low profile. Part of the flue zone would be seen, but at some distance. The substantial upper floor setbacks would help to limit the overall bulk of the scheme and it is apparent from CD7.13 p 14 that the Illustrative Scheme would be less bulky and visually dominant than that theoretically permissible under the maximum parameter plan.
- 13.46 The analysis in CD2.31 demonstrates that under the maximum parameter plans the BRE Guidelines would be breached in the case of a ground floor bedroom in

148 Sleaford Street. The VSC would drop to around 17%; this would improve to 24% under the Illustrative Scheme. These properties would continue to receive adequate sunlight to rooms and gardens. The Illustrative Scheme would be within the bounds of normal urban conditions.

York Street

- 13.47 Plots 7 and 8 would present three storey elevations towards the rear of some of the houses in York Street, with a further three floors set back. The three storey elements of Plots 7 and 8 would be about 15m high, but being at a lower ground level their perceived height from York Street would be less than 13m. They would be 32m to 33m (parameter plans) and 33m to 34m (Illustrative Scheme) from the nearest York Street houses, which is sufficient to avoid overlooking and excessive bulk. There would also be good separation between the proposed buildings and the ends of the York Street gardens, and the scheme would increase the already substantial planting in this area. The upper floors of Plot 7 would be some 64m (parameter plans) or 65m (Illustrative Scheme) from the backs of the houses. The equivalent distances for Plot 8 would be about 55m and 56m. Again, this is a good level of separation. The buildings in both the parameter plans and the Illustrative Scheme would be acceptable in terms of privacy, outlook and perceived bulk.
- 13.48 In respect of NSL there would be several breaches of the BRE Guidelines. The most significant of these would be major breaches in respect of ground floor habitable room windows at 52, 56, and 76 York Street and a first floor window at 74; there would also be a number of moderate or minor breaches. The Illustrative scheme would reduce the impact; the only remaining major breach would be to the first floor window of No 74 which is thought to be a non-habitable room. The breaches in NSL are spaces where the design of neighbouring properties and the insets between neighbouring extensions increases sensitivity due to the depth of the rooms. Neither the parameter plans nor the Illustrative Scheme would cause a significant breach of the BRE guidelines in respect to VSC.
- 13.49 As regards sunlight, the guidelines would not be significantly breached except for in the case of a ground floor window at 72 York Street where there would be a major breach of the guidelines in the parameter plan. Under the Illustrative Scheme, the impact would be negligible.
- 13.50 Overall, the Illustrative Scheme would represent a satisfactory arrangement.

Other properties

- 13.51 I do not consider the relationship of the scheme to other properties to be sensitive. That includes the homes on the other side of the railway line. For the residents in those homes who do have a direct line of vision towards the Beehive Centre, the proposed buildings would appear considerably larger than at present, but the distance is such as to avoid major harmful impacts in respect of loss of daylight, sunlight, overshadowing or outlook. [2.19 and CD7.13 pp 7, 10-12, 15]

Conclusion on Matter c): The extent to which the proposed development is consistent with Government policies for achieving well-designed places

- 13.52 The site currently has little sense of place or enclosure and no local distinctiveness and it is dominated by motor vehicles. The scheme would bring about a great improvement in the character and appearance of the site. It would embody the qualities of good urban design, create a distinctive place, contain well-designed spaces with animated streets and active street frontages. It would be pedestrian and cyclist friendly and would support public transport. It would make the best use of this urban brownfield site.
- 13.53 The scheme would have a very modest wider impact. It would break the skyline slightly when seen from Castle Mound but there are already some developments that do the same. It would not appear obtrusive in views from Castle Mound or other vantage points such as Redmeadow Hill. The scheme would cause less than significant harm at a low level to the Mill Lane Conservation Area, and in the view of the Applicant's heritage witness to five other assets, though I have concluded that there would be no harm to the significance of these assets or to the additional assets identified by the Council. Were such harm to exist, it would in my view be at the negligible level of less than substantial. All heritage impacts in this case would be greatly outweighed by the scheme's public benefits.
- 13.54 The Illustrative Scheme in my view demonstrates that the parameter plans and Design Code can work together to produce a successful scheme that would be acceptable in its impacts on neighbouring homes in respect of daylight, sunlight, overshadowing and outlook. The BRE Guidelines would still be breached in a number of instances but some of the reductions in VSC arise from the fact that much of the site is currently very open and that conditions will of necessity change to make the best use of this urban brownfield site. Moreover, some of the low VSC and NSL values arise because of particular circumstances such as overhanging eaves and rear extensions. The Illustrative Scheme demonstrates in my view that the scale and number of impacts would be adequately mitigated through the parameters and Design Codes.
- 13.55 It is true that if it were possible to build the scheme to the maximum building envelopes shown on the parameter plans, a substantial number of windows and habitable rooms would fail against the BRE Guidance, with many examples of major reductions in daylight and low retained VSC values.²⁰³ But the maximum envelopes shown on the parameters plans do not represent the fixed building lines of an actual scheme: it is not possible to build out everywhere to the maximum building envelopes owing to the controls exerted by the parameter plans themselves and by the Design Code.
- 13.56 The Illustrative Scheme demonstrates that an acceptable development can be built within the terms of the outline planning application. In such circumstances it

²⁰³ Caution should be exercised over the idea that a retained VSC of 16% to 18%, which has been referred to in some appeal decisions, is a generally acceptable alternative benchmark. Although those figures might have been considered appropriate in the circumstances of those cases, they are not rooted in the research that lies behind the BRE Guidance and of course each case must be considered on its merits.

is not normally appropriate in my experience to refuse an application on the basis that a less acceptable scenario might be built, provided adequate controls exist to prevent this from happening. The local planning authority has full control over the final outcome through the reserved matters approval process. The appropriate response is to attach conditions to the planning permission to ensure that the development is acceptable.

- 13.57 That leads to the question of whether Condition 6 is necessary. I believe it is, because it would provide a degree of certainty for those who are concerned about the potential impact of the eventual scheme. It seeks to confine the daylight, sunlight and overshadowing impacts of the proposed development to no greater than those set out in the eb9 Appendices. Those impacts have been tested; they are a known quantity and in my assessment they are acceptable. The condition does not confine the development to the Illustrative Scheme itself, so it still provides flexibility for the developer.
- 13.58 There is no doubt that even under the illustrative Scheme residents whose homes back closely on to the site would experience a substantial adjustment (in their rear aspect, not their whole dwellings) in daylight levels, scale and outlook. The environment at the rear of their homes would change from suburban to a denser urban environment with much larger scale buildings than those in the current Beehive Centre, and the levels of daylight would change accordingly. The scale of the buildings and the building-to-building relationships would be those of a more central urban area. On the other hand, the scheme would make much better and more intensive use of an urban site and overall, as a neighbour, it would be a much better designed development than the current Beehive Centre.

Matter d) The extent to which the proposed development is consistent with the development plan for the area

- 13.59 Economic and employment issues have been considered under Matter a). Local Plan Policy 2 sets out the spatial strategy for the location of employment development. The site is not specifically identified as a development site in the Local Plan. It is not included in the Proposals Schedule at Appendix B and is not one of the six key locations for the delivery of employment land to support the Cambridge Cluster referred to in the supporting text to Policy 2. It is identified as an Opportunity Area in the emerging Local Plan, but work on this plan is at an early stage and its policies and proposals do not carry much weight.
- 13.60 Several representations have criticised the scheme as being in the wrong place: out of alignment with the key identified employment locations and the strategic pattern of development in Greater Cambridge, not especially close to the stations, out of scale with the area and, in the absence of a residential element, not reflective of the mixture of surrounding uses or the housing needs of the city. Some have argued that, given the sheer size of the scheme, the scale and composition of any development on the site ought to be considered as part of the plan-led process in the wider context of the future development needs of Cambridge.
- 13.61 It is certainly the case that the site is not adjacent to the stations and would contain far more floorspace than currently exists on the site. On the other hand,

adopted Policy 2 does not seek to confine employment development to the identified sites. The strategy is to support Cambridge's economy with particular emphasis on growth of the Cambridge Cluster of knowledge-based industries and institutions. This allows for beneficial windfall developments to take place on sites that that were not anticipated for development at the time the plan was produced.

- 13.62 The scheme would support important economic strategic objectives in the adopted Local Plan: it would promote economic growth in a sustainable and accessible location and facilitate innovation and research and knowledge based industry. It would meet identified need for laboratory floorspace and support the Cambridge Cluster. At the same time it would respond positively to Cambridge's key constraints: it would be outside the historic core, make efficient use of land, reduce the pressure on the local highway network and reduce pressure on the Green Belt by providing additional employment floorspace within the urban area.
- 13.63 Thus in my view the scheme would not conflict with the Local Plan in respect of the location of large scale employment development. It would accord with Policy 2 and also Policy 40 of the Local Plan which focus employment development on the urban area and the city centre, and support employment proposals in sustainable locations and new business space in areas where there is strong demand.
- 13.64 Local Plan Policy 3, which sets out the spatial strategy for residential development, makes provision for housing elsewhere in Cambridge. There is nothing in the plan that would actually require residential development to be included on the site and the scheme would not conflict with Policy 3 in respect of the spatial strategy for housing. Given the lead-in time for this very large scheme, any consequences it might have for future housing need in and around Cambridge can be dealt with through the emerging plan.
- 13.65 Retail impact and the effect of the development have been considered under Matter b). The scheme would not harm any town centre. The retail park does not enjoy policy protection and, although large format retailing would be lost, there would be adequate retail provision both in the surrounding area and indeed in the form of the new local centre created on the site. The scheme would therefore be in accordance with Local Plan Policy 6.
- 13.66 The loss of the swimming pool and gym from the site, also discussed under Matter b), would to a degree conflict with Local Plan Policy 73. This policy resists the loss of community, sports and leisure facilities unless the facility can be replaced on site or appropriately relocated. The degree of conflict with the policy would not be very significant for the reasons discussed under Matter b) and the development would offer a contribution towards upgrading existing public facilities.
- 13.67 Whether the development would respond positively to its context, create a successful place, deliver good building design and create a well-designed public realm, as sought by Local Plan Policies 55, 56 57 and 59, have been explored under Matter c). The development would clearly be of a different scale and grain from its surroundings, and it would be different too in its format and its proposed uses. Some neighbouring dwellings would experience a substantially altered
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outlook, and some a loss of light such that the BRE Guidelines would be breached, even in the Illustrative Scheme.

- 13.68 However, the existing site is a low rise large floorplate retail park with an abundance of surface level parking, so it is already very different from its surroundings. It is well-defined and discrete, and it is reasonable to expect development of a larger scale here in order to make the best use of an accessible urban brownfield site. This will inevitably result in a change in scale and outlook and a degree of impact on neighbouring properties. The loss of light to some rooms should be seen in the context that many properties have high existing levels of daylight for an urban area owing to their open aspect over the retail park and its car park. There are other examples of recent development in the general area of large scale development that contrasts with lower scale surroundings.
- 13.69 Whilst making the best use of the site, the scheme demonstrates a positive response to its context in the siting and orientation of the buildings, the use of set-back upper floors, the controls exerted by the maximum parameters, the comprehensive Design Code, the emphasis on sustainable transport and the good pedestrian and cycle links which tie the scheme into the surrounding area. The design strategy set out in the Design and Access Statement, and the controls exerted by the parameter plans and the Design Code, would combine to create a successful place based on good urban design principles. Overall I consider that the scheme accords with Local Plan Policies 55, 56, 57 and 59.
- 13.70 Policy 60, which relates to tall buildings and the Cambridge skyline, and Policies 61 and 62 which deal with the historic environment and heritage assets, have also been considered under Matter c). There would be a low level of impact to the Mill Lane Conservation Area. The scheme would appear in relatively few panoramic views. It would slightly break the skyline from a small number of locations, for example Castle Hill Mound, but not to the extent that it would harm the cityscape or the city's setting. The maximum level of harm identified by either witness to any heritage asset is less than substantial. The Porcelanosa building is not listed and although it is of more interesting construction it remains a single storey retail building on a retail park. In my view the impact on heritage assets would be less than substantial at the lowest level and would be substantially outweighed by the public benefits of the scheme. For all these reasons the proposal would be in accordance with Local Plan Policies 60, 61 and 62.
- 13.71 Subject to the conditions discussed in Section 12 of this report, the scheme would be in accordance with a range of development management policies including Policies 28, 29 and 31 (carbon reduction, sustainable design and construction, water use, renewable and low carbon energy generation and integrated water management), Policy 32 (flood risk), Policy 33 (contaminated land), Policy 34 (light pollution), Policy 35 (noise and vibration), Policy 36 (air quality), Policy 37 (Cambridge Airport), Policy 42 (connection to digital infrastructure), Policies 67 and 68 (open spaces), Policies 69, 70 and 71 (biodiversity, habitats and trees), Policies 80, 81 and 82 (access, transport impact and parking), Policy 84 (telecommunications) and Policy 85 (infrastructure delivery).

- 13.72 For all these reasons, I consider that the proposal would accord with the development plan as a whole.

Overall balance of considerations

- 13.73 The scheme would deliver strong economic and placemaking benefits on an accessible urban brownfield site. In my view it would accord with the development plan as a whole and with NPPF Chapter 6 (Building a strong, competitive economy) Chapter 7 (Ensuring the vitality of town centres) and 12 (Achieving well-designed places). The negative aspects of the scheme are in my assessment outweighed by the scheme's benefits.
- 13.74 In coming to this conclusion, I recognise that some people hold strong alternative views of the site's future. Although the scheme is tailored to attract the science and R&D sectors, there is no specific end user of the scheme at this stage; it is based on one (albeit very competent and comprehensive) plan of how the site can be developed to maximise its use whilst controlling the impacts on its surroundings. Against this background, some local residents and councillors have put forward reasonable arguments that development on the site should be approached differently. A mixed use scheme involving residential development, for example, might be more reflective of the land use character of the immediate area to the south and west of the site. The site might be developed to a lower scale, with lesser impacts on neighbouring residents. And though no prematurity case was made at the Inquiry, several objectors have argued that redevelopment of this scale should come through the forthcoming local plan, in which Greater Cambridge's development needs could be considered in the round, with community input.
- 13.75 Whilst recognising these points, I do not believe that there is anything in the current development plan that should prevent the scheme from being considered on its merits now. I give greater weight to the fact that the scheme as presented would bring many benefits in respect of economic growth, employment and related community benefits, urban design and placemaking, and sustainable transport. These in my view outweigh the harms identified in respect of daylight, sunlight, overshadowing and outlook, the low level of less than substantial harm to heritage assets and the minor townscape impacts. Permission would enable work to commence on reserved matters, whereas deferment to the development plan process would potentially delay the realisation of any benefits. For all the reasons given in this report I believe that the balance falls towards the grant of permission.

14. Recommendation

- 14.1 For all the above reasons I recommend that planning permission is granted.

Jonathan Bore

INSPECTOR

ANNEX A: APPEARANCES

FOR RAILPEN [THE APPLICANT]

Mr Rupert Warren KC

Instructed by Mills & Reeve LLP

He called:

Mr Guy Kaddish BSc (Hons) DipTP	Planning Partner, Bidwells
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Mr David Leonard BA (Hons) BArch (Hons) RIBA, Masterplanning	Director, Leonard Design
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Mr Jonathan Lonergan MRICS, LLB, MSC (Surv) Daylight and Sunlight	Director, eb7 Ltd
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Mr Alastair Macquire BA (Hons) Dip LA CMLI Townscape	Consultant, Bidwells
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Mr Stephen Handforth MSc IHBC Heritage	Director, Handforth Heritage
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Mr Alex O'Byrne BSc Socio-economics	Partner, Volterra
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Mr Peter Seaborn LLB (Hons) Law	Partner, Mills & Reeve LLP
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Ms Jennie Hainsworth MRTPI Planning	Associate, Bidwells
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FOR CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL

Mr Josef Cannon KC

Instructed by Cambridge City Council

Dr Lois Lane

They called:

Mr Andrew Martin MSc Planning	Principal Planner, Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service
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Mr Cuma Ahmet	Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service
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Prepared evidence but was not called:

Mr Ian Dias BSc (Hons) MRICS Daylight, Sunlight and Overshadowing	Partner, Schroeders Begg (UK) LLP, Chartered Surveyors
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INTERESTED PERSONS

Mr M Ball	Better Beehive Group
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Ms S Nicholas	Cambridge Past, Present and Future
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Cllr N Bennett	Abbey Ward Councillor
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Cllr R Robertson	Petersfield Councillor
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Cllr Katie Porrer	Speaking on behalf of herself and 4 members of the Planning Committee
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Mr M Lucas-Smith	Local Resident
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Mr M Rison	Local Resident
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Mr N Richardson	Local Resident
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ANNEX B: CORE DOCUMENTS

Core documents, proofs of evidence and documents submitted at the Inquiry can all be accessed at: [Beehive Centre Public Inquiry](#)

CD Series	Title
1.	Application Documents and Plans (2023 Application)
2.	Application Documents and Plans (2024 Revised Application)
3.	Committee Reports
4.	The Development Plan and Policy
5.	Emerging Development Plan
6.	Call in Documents
7.	Inquiry Documents
8.	Residential Amenity Documents
9.	Documents Referred to in Proofs of Evidence
10.	Referred to in Case Studies
11.	Other Documents
IQ Series	Description
IQ1.01 to IQ1.23	Public Inquiry Documents

ANNEX C: SCHEDULE OF RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS

1. No development on any phase shall commence until details of the appearance, means of access, landscaping, layout and scale, (hereinafter called the 'reserved matters') for that phase have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The development of each phase shall be carried out as approved.
2. Application(s) for approval of the reserved matters for any phase shall be made to the local planning authority before the expiration of ten years from the date of this permission. The development of each phase hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of approval of the last of the reserved matters of that phase to be approved.
3. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the approved documents, as listed below, save for where such details are superseded by further details being submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority pursuant to the conditions attached to this permission.
 - PO - LDA - ZZ - XX - DR - A – 08000 REV P2 (Site Location Plan)
 - PO - LDA - ZZ - XX - DR - A – 08003 REV P2 (Maximum Building Heights & Plots)
 - PO - LDA - ZZ - XX - DR - A – 08004 REV P2 (Land Use – Ground Floor)
 - PO - LDA - ZZ - XX - DR - A – 08005 REV P2 (Land Use – Upper Floors)
 - PO - LDA - ZZ - XX - DR - A – 08006 REV P2 (Access and Circulation)
 - PO - LDA - ZZ - XX - DR - A – 08007 REV P2 (Landscape and Open Space)
 - Design Code (Leonard Design Architects, dated November 2024).
4. The proposed maximum floorspace of all land uses indicated (including any basements and external bin/cycle stores) shall not exceed a total of 166,685 sqm (gross external area).
5. Prior to or concurrently with the submission of the first of the reserved matters application(s) for any phase of the development, a site wide phasing plan for the development hereby permitted shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The site wide phasing plan shall identify all phases of the development and the sequence in which they will be developed and shall include a mechanism for its review and amendment. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.
6. Each reserved matters application shall be accompanied by a report which tests the daylight, sunlight and overshadowing effects of each building to which the reserved matters application relates in accordance with the relevant BRE Guidance: Site Layout Planning for Daylight and Sunlight – A Guide to Good Practice (BR209 2022 Edition).

Each such report shall set out the impacts on each identified window and room of all receptor properties and their gardens identified in the Illustrative Scheme results for VSC, NSL, APSH, Winter PSH and BRE 2-hour sunlight test (on 21 March), as set out in tables within appendices 2b, 3b, 4b and 5 to the daylight, sunlight and overshadowing evidence prepared by eb7 and dated 27 May 2025 (the eb7 Appendices). It shall include a full pack of neighbouring window referencing and NSL contour plots for room layout interpretation including neighbouring property reference locators.

Each report shall use the baseline and arrangement of neighbouring properties on which the results in the eb7 Appendices were derived and also take into account the effects of any other building(s) which have been granted reserved matters approval and, for any plots that have not, the footprint and position of the buildings shown for that plot on the Illustrative Masterplan PO-LDA-ZZ-XX-DR-A-08010 Rev P2.

The daylight, sunlight and overshadowing effects of the development shall not amount to any greater Vertical Sky Component loss, No-Sky Line loss, Annual Probable Sunlight Hours loss, Winter Probable Sunlight Hours loss or BRE 2-hour sunlight test loss on 21 March to any of the identified windows and rooms of receptor properties, or their gardens, than those identified in the eb7 Appendices.

7. Prior to commencement of development on any phase (other than site investigation, archaeological works and enabling works to make the site ready for construction), cross sections showing the finished floor levels of all proposed buildings and associated external landscaping within that phase in relation to the existing and proposed ground levels of the surrounding land and buildings shall be submitted for approval to the local planning authority. The development shall be constructed in accordance with the approved details.
8. Prior to the commencement of development on any phase (other than site investigation, archaeological works and enabling works to make the site ready for construction), a demolition and construction environmental management plan for that phase shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The development of each phase shall be undertaken in accordance with the approved plan.
9. Demolition and construction, and deliveries for those purposes, shall be carried out only between 0800 hours to 1800 hours Monday to Friday, and 0800 hours to 1300 hours on Saturday and at no time on Sundays, Bank or Public Holidays, unless the local planning authority gives written consent to any variation.
10. Any reserved matters application for a phase or building containing plant or equipment likely to generate external noise affecting noise-sensitive premises both within and beyond the site boundary shall be accompanied by a noise assessment for approval by the local planning authority. The noise assessment shall contain details of mitigation measures to be carried out in respect of the noise source and where necessary and appropriate the insulation of the buildings against external noise. The approved details shall be implemented before the relevant phase or building is occupied and shall be retained thereafter in accordance with the approved details.
11. Any reserved matters application for a phase which includes space that is intended to be used for outdoor events likely to generate noise shall include a plan for the approval of the local planning authority containing details for the management and mitigation of such noise to minimise disturbance to nearby noise sensitive premises. The approved details shall be implemented from the first occupation of the relevant phase and maintained thereafter.
12. Reserved matters applications for each phase shall include a scheme for approval by the local planning authority for external and internal artificial lighting within that phase. The scheme shall be designed to minimise light pollution and disturbance to residential properties. The details shall be accompanied by an artificial lighting impact assessment. Each approved lighting scheme shall be fully installed, maintained and operated in accordance with the approved scheme.

13. Prior to the use of any commercial floorspace in which fumes or odours are emitted, details of a scheme for the extraction and filtration of such fumes and odours shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The scheme shall be fully installed, maintained and operated in accordance with the approved details prior to the premises being brought into use.
14. No laying of services, creation of hard surfaces or erection of buildings shall commence on any phase until a detailed design for the surface water drainage for that phase, including a timetable for implementation and full details of maintenance and adoption, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The submitted details shall be based upon the principles within Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy Appendix 8.1A (October 2024). The surface water drainage works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details for that phase. Any elements of the surface water drainage system within that phase that are not adopted by a statutory undertaker shall thereafter be maintained and managed in accordance with the approved maintenance details. An independent report from an appropriately qualified person shall be submitted to the local planning authority on completion of each phase and before its occupation, confirming that the surface water drainage system has been installed in accordance with the approved details.
15. No development of any phase, other than site investigation, shall commence until the following have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority in relation to that phase:
 - a site investigation strategy in respect of contamination risk based upon the findings of the Preliminary Risk Assessment ref: WIE17469-100-R-5-3-1-PRA, dated July 2024 and the Preliminary Generic Quantitative Risk Assessment, ref: WIE17469-100-R-12-1-2-GQRA, dated February 2023;
 - an intrusive site investigation report; and
 - a remediation strategy.

The development of each phase shall be undertaken in accordance with the agreed remediation strategy and no occupation of that phase shall take place until a report has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority demonstrating compliance with the approved remediation strategy. If unexpected contamination is encountered during the development works which has not previously been identified, all works on the relevant phase shall cease immediately and shall not recommence until an intrusive site investigation report and a remediation strategy specific to the newly discovered contamination have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved intrusive site investigation report and remediation strategy.

16. No demolition or development in any phase shall commence until a programme of archaeological work has been undertaken for that phase in accordance with a written scheme of investigation that has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority.
17. No development above ground level, other than demolition, in any phase shall commence until a hard and soft landscaping scheme for that phase, including long term maintenance and management responsibilities, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Hard and soft landscaping works within each phase shall be carried out and maintained in accordance with the approved landscaping details. If within a period of ten years from the date of the planting, any tree or plant is removed, uprooted or destroyed or

dies, it shall be replaced within the next planting season by another equivalent tree or plant of the same species and size.

18. Prior to the commencement of development, a site wide biodiversity gain plan shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority which shall include the strategic approach to securing a minimum 20% net gain in biodiversity on-site, using the most up to date DEFRA metric.
19. No development shall commence on any phase until a biodiversity gain plan for that phase, which shall be generally in accordance with the site wide biodiversity gain plan, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The phase biodiversity gain plan shall set out the detailed biodiversity net gain requirements for that phase together with details of implementation, management and monitoring for a period of 30 years for significant habitat enhancements, on-site and off-site as appropriate. Measures for biodiversity gain plan in each phase shall be implemented in full in accordance with the approved plan.
20. Details of the design and maintenance of any biodiverse roof, including the control of access thereto, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority before development of that building above ground level.
21. All reserved matters applications for buildings shall be accompanied by a sustainability statement and an energy statement which shall have regard to the targets and commitments set out within the submitted Sustainability Strategy, Revision 01 (16 August 2024), and the submitted Energy Strategy, Revision 01 (August 2024). The sustainability statement shall be accompanied by a BREEAM pre-assessment for approval by the local planning authority which shall demonstrate that all buildings to which the reserved matters application relates are capable of achieving a minimum of BREEAM excellent with at least 5 credits for Wat01, save that:
 - the pre-assessment shall show that any office floorspace within the reserved matters area shall be capable of achieving BREEAM outstanding with at least 5 credits achieved for Wat01; and
 - the BREEAM requirement shall not relate the multi-storey car park element of Building 10.

The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Within six months following first occupation of each building, a post construction statement shall be submitted to the local planning authority confirming that the water efficiency provisions relating to that building as set out in relevant sustainability statement have been fully implemented, including the achievement of no less than 5 Wat01 credits.

22. No development above base course of a permanent building, excluding Building 10, shall take place until a detailed scheme for the management and recycling of grey water and/or rainwater for that building, including any necessary infrastructure, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The development shall be carried out and thereafter maintained in accordance with the approved details.
23. Prior to the installation of any back-up power generator associated with the approved development, or any phase of development, details of the generator shall be submitted to and agreed in writing with the local planning authority. The details shall demonstrate that the operation of the generator will not lead to hourly exceedances of both nitrogen dioxide and particulate matter (PM10) against local air quality management objectives. The approved system shall be installed, maintained and operated in accordance with the approved details.

24. No development except for enabling works shall commence on any phase until a scheme for the on-site storage facilities for commercial waste, including waste for recycling in that phase, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The approved scheme shall be carried out before the use of that phase is commenced or otherwise in accordance with a programme approved by the local planning authority for that phase and shall be retained thereafter.
25. Prior to the occupation of any phase which includes commercial buildings, a delivery, servicing and emergency vehicle management plan relating to that phase shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Each such plan shall be based upon the principles within the agreed Appendix 13.4A Delivery and Servicing Plan prepared by Waterman (ref: WIE17469-100-R 6-2-1-DSP) dated August 2024 and shall include details of access arrangements, and any proposed restrictions on permitted hours for service collections / dispatches from and deliveries to the commercial units within that phase (including refuse/ recycling collections where appropriate).
- Each approved delivery, servicing and emergency vehicle management plan shall be implemented in full in accordance with the approved details.
26. All reserved matters applications for a phase which includes buildings shall be accompanied by a parking management plan for that phase, based upon the principles within the agreed Appendix 13.3A Car Parking Management Plan prepared by Waterman (ref: WIE17469-100-5-2-1-PMP) dated August 2024. Each approved phase parking management plan shall be implemented in accordance with its approved details.
27. An electric vehicle charging scheme shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority:
- prior to the setting out of any car parking spaces within the multi-storey car park, and
 - for each phase, prior to the setting out of any car parking in that phase.
- The scheme shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details and maintained and retained thereafter.
28. Before any development within a phase commences (excluding enabling works), details shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority to demonstrate that the proposed construction equipment relating to that phase shall not impair the performance of communication, navigational aids and surveillance equipment required for the safe operation of Cambridge Airport. The development of each phase shall be carried out and thereafter operated in accordance with the approved assessment.
29. Development within any phase (excluding enabling works) shall not commence until a bird hazard management plan relating to that phase has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The management plan shall take into account the advice in Combined Aerodrome Safeguarding Team (CAST) Advice Note 3 "Wildlife Hazards Around Aerodromes" (April 2024). Each such plan shall be implemented as approved and shall remain in force for the life of the relevant buildings.
30. No solar photovoltaic panels shall be fixed in place until a glint and glare assessment for such panels has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The installation, operation, and maintenance of the solar photovoltaic panels shall thereafter be in accordance with the approved assessment.
31. Development hereby permitted within the East West Rail safeguarded area (as shown on East West Rail Safeguarding Map – SG-104 drawing ref 133735-EWR-ZO-XXX-PLN-LEP-00104

dated 13 November 2024) shall not prejudice the underlying objectives of such safeguarding nor the safe operation of the railway nor the safe use by pedestrians and cyclists of the Coldhams Lane cycle bridge where it crosses the Fen Line railway.



Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

www.gov.uk/mhclg

RIGHT TO CHALLENGE THE DECISION IN THE HIGH COURT

These notes are provided for guidance only and apply only to challenges under the legislation specified. If you require further advice on making any High Court challenge, or making an application for Judicial Review, you should consult a solicitor or other advisor or contact the Crown Office at the Royal Courts of Justice, King's Bench Division, Strand, London, WC2 2LL (0207 947 6000).

The attached decision is final unless it is successfully challenged in the Courts. The Secretary of State cannot amend or interpret the decision. It may be redetermined by the Secretary of State only if the decision is quashed by the Courts. However, if it is redetermined, it does not necessarily follow that the original decision will be reversed.

SECTION 1: PLANNING APPEALS AND CALLED-IN PLANNING APPLICATIONS

The decision may be challenged by making an application for permission to the High Court under section 288 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (the TCP Act).

Challenges under Section 288 of the TCP Act

With the permission of the High Court under section 288 of the TCP Act, decisions on called-in applications under section 77 of the TCP Act (planning), appeals under section 78 (planning) may be challenged. Any person aggrieved by the decision may question the validity of the decision on the grounds that it is not within the powers of the Act or that any of the relevant requirements have not been complied with in relation to the decision. An application for leave under this section must be made within six weeks from the day after the date of the decision.

SECTION 2: ENFORCEMENT APPEALS

Challenges under Section 289 of the TCP Act

Decisions on recovered enforcement appeals under all grounds can be challenged under section 289 of the TCP Act. To challenge the enforcement decision, permission must first be obtained from the Court. If the Court does not consider that there is an arguable case, it may refuse permission. Application for leave to make a challenge must be received by the Administrative Court within 28 days of the decision, unless the Court extends this period.

SECTION 3: AWARDS OF COSTS

A challenge to the decision on an application for an award of costs which is connected with a decision under section 77 or 78 of the TCP Act can be made under section 288 of the TCP Act if permission of the High Court is granted.

SECTION 4: INSPECTION OF DOCUMENTS

Where an inquiry or hearing has been held any person who is entitled to be notified of the decision has a statutory right to view the documents, photographs and plans listed in the appendix to the Inspector's report of the inquiry or hearing within 6 weeks of the day after the date of the decision. If you are such a person and you wish to view the documents you should get in touch with the office at the address from which the decision was issued, as shown on the letterhead on the decision letter, quoting the reference number and stating the day and time you wish to visit. At least 3 days notice should be given, if possible.