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# **Brookmans Park, Building 3 Planning Statement**

**Inmarsat Global Limited**

08 November 2023

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## 1.0 Introduction

1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared by Lichfields on behalf of Inmarsat Global Limited ('Inmarsat' or 'the applicant'). It accompanies a planning application ('the application') at Brookmans Park Teleport, Great North Road, Brookmans Park, Hatfield AL9 6NE ('the site').

1.2 The proposed development ('proposed development') is to support Inmarsat, a leading satellite service provider, to relocate its research and development activities to part of Brookmans Park Teleport. It follows the recent grant of planning permission (ref: 6/2023/0730/FULL), approved 19 June 2023, for the installation of a platform for use for research and development and to allow for testing of new satellite technology.

1.3 The current proposals relate to further development works proposed to support Inmarsat's occupation of part of the Brookmans Park Teleport site. The works relate primarily to the reuse and refurbishment of Building 3, as well as other minor works to support Inmarsat's occupation of part of Building 2 and 1 and operation at the site.

1.4 The description of development, as set out in the application forms is as follows:

*Proposed development at Brookman's Park Teleport Site comprising reuse and refurbishment of Building 3 for work associated with research and development and testing of new satellite technology on site.*

*Together with trenched cable linkage between gantry platform and buildings 1, 2 and 3 and other associated works.*

1.5 The purpose of this Planning Statement is to assess the proposed development against relevant policies in the development plan alongside other relevant material planning considerations, including the policies of the National Planning Policy Framework (the 'NPPF' or the 'Framework').

### **Accompanying Documents**

1.6 This Planning Statement should be read in conjunction with the following application documents:

- 1 Application drawings, prepared by Made Architects; and
- 2 Design and Access Statement ('DAS'), prepared by Made Architects.

### **Planning Statement Structure**

1.7 The remainder of this Planning Statement is structured into the following sections:

- Section 2.0 introduces the applicant, application site and its surroundings, provides an overview of planning history and summarises pre-application consultation;
- Section 3.0 provides a summary of the proposals;
- Section 4.0 sets out the planning policy relevant to the proposals;
- Section 5.0 contains an assessment of the proposals in planning terms; and

- Section 6.0 provides our conclusions.

## 2.0 **Background**

### **Inmarsat**

- 2.1 Inmarsat is a leading satellite service provider and has offered mobile satellite communication services and reliable, seamless global connectivity for over 40 years.
- 2.2 Inmarsat owns and operates the world's most reliable satellite network, including its own fleets of advanced communications satellites, ground infrastructure and terminals. The business currently has 14 satellites in orbit, with a further 7 launches planned in the next 4 years. Focussed on air and maritime, Inmarsat presently connects 17,000 aircraft and 160,000 vessels, the latter protecting 1.6m seafarers every day.
- 2.3 The business is presently in the process of relocating its existing operations at 99 City Road, in the City of London. Whilst the principal office element of the business will remain in London, Inmarsat is seeking a new state-of-the-art Research and Development and testing facility for its satellite technology development at Brookmans Park Teleport.

### **Brookmans Park Teleport**

- 2.4 The application site is located at Brookmans Park Teleport. This is situated outside the north-east edge of the settlement of Brookman's Park and approximately 3km north of Potters Bar. Brookmans Park Teleport is currently in use as offices and telecommunication uses. The site was originally established for the BBC for broadcasting. It is now used by a number of satellite/ telecoms operations.
- 2.5 As shown on Figure 2.1 at the centre of the Teleport site there is a main office building (Building 1), a number of other small buildings and structures and an area of satellite equipment on hardstanding.
- 2.6 The remainder of the site, beyond the built area, is occupied by bushes and grass and houses 4 large radio masts and satellite equipment. The eastern, northern and southern boundary of the site is occupied by reasonably mature trees.
- 2.7 There is an existing vehicular access to the Teleport site, from the A1000.

Figure 2.1 Aerial View of Brookmand Teleport Site

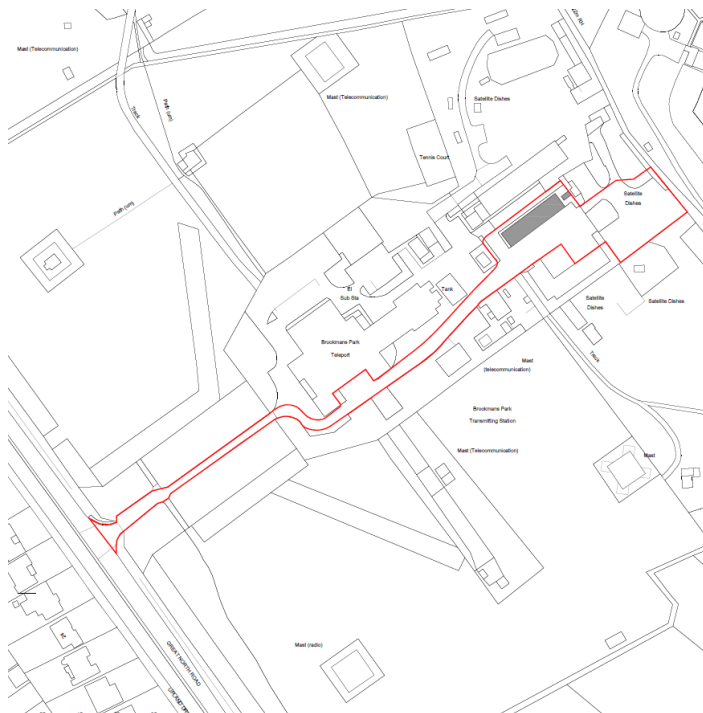


Source: Google Earth

## The Application Site

- 2.8 The application site relates to part of the site that is proposed to be used by Inmarsat. This is shown on the site location plan outlined in red.

Figure 2.2 Site Location Plan



Source: Made Architects

- 2.9 The site area is 5,150 sqm is the total area. The application site relates to an area of external space currently a concrete pad in disrepair and Building 3 (shaded in grey). The site is not

located in a Conservation Area and presently contains no Listed or Locally Listed buildings. There is a current application to Historic England to assess Brookman's Park transmitting station for listing.

- 2.10 The site is wholly located in Flood Zone 1 and therefore at low risk of flooding. A small part of the Brookmans Park Teleport site (to the south east outside the application site) has a high risk of surface water flooding; and the grassed area to the north of the built area has areas of low risk surface water flooding – these areas do not impinge on the application site.

## Surrounding Area

- 2.11 The application site itself is surrounded by the Brookmans Part Teleport site which it sits within. The immediate surrounding context is therefore characterised by the functioning teleport site – including buildings, satellite antennae and supporting infrastructure.
- 2.12 The wider Brookmans Park Teleport site is bound to the west by the A1000 beyond which are residential properties on Upland Drive within the Brookmans Park settlement boundary; to the south there are residential properties and Kentish Lane; to the east fields and Kentish Lane, and to the north fields with a satellite and radio masts in, beyond this is farmland. Surrounding the site is a mix of greenfield land and residential and commercial uses, some of which is located within Brookman's Park development boundary to the east.
- 2.13 There is a public footpath (North Mymms 037), which runs along the north boundary of Brookmans Park Teleport site from the A1000, and to the south of the wooded area before continuing north/east through farmland beyond the site boundary.
- 2.14 There is a group TPO on the wider Brookmans Park Teleport site protecting the area of trees, located at the junction of the A1000, along the site's boundary and access road. There is also a TPO covering the triangular wooded area at the north of the wider site. The proposed development does not affect any trees, including those subject to TPO.
- 2.15 The nearest Listed building is 56 Bell Lane (Grade II Listed) and Carpenters Cottage (Grade II Listed), which is situated approximately 450 metres west of the site. Due to the distance these are not affected by the proposed development.
- 2.16 Northaw Great Wood Site of Special Scientific Interest is situated approximately 1.5km metres south-east of the site. The site is within the SSSI risk zone.

## Planning History

- 2.17 There are a number of applications relating to the site's use for radio broadcast use since before 1 July 1948, including applications for masts, aerials, minor works and tree works. More recent history is listed here:
- 23/0730/FUL | Installation of a platform and service room, with trenched cable linkage between data room and platform and other associated works. Status : Application granted (19 June 2023)
  - 17/0206/F | Change of use of 895 square metres of ancillary office accommodation to Class B1 (Office) use. Status: Application granted (19/04/2017)
  - S6/2011/2770/LUP | Certificate of lawfulness for the proposed use of part or all of the existing equipment buildings for a data centre that will be connected near continuously



to a live electronic communications network for the purpose of storing, processing, updating, transmitting and receiving data by electronic means. Decision: Approved (08/02/2012)

- 04/1751/FP |Extension to existing car parking area. Decision: Withdrawn (04/02/2005).
- S6/2003/0022/FP |Construction of earth mounding (upto 2.5m in height) and installation of close boarded fencing (2m in height) in north western and south eastern sections of the site. Decision: Approved 16/06/2003
- S6/2003/0287/FP |Installation of two antennas on existing mast at height of 16.5 metres with associated telecommunications equipment to be housed within existing building. Decision: Approved (07/04/2003)
- S6/2002/0191/FP |Installation of two 0.6m dishes on existing tower and new equipment cabin to house digital radio equipment. Decision: Approved (25/03/2002)
- S6/2001/1333/FP | Erection of 18.3 metre dish antenna. Decision: Withdrawn (17/02/2003)
- S6/2001/1119/FP| Installation of four dipole antennas on existing telecommunications mast. Decision: Approved (16/09/2002)
- S6/2001/0308/DT | Prior approval to siting of replacement equipment cabin adjacent to 45 metre tower. Decision: Approved (02/04/2001)
- S6/1998/1053/FP |Installation of electricity sub-station adjacent to eastern boundary. Decision: Approved (04/01/1999)

2.18 The planning history reflects the functional telecommunication usage of the wider Brookmans Park Teleport site.

### **Planning History – Inmarsat**

2.19 Inmarsat is to lease space at the Brookmans Park Teleport site. To enable its occupation and use of the site planning permission was obtained for the construction of a Research and Development Platform to allow the testing of new satellite technology, along with other associated works (ref: 6/2023/0730/FULL). This was granted on 19 June 2023.

2.20 The current proposals relate to other works to building on this approval and to support Inmarsat’s occupation of the site.

### **Pre-application engagement**

2.21 An on site pre-application meeting was held with Officers from Welwyn Hatfield Council on 8 January 2023 (application ref: 2022/230/PA). Written feedback was issued on 3 February 2023 following the meeting. This advice mainly focused on the installation of the new platform gantry, which has now been granted planning permission (ref:6/2023/0730/FULL).

2.22 It was noted as part of this pre-application request that Inmarsat would be reoccupying parts of existing buildings on the site. The feedback at the time relevant to this stated:

- 1 The re-use of buildings is identified at Paragraph 150 of the NPPF as one of the developments which are not inappropriate (in Green Belt) provided that the buildings are of substantial construction.
- 2 There are no objections toward the reoccupation of the existing main office building and workshops on the site provided the proposed activities would fall within an appropriate use class. In this regard planning permission 6/2017/0206/FULL is relevant. This permission, dated 19/04/2017, granted “change of use of 895 square metres of ancillary office accommodation to Class B1 (Office) use”. The approved floorplans can be viewed on the Council’s website.
- 3 In term of the lawful use of the remainder of the site, a Certificate of Lawfulness ref: S6/2011/2770/LUP, dated 8 February 2012, certified that the lawful use of the site was electronic communications, which is a sui generis use.

## 3.0 **Proposals**

3.1 This Section provides a summary of the proposed development. Further details of the proposals are provided in the application drawings and accompanying DAS.

3.2 The description of development is as follows:

*Proposed development at Brookman's Park Teleport Site comprising reuse and refurbishment of Building 3 for work associated with research and development and testing of new satellite technology on site.*

*Together with trenched cable linkage between gantry platform and buildings 1, 2 and 3 and other associated works.*

3.3 The works proposed as part of the application relate to wider refreshment and improvements to the site to facilitate Inmarsat's occupation, comprising:

- 1 Re-use and refurbishment of Building 3, to create laboratories, communications room, workshop and plant room to support the research and development and testing of new satellite technology;
- 2 Extension of Building 3 by 63 sq m;
- 3 External improvement works to Building 3 with façade alterations, recladding,; and external installation of ramp;
- 4 Alterations to existing fencing to enclose the platform gantry area;
- 5 Refurbishment of existing hardstanding; and
- 6 Installation of trenching between Buildings 1, 2 and 3 to link those within Inmarsat's ownership.

3.4 The wider proposals also include refurbishment of part of Building 1 and Building 2, but these do not require planning permission.

## 4.0 **Planning Policy Context**

4.1 This section identifies key relevant planning policy and guidance at a national and local level relevant to this proposal. The proposed development is then assessed against these policies in Section 5.0.

### **The Statutory Development Plan**

4.2 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, states that:

*“If regard is to be had to the development plan for the purpose of any determination to be made under the planning acts the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise”.*

4.3 The statutory development plan for the site comprises:

- 1 Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan 2016 -2036 (adopted October 2023).

### **Local Plan**

4.4 Key designations / allocations relating to the site set out in the District Plan are as follows:

- 1 Within Green Belt;
- 2 The site sits just outside North Mymms Common and Newgate Street Farmed Plateau Landscape Area, to the north, east and south of the site.

4.5 Relevant policies in the Local Plan relevant to the proposed development include:

- Policy SP 1 Delivering Sustainable Development
- Policy SP3 Settlement Strategy and Green Belt Boundaries
- Policy SP4 Transport and Travel
- Policy SP9 Place-making and High Quality Design
- Policy SP10 Sustainable Design and Construction
- Policy SP11 Protection and Enhancement of Critical Environmental Assets
- Policy SADM 10 Employment Development
- Policy SADM 15 Heritage
- Policy SADM 16 Ecology and Landscape
- Policy SADM34 Development in the Green Belt

### **Other Material Considerations**

4.6 The Revised National Planning Policy Framework (“NPPF”) (2023) is also a material consideration in the determination of planning application.

## **National Planning Policy Framework (2023)**

4.7 The National Planning Policy Framework sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied. Paragraph 11 states that Development Plans and decisions on planning applications should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development. For decision-taking this means:

*c) approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or*

*d) where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:*

*i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or*

*ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.*

4.8 Key policies relevant to these proposals in the NPPF are set out in:

- Section 4 – Decision making;
- Section 6 – Building a strong and competitive economy;
- Section 10 – Supporting high quality communications;
- Section 11 – Making effective use of land;
- Section 12 – Achieving well-designed places;
- Section 13 – Protecting Green Belt land;
- Section 16 Conserving and enhancing the historic environment.

## 5.0 **Policy Assessment**

5.1 This section sets out an assessment of the relevant planning issues associated with the proposed development.

5.2 The following areas are considered specifically relevant in this instance:

A. Principle of Proposed Development

B. Economic/ Scheme Benefits

C. Design, Layout, Height and Massing

D. Heritage

E. Transport, Access, Parking

F. Ecology

G. Trees

### **A. Principle of Proposed Development in Green Belt**

#### **Research and Development Satellite Testing**

5.3 The proposed development is for a new research and development satellite testing facility at part of Brookmans Park Teleport. The current proposals relate to planning permission (ref: 6/2023/0730/FULL) for installation of a platform for use for research and development and to allow for testing of new satellite technology. The works subject to this planning application relate to other works to support Inmarsat's occupation of part of the Teleport site.

5.4 The teleport site has been used historically for broadcasting and telecommunication uses since the 1940s; and associated satellites have been positioned on the site for over 20 years. The proposed use is therefore in keeping with character of the site as a functioning teleport i.e. with a range of hardstanding, satellites and supporting infrastructure and ancillary office space.

5.5 The site was identified as an appropriate location for new telecommunication development in the District Plan, now superseded by the Local Plan.

5.6 Former District Plan Policy RA8 which relates to Brookmans Park Transmitting Station stated that Telecommunications and other related development at the Brookmans Park Transmitting Station will only be permitted where it is in accordance with the adopted masterplan and former Policy R21 (relating to telecommunications development).

5.7 Policy RA8 recognised the importance of concentrating telecommunication development on sites where technical infrastructure is already in situ – therefore the policy notes very special circumstances may exist to justify further telecommunication development at the site. The Council prepared a Masterplan in 1995 with the BBC to guide development on the site, including requiring landscaping to screen the site – we understand from pre-application discussions with the Council that this masterplan is no longer available. The owners of the site Arqiva also do not have a copy. Policy RA8 is considered out of date by

the Council and has not been carried forward in the new Local Plan, as such the Council's view is that the development within the site area should be considered under Green Belt policy.

- 5.8 It is relevant to note that the site has for more than 20 years been identified in the District Plan as a site within Green Belt where new telecommunication development could be justifiable by virtue of its significant telecommunication function.

### **Reuse and extension of Building 3**

- 5.9 The site is located within the Green Belt as designated within the adopted Local Plan.

- 5.10 In relation to Green Belt the reuse, refurbishment of Building 3 should be considered 'appropriate development' in Green Belt when considered against policy in the NPPF; and Policy SADM 34 (Development within the Green Belt) of the Local Plan.

- 5.11 Paragraph 150 of the NPPF states the following development is not inappropriate in Green Belt:

*d) the re-use of buildings provided that the buildings are of permanent and substantial construction;*

*e) material changes in the use of land (such as changes of use for outdoor sport or recreation, or for cemeteries and burial grounds); and*

- 5.12 The extension of Building 3 by 67 sq m is capable of being considered exceptional development in Green Belt. Paragraph 149 of the NPPF states local planning authorities should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt. However exceptions to this are:

*c) the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building;...*

*...g) limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land, whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would:*

*– not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development; or*

*– not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt, where the development would re-use previously developed land and contribute to meeting an identified affordable housing need within the area of the local planning authority.*

- 5.13 Building 3 is an existing building which is to be refurbished and extended by 63 sqm. The small scale extension does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building and can be considered an exception by Paragraph 149 in Green Belt Policy terms.

- 5.14 The proposals would not result in a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt. Also that it would not affect the openness of the wider Green Belt area within the adjacent North Mymms Common and Newgate Street Farmed Plateau as a result of intervening tree screening.

- 5.15 The refurbishment and extension of Building 3 is capable of being considered as appropriate and/ or exception in Green Belt.

### **Other facilitating works in Green Belt**

- 5.16 To support Inmarsat's occupation of part of the Brookman's Park Teleport site other minor works area proposed comprising:

- 1 Alterations to existing fencing to enclose the platform gantry area;
- 2 Refurbishment of existing hardstanding; and
- 3 Installation of trenching between buildings to link those within Inmarsat's ownership.

- 5.17 On review of Green Belt national and local policy, these are also considered to be appropriate development and/ or exceptional development in Green Belt terms.

### **B. Economic/Scheme Benefits**

- 5.18 As set out in the approved application for the platform gantry planning permission ref: 6/2023/0730/FULL), Inmarsat's occupation of part of Brookmans Park Teleport will result in notable benefits. In summary:

- 1 The site will play a key role in researching and developing satellites and advancing this technology.

Satellite and telecommunications infrastructure is vital to the UK. It underpins the operation of key services and contributes billions every year to the UK economy.

The UK has a powerful and innovative space sector, which has been identified by the UK Government as a strategic growth sector.

- 2 The site will be operated by British-based Inmarsat, the company plays a vital global role in satellite communications and its services form the backbone of aviation and maritime safety, protecting millions of people every day.
- 3 With its existing Teleport status and proximity to Inmarsat's London HQ, Brookman's Park is the location identified following an extensive 2 year site search, for Inmarsat's new, globally important, Research & Development lab.
- 4 Inmarsat's premises would host around 20-30 space engineers and customers at peak times –the site currently employs around 100 staff and has an overall capacity of 200-400.
- 5 Inmarsat's use of the site and the proposed development will maintain Brookman's Park established use as an active centre for Radio Satellite Telecommunications and bring up to 30 highly skilled technical roles to Welwyn & Hatfield.
- 6 Lack of more appropriate alternative locations in Welwyn Hatfield which would cause less harm to Green Belt.

### **C. Design, Layout, Height and Massing**

- 5.19 Design policies in the Local Plan are also relevant to consideration of the proposals. Local Plan Policy SP9 (Place Making and High-Quality Design) relates to design. It includes principles such as proposals responding to character and context and creating development



that is safe and secure. In terms of building function and form the policy states that alterations to buildings should relate well to the character and proportions of the existing building and its curtilage. As well as the surrounding context, including in terms of their siting, height, mass, scale, detailed design and materials.

5.20 The Building 3 refurbishment and other work of proposed development have been designed to meet the requirements of Inmarsat's operations on site as a satellite testing facility. The location of Building 3 is in close proximity to the approved Gantry platform as well as Building 1 and 2.

5.21 The extension of Building 3 is small scale. This minimises potential visibility from outside the Brookmans Park Teleport site. The use of materials will help the Building look refreshed and responds to existing materiality on site.

5.22 Overall, the proposals would be in keeping with the surrounding telecommunication uses on the Brookmans Park Teleport site. The proposals accord with design policies in national and local policy.

## **D. Heritage**

5.23 At present there are no existing heritage assets on or adjacent to the site that are relevant to the proposed development. If the proposed Historic England listing of the Brookmans Park Transmitting Station is carried forward policies in national and local policy relation to Listed Buildings and preserving heritage assets would apply.

5.24 Local Plan Policy SADM 15 Heritage would be relevant if the listing did go ahead. Policy SADM 15 states that proposals which affect designated heritage assets and the wider historic environment should consider the following:

- the potential to sustain and enhance the heritage asset and historic environment in a manner appropriate to its function and significance.
- Successive small-scale changes that lead to a cumulative loss or harm to the significance of the asset or historic environment should be avoided.
- Proposals should respect the character, appearance and setting of the asset and historic environment in terms of design, scale, materials and impact on key views.
- Architectural or historic features which are important to the character and appearance of the asset (including internal features) should be retained unaltered.
- The historic form and structural integrity of the asset are retained; and Appropriate recording of the fabric or features that are to be lost or compromised takes place and is deposited into the Historic Environment Record.

5.25 In line with the requirements of Local Plan Policy SADM 15, given the nature of the proposals, it is concluded the proposed development would not result in a change that would impact upon the heritage significance of the main building or transmission towers at Brookman's Park, via a change in setting.

5.26 The proposals are thus in accordance with Policy SADM 15 of the Local Plan, and in particular bullet point 3 which states that "Proposals should respect the character,

appearance and setting of the asset and historic environment in terms of design, scale, materials and impact on key views."

- 5.27 Should either the main building or transmission towers at Brookman's Park be subject to 'Listing', any changes within their 'setting' would require consideration under Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. The designation of the structures would not, however, alter the consideration of how their 'setting' may contribute to their overall heritage significance, nor how any changes within their 'setting' would alter such significance. Accordingly, the conclusions set out here would remain valid, and no harm would continue to arise to the heritage significance of the structures, via a change in setting. There would thus be no conflict with Section 66(1) of the Act, and the proposals would continue to be in accordance with Policy SADM 15 of the Local Plan.

## **E. Transport, Access, Parking**

- 5.28 The NPPF requires transport issues to be considered from the earliest stage of development proposals so that the potential impacts of the development on transport networks can be addressed (a), opportunities from existing or proposed transport infrastructure, and changing transport technology and usage, are realised (b), opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport are identified and pursued (c) and the environmental impacts of traffic and transport infrastructure can be identified, assessed and taken into account (d) (paragraph 104).
- 5.29 When determining planning applications, development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds where it would have an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe (NPPF paragraph 110). All developments that will generate significant amounts of movement should be required to provide a travel plan, and the application should be supported by a transport statement or transport assessment so that the likely impacts of the proposal can be assessed (paragraph 113). Local Policy on transport and travel is set out in Policy SP4.
- 5.30 Brookman's Park Teleport is an existing functioning telecommunication site. The proposed development would typically increase the number of employees on site by approximately 20-30 employees. The additional trips would be negligible.
- 5.31 Access to the site will use the existing access from the A1000. Inmarsat has been allocated 22 parking spaces in the existing car park.
- 5.32 The proposals are small scale and will use existing access and parking arrangements. On that basis they are considered to accord with local and national policy relating to transport, access and parking.

## **F. Landscaping**

- 5.33 Local Plan Policies SP9 and SP10 relate to landscaping. Policy SP10 encourages landscaping to be incorporated into the layout of new proposals in line with sound ecological principles.
- 5.34 As set out in the Landscape scheme for planning permission ref: 2023/0730/FULL, the planting strategy for Inmarsat's occupation of the site has been developed to strengthen the existing character of the site, whilst integrating with the local environment. The majority of the external landscape will be open but sensitively landscaped in order to create a natural

character and set the scheme contextually within the wider landscape setting. The landscape proposals seek to enhance the existing biodiversity by introducing natural planting, linking with the wider setting.

- 5.35 The Landscape Enhancement Strategy Plan approved as part of planning permission ref: 2023/0730/FUL sets out landscaping improvements as part of Inmarsat's occupation of the site (Ref:2697-LLA-ZZ-00-DR-L-0201-P01 Landscape Enhancement Strategy Plan). It confirms where possible native species will be implemented and it is proposed to implement a native hedge species to border the southern boundary, with the hedge maintained at approximately 1.5- 2.0m wide to help nesting birds, and linear planting belt also used help define the development and platform, whilst relating to the wider informal boundaries, creating important wildlife corridors, improving habitat values and visual connectivity.
- 5.36 It is also proposed to implement an area of improved grassland to the south of the site within the wider proposals which will help settle the scheme within the wider parkland, species rich grassland will encourage natural habitats and reduce intensive maintenance regimes.
- 5.37 Along the existing vegetative boundary to the South East of the site a series of bat and bird boxes are proposed with log piles to the floor, these will increase habitat value and help bat and bird foraging whilst increasing insect habitat value.
- 5.38 In terms of landscape management, the Landscape scheme for planning permission ref: 2023/0730/FUL also set out details of the management regime which will ensure that the spaces and other integral parts of the landscape are well managed in perpetuity, for the benefit of wildlife value they do not become degraded through neglect, inappropriate management or misuse.
- 5.39 The landscaping proposals under planning permission 2023/0730/FUL which this current permission sits alongside remain relevant and are in line with policies relating to landscaping and will offer opportunities for improved landscaping.

## **G. Ecology**

- 5.40 The NPPF includes clear objectives for conserving and enhancing the natural environment, including paragraph 174 which states "Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment..." ; and paragraph 180 which requires LPAs to apply a number of principles when determining planning applications including encouraging developments to integrate opportunities to improve biodiversity in and around developments, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity or enhance public access to nature.
- 5.41 Local Policy SADM16 is relevant in terms of Ecological Assets. Part 1 states proposals will be expected to maintain, protect, conserve and enhance biodiversity, the structure and function of ecological networks and the ecological status of water bodies. All developments that are not otherwise exempt will be required to deliver a measurable biodiversity net gain of at least 10%
- 5.42 As outlined in terms of the Landscaping section above, the Platform Gantry scheme includes proposals which offer the potential to enhance the opportunities for biodiversity.

The proposals are considered to accord with local and national policy in terms of biodiversity.

## **H.Trees**

- 5.43 Paragraph 131 of the NPPF states that trees make an important contribution to the character and quality of urban environments, and can also help mitigate and adapt to climate change. Planning policies and decisions should ensure that new streets are tree-lined, that opportunities are taken to incorporate trees elsewhere in developments (such as parks and community orchards), that appropriate measures are in place to secure the long-term maintenance of newly-planted trees, and that existing trees are retained wherever possible. Local Plan Policy SP 9, SP 10, SP 11 and SADM 16. seeks to protect and retain existing trees, hedgerows and woodland.
- 5.44 There are no trees on or immediately adjacent to the application site that would be affected by the proposed development.
- 5.45 The wider Brookmans Park Teleport site benefits from existing trees which screen the proposed development when viewed from surrounding areas.
- 5.46 The proposed development is considered to accord with planning policies relating to trees set out in both local and national policy.

## 6.0 Conclusion

- 6.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared by Lichfields on behalf of Inmarsat to accompany a full planning application for the to further development works proposed to support Inmarsat’s occupation of part of the Brookmans Park Teleport site.
- 6.2 The full planning application follows recent planning permission (ref: 6/2023/0730/FULL). This related to the installation of a platform to enable research and development work for Satellites to be carried out by Inmarsat at Brookmans Park Teleport – an established teleport site.
- 6.3 The proposed development, subject to this planning application, relates primarily to the reuse and refurbishment of Building 3, as well as other minor works to support Inmarsat’s occupation of part of Building 2 and 1 and operation at the site.
- 6.4 The site is within Green Belt and that has been fully considered within this report.
- 6.5 The proposed development is on previously developed land and primarily comprises refurbishment of an existing building. It is capable of being considered appropriate development in terms of the NPPF Paragraph 150 in terms of the reuse of buildings. The extension to Building 3 and the other minor works are also considered to be ‘exceptions’ to development in Green Belt in terms of Paragraph 149 extension to existing building and limited infilling.
- 6.6 In terms of benefits of Inmarsat’s occupation of part of the Brookmand’s Park site these are summarised as follows:
- 1 The site will play a key role in researching and developing satellites and advancing this technology.  
  
Satellite and telecommunications infrastructure is vital to the UK. It underpins the operation of key services and contributes billions every year to the UK economy.  
  
The UK has a powerful and innovative space sector, which has been identified by the UK Government as a strategic growth sector.
  - 2 The site will be operated by British-based Inmarsat, the company plays a vital global role in satellite communications and its services form the backbone of aviation and maritime safety, protecting millions of people every day.
  - 3 With its existing Teleport status and proximity to Inmarsat’s London HQ, Brookman’s Park is the location identified following an extensive 2 year site search, for Inmarsat’s new, globally important, Research & Development lab.
  - 4 Inmarsat’s premises would host around 20-30 space engineers and customers at peak times –the site currently employs around 100 staff and has an overall capacity of 200-400.
  - 5 Inmarsat’s use of the site and the proposed development will maintain Brookman’s Park established use as an active centre for Radio Satellite Telecommunications and bring up to 30 highly skilled technical roles to Welwyn & Hatfield.

6 Lack of more appropriate alternative locations in Welwyn Hatfield which would cause less harm to Green Belt.

6.7 In addition economic benefits associated with the development are also relevant:

- 1 Creating up to 20-30 new high skilled jobs on the site;
- 2 Providing capital investment to the Brookmans Park Teleport site;
- 3 Bringing high paid and high skilled technical innovative research and development jobs to Brookmans Park and Welwyn Hatfield;
- 4 Providing significant investment in Welwyn Hatfield from relocating satellite operations from London to Hertfordshire; and
- 5 Investing in research and development of satellites which is vital to the UK economy.

6.8 On balance the proposed development is in accordance with local and national policy and the applicant would seek to implement the proposed use as soon as possible upon the grant of planning permission.

6.9 If you have any further queries, please do not hesitate to contact Alison Bembenek on [alison.bembenek@lichfields.uk](mailto:alison.bembenek@lichfields.uk) or Ian Anderson [ian.anderson@lichfields.uk](mailto:ian.anderson@lichfields.uk) in the first instance.

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