

## **Hatfield Plot 5610**

*Planning Statement*

*November 2022*

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# 1 Introduction

1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared by Sphere25 LLP on behalf of Cambria Property Investments Limited (hereafter referred to as ‘the Applicant’). The statement is submitted in support of the Full Planning Application (‘the Application’) for the development of Plot 5610, Gypsy Moth Avenue, Hatfield Business Park, Hatfield, AL10 9BS (‘the Site’).

1.2 The description of development is as follows:

*“Erection of two industrial units for light industrial processes (E(g)(iii)) / general industrial (B2) / storage & distribution purposes (B8) and ancillary office space, with associated parking, access and supporting infrastructure.”*

1.3 The Planning Statement has been collated following thorough examination of the relevant Local Plan and other documents that may constitute a material consideration in the determination of the planning application for the redevelopment of the Site.

1.4 The proposals have benefited from pre-application consultation with Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council (‘WHBC’) planning officers.

## **Application Documents**

1.5 The planning application submission is accompanied by a package of supporting information. In this document, reference will be made, where appropriate, to the conclusions and details contained within these supporting documents.

1.6 The reports have been undertaken to demonstrate that the Site can accommodate a commercial development at the proposed scale.

1.7 The supporting application items and documentation are set out below:

<b>Planning Application Document</b>	<b>Author</b>
Planning Application Form	Sphere25 LLP
Site Location Plan	SRA Architects
Architectural Plans:	SRA Architects

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Existing Site Plan</li> <li>• Existing Site Sections</li> <li>• Proposed Site Plan</li> <li>• Proposed Site Plan with Easements</li> <li>• Building A – Proposed Ground Floor Plan</li> <li>• Building A – Proposed First Floor Plan</li> <li>• Building A – Proposed Roof Plan</li> <li>• Building A – Proposed Elevations 1</li> <li>• Building A – Proposed Elevations 2</li> <li>• Building A – Proposed Sections</li> <li>• Building B – Proposed Ground Floor Plan</li> <li>• Building B – Proposed First Floor Plan</li> <li>• Building B – Proposed Roof Plan</li> <li>• Building B – Proposed Elevations 1</li> <li>• Building B – Proposed Elevations 2</li> <li>• Building B – Proposed Sections</li> <li>• Proposed Site Sections</li> </ul>	
<p>Landscaping Plans:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Landscape Masterplan</li> <li>• Planting Plan</li> </ul>	Macgregor Smith

Supporting Application Document	Author
Planning Statement	Sphere25 LLP
Economic Statement	Sphere25 LLP
Design and Access Statement (DAS) <i>including Landscaping Strategy</i>	SRA Architects <i>Macgregor Smith</i>
Ecological Appraisal	Ecology Solutions
Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA)	EnviroArb-Solutions
Proposed Drainage Strategy	Eastwood Consulting Engineers
Phase 2 Ground Investigation Report	Ian Farmer Associates
Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Excavation	Cotswold Archaeology
Acoustic Impact Assessment	Hawkins Environmental
Air Quality Assessment	Hawkins Environmental
Energy Statement	D&d Building Services Consulting Engineers

Supporting Application Document	Author
Proposed External Lighting Plan and External Lighting Information	D&d Building Services Consulting Engineers
Transport Statement	i-Transport
Travel Plan	i-Transport

**Table 1: Submission Documents**

### Structure of the Planning Statement

- 1.8 The purpose of this Planning Statement is to set out the planning rationale that underpins the Planning Application and to demonstrate the proposals are acceptable in planning terms. This Statement is structured as follows:
- 1.9 Section 1 provides an **Introduction** to the Application. This includes a list of the documents and reports submitted in support of the Application.
- 1.10 Section 2 describes the **Site and its Context**. This section provides an overview of the Site, its physical features and surrounding land uses that characterise the area.
- 1.11 Section 3 outlines the lawful use of the site, and associated **Planning History**, including the overarching outline planning application for the business park within which this application sits.
- 1.12 Section 4 describes the **Proposal**. This details the principles and features of the Site, which have been considered in the development of the proposals.
- 1.13 Section 5 sets out the **Planning Policy Context**. Here, relevant national, regional and local planning policies are outlined. The section explains the policy framework against which the Application will be considered.
- 1.14 Section 6 provides a **Planning Assessment** of the proposals. This section assesses the principle of the proposed development alongside the wider planning considerations.
- 1.15 Section 7 provides an overview of the **Planning Benefits** of the proposals, and why Planning Permission should ultimately be granted.
- 1.16 Section 8 is a short **Summary and Conclusion** of the planning statement.

## 2 Site and Surrounding Area

### The Site

- 2.1 The Site measures approximately 0.96 ha in area and is situated at the northern end of Hatfield Business Park. This part of the park is now well established for a range of commercial uses including offices and warehouses.
- 2.2 The Site has previously been in use for vehicle parking on a large area of gravel surfacing in the centre of the Site. The western area is predominantly trees and dense undergrowth, with the eastern area consisting of grass and smaller vegetation. The Site is relatively flat ranging between 76 to 77 metres above sea level.
- 2.3 The Plot is bound to the west by the UNO Bus Garage and to the east lies the PCL/Arla distribution facility beyond Gypsy Moth Avenue. The Toolbank warehouse facility lies immediately to the south with other operators including DHL in close proximity. Hatfield Avenue bounds the Site to the north, beyond which lies the residential area of Hatfield Garden Village.
- 2.4 Vehicular and pedestrian access into the Site is currently taken via the existing estate road network via Gypsy Moth Avenue to the south. The Site links to the strategic road network via the A1(M) at junction 4 to the north and 3 to the south. The A1(M) provides a link to the M25 and London to the south and becomes the A1 to the north. Both junctions can be accessed via the A1001 Comet Way, from the main roundabout junction with Hatfield Avenue, B197 Wellfield Road, Manor Road and Birchwood Avenue.
- 2.5 Bus stops are located on the northern and eastern site boundaries with a range of lines providing connections to (inter alia) Welwyn Garden City, Luton and Hitchin. Hatfield railway station can be reached by bus in approximately 10 minutes.

### **Site Specific Designations**

- 2.6 The Site falls within the wider Hatfield Business Park, which is designated as an employment area (EA6), under Policy EMP1 of the adopted Welwyn Hatfield District Plan (2005).
- 2.7 The Site is not located within a Conservation Area and does not contain nor is it within the setting of any statutorily listed buildings. A number of trees exist within the Site however none are believed to be subject to Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs).
- 2.8 The Site lies within Flood Zone 1 (low probability), meaning a less than 1 in 1,000 annual chance of flooding from rivers and sea.
- 2.9 The Site is not located within nor is it in close proximity to any Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA).

## 3 Current Uses and Planning History

### Planning History

#### Planning Register

- 3.1 Hatfield Business Park sits on the site of the former Hatfield Aerodrome which was a private airfield and aircraft factory founded in the 1930s. The Aerodrome was first occupied by the DeHavilland Aircraft Works, and later by British Aerospace (BAe), until it was closed by BAe in the mid 1990's with the loss of 8,000 jobs<sup>1</sup>.
- 3.2 Following its closure, Goodman (formerly known as Arlington) in partnership with Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council, Hertfordshire County Council and St Albans District Council, developed a masterplan and Supplementary Planning Guidance document (Hatfield Aerodrome SPG (1999)) to facilitate the re-development of the site. The over-arching principles of the document were to:
- Promote sustainable development on the site;
  - Provide for a mix of uses on the site;
  - Promote economic development on the site to help replace the jobs lost when BAe closed; and
  - Provide work and homes for local people.
- 3.3 Outline planning permission which was subsequently granted in December 2000 (ref. S6/1999/1064/OP) for the following description of development:

*“Demolition of existing (unlisted) buildings, removal of runway and other hard standing areas and redevelopment for the following purposes: as a business park comprising uses within use class B1, B2, B8 and sui generis use; housing; new university campus (use class D1 and D2) to include replacement De Havilland sports and social club and associated playing fields; two hotels; primary school and associated facilities; district centre; works of conversion to enable recreation use of existing listed hangar; aviation heritage centre. Together with associated highway, transport and service infrastructure (including a*

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<sup>1</sup> Officer report for planning application ref. 6/2015/2043/OUTLINE. Available online at <https://planning.welhat.gov.uk/Planning/Display/6/2015/2043/OUTLINE>



*strategic transport corridor), landscaping and open space, diversion of Ellenbrook. Means of access to be determined”*

- 3.4 Paragraph 4.139 and the corresponding table of the Section 106 Agreement for planning permission S6/1999/1064/OP set out a total of c. 190,000sqm of development floorspace on the Hatfield Business Park, spread over B1, B2, B8 and Sui-Generis uses (not including hotel). We understand this has subsequently been revised to a higher quantum of floorspace through a number of supplemental deeds as a result of high market demand for B8 uses in recent years<sup>2</sup>.
- 3.5 An outline planning application was later submitted in 2015 (ref. 6/2015/2043/OUTLINE) for undelivered floorspace across a number of plots, including the subject Site (then known as Plot 5600). The Illustrative Site Layout Plans for this plot approved within the outline application show an option for 3,120sqm ‘B1c/B2’ use and 1,100sqm ‘B1 office’ use (drawing ref. DR-411-213-03) and another for 5,600sqm of ‘B1 office’ use (drawing ref. DR-411-215-00). Outline planning permission was granted on 5 July 2016, effectively extending the life of the original 2000 outline permission. An application for approval of Reserved Matters was not submitted for the area of the subject Site at Plot 5600, such that outline scheme and associated potential economic benefits have as yet not been realised here.
- 3.6 An application for a temporary planning permission was later submitted in 2018 (ref. 6/2018/2946/FULL) to use part of the western side of the subject Site for a period of 18 months for vehicle storage in association with Cambria Automobiles’ principal car dealerships on Plot 4100 in Hatfield Business Park. The application was approved in January 2019. Application ref. 6/2020/1195/VAR was later approved in July 2020 to extend the car storage use until 28 July 2022.
- 3.7 An application for a pre-delivery inspection facility (Use Class B2) and car storage area (Use Class B8) at the Site was also submitted in 2018 (ref. 6/2018/3255/FULL) to serve as a supporting facility to Cambria’s main car dealership scheme on Plot 4100. The application was approved in March 2019, however the permission has not been implemented.

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<sup>2</sup> Pre-application response from WHBC dated 19 October 2022

## 4 The Proposal

4.1 The description of development subject of this Planning Application is as follows:

*“Erection of two industrial units for light industrial processes (E(g)(iii)) / general industrial (B2) / storage & distribution purposes (B8) and ancillary office space, with associated parking, access and supporting infrastructure.”*

4.2 The Design and Access Statement (DAS) submitted in support of this Application sets out the design development process in detail. A thorough assessment of the Site’s opportunities and constraints has been considered in the design of the proposal including feedback received to date from WHBC Planning Officers.

4.3 The following sections outline the key development principles that have formed the basis of the proposals, as are explored in more detail in the accompanying DAS.

### **Use and Quantum**

4.4 This application seeks permission for two warehouse units for flexible commercial use at this currently under-utilised allocated employment plot.

4.5 Following an assessment of the Site’s opportunities and constraints a total of 4,181 sqm GIA of floorspace as follows:

- Building A: 2,936sqm
- Building B: 1,245sqm

4.6 The plot occupies a prominent position of the business park with direct access to strategic road infrastructure, and is highly attractive to a range of potential occupiers operating across use classes B2 and B8 in particular.

### **Layout**

4.7 The design team in conjunction with feedback from WHBC planning officers has sought to optimise the layout of the Site to deliver a high quality employment development.

- 4.8 Existing site services have been avoided while the landscaping buffer around the site perimeter is retained so as to deliver a plot in keeping with the wider business park aesthetic.
- 4.9 Building A on the eastern portion of the plot is free of constraints and comprises the largest of the 2 warehouses, set adjacent the very large Toolbank unit to the south. Service doors are located closest the existing vehicular entrance to the south while the office entrance is located closest to the car parking and proposed pedestrian site entrance.
- 4.10 Building B as the smaller of the 2 units is located south of a large existing drainage pipework easement and set within the southernmost tip of the Site. A suitable buffer is retained around both units.
- 4.11 The layout strategy seeks to maximise efficiency of the business park plot while safeguarding existing easements, ensuring efficient access and vehicular circulation and delivering a logical and sympathetic completion of this section of the business park.

### **Design Principles**

- 4.12 The buildings have been designed in keeping with the commercial context of the area while seeking to provide a transition from the larger existing Toolbank building to the south to the smaller scale residential development to the north. As such, the office components are lower in height than the warehouse units, which reduces the perceived scale and minimises the visual impact from surrounding locations.
- 4.13 To further reduce the impression of massing, the office elevations have been defined by a horizontal band of cladding with ribbon windows punched through. Below the windows a different profile cladding is proposed to break up the mass of the building.
- 4.14 The warehouse elevations have been kept simple using a horizontal blue cladding as these are subservient to the office elevations, while double height glazing has been used to define the building entrances.

### **Landscaping**

- 4.15 The Landscaping Strategy is provided within the accompanying DAS and has been prepared by Macgregor Smith.

- 4.16 The Landscape Proposals are designed to create a green frame to the Site. Planting has been maximised and trees have been planted where possible, adhering to the constraints of the easements and respecting the requirement for structural landscape to the site edge.
- 4.17 The landscape treatment to the new plot road frontage along the north eastern and eastern boundaries of Hatfield Avenue and Gypsy Moth Avenue, would respond to and visually extend the parkland style landscape of the wider business park.
- 4.18 A layering of trees and shrub planting to the perimeter of the site will help soften and screen views of the warehouses and associated parking and settle the development into the landscape.

## **Access and Parking**

### **Access**

- 4.19 The Site will be served by a singular vehicular access utilising the existing estate road to the south via Gypsy Moth Avenue. This is suitable for cars and articulated lorries for deliveries to and from the Site. A large c. 25m turning circle is permitted in front of Building A while offering continuous access to Building B through the northern portion of the Site.
- 4.20 A new gated pedestrian access into the Site is proposed on the northern boundary adjacent the existing bus stop on Hatfield Avenue. This provides convenient access to the office entrance of Building A while footpaths through the Site are provided to Building B as well as around the perimeter of both buildings.
- 4.21 Refuse stores are located close to both buildings for ease of storage and collection.

### **4.22 Car and Cycle Parking**

- 4.23 A total of 62 car parking spaces are provided for staff including 4 accessible spaces split proportionately adjacent the two building entrances. 10 spaces are also provided as active electric vehicle charging spaces, with 8 spaces provided with passive cable routes.
- 4.24 Secure cycle parking is also provided within a bike store adjacent building A with 8 Sheffield stands providing 16 cycle parking spaces.

## 5 Planning Policy Context

- 5.1 This section sets out the key national and local planning policies against which the Application will be determined. It also considers other documents that constitute material planning considerations and may be referred to during the consideration of this Application relating to the subject Site.
- 5.2 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires the determination of planning applications to be made in accordance with the relevant Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 5.3 In this case, the Development Plan comprises:
- Welwyn Hatfield District Plan (2005) – Saved Policies
  - Supplementary Planning Documents and Guidance
- 5.4 In addition, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) provides guidance at the national level and is an important material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

### **National Guidance – NPPF (2021)**

- 5.5 The NPPF was first published in March 2012 and was last updated in July 2021. The Framework states that planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The NPPF must be taken into account in preparing the development plan, and is a material consideration in planning decisions.
- 5.6 The framework contains a number of general policies of relevance. At the heart of the Framework is a ‘presumption in favour of sustainable development’. **Paragraph 8** states:
- 8. Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually*

*supportive ways (so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across each of the different objectives):*

- a) an economic objective – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;*
- b) a social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering well-designed, beautiful and safe places, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities’ health, social and cultural well-being; and*
- c) an environmental objective – to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.*

5.7 The NPPF states that the presumption in favour of sustainable development should run throughout plan-making and decision-taking. **Paragraph 11** of the NPPF states that 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.*

- 5.8 **Chapter 4** relates to decision making and states that local planning authorities should approach planning decisions in a positive and creative way, whilst also encouraging pre-application engagement to resolve issues early in the development of proposals. Additionally, it encourages Local Planning Authorities to work proactively with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area.
- 5.9 **Chapter 6** focuses on how the playing system can help build a strong and competitive economy. **Paragraph 81** states that planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development. The approach taken should allow each area to build on its strengths, counter any weaknesses and address the challenges of the future.
- 5.10 **Paragraph 82** states that planning policies should:
- d) *be flexible enough to accommodate needs not anticipated in the plan, allow for new and flexible working practices (such as live-work accommodation), and to enable a rapid response to changes in economic circumstances.*
- 5.11 **Paragraph 83** states that planning policies and decisions should recognise and address the specific locational requirements of different sectors, including making provision for *“clusters or networks of knowledge and data-driven, creative or high technology industries; and for storage and distribution operations at a variety of scales and in suitably accessible locations.”*
- 5.12 **Chapter 9** states that the planning system should actively manage patterns of growth to focus significant development on locations which are or can be made sustainable, thereby reducing the need to travel. The guidance states that applications for development should give priority first to pedestrian and cycle movements as well as appropriate facilities that encourage public transport use. Additionally, developments that will generate significant amounts of

movement should provide a travel plan and a transport statement or transport assessment so that the likely impacts of the proposal can be assessed.

5.13 **Chapter 11** relates to making effective use of the land. **Paragraph 119** states that planning policies and decisions should promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions.

5.14 **Paragraph 120** states that planning policies and decisions should:

*c) give substantial weight to the value of using suitable brownfield land within settlements for homes and other identified needs, and support appropriate opportunities to remediate despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated or unstable land;*

*d) promote and support the development of under-utilised land and buildings ...*

5.15 **Paragraph 122** states that planning policies and decisions need to reflect changes in the demand for land. They should be informed by regular reviews of both the land allocated for development in plans, and of land availability.

5.16 **Paragraph 124** explains that planning decisions should support development that “*makes efficient use of land*”, taking into account the identified need for different types of housing and other forms of development, local market conditions and viability, the availability and capacity of infrastructure and services, the desirability of maintaining an area’s prevailing character, and the importance of securing well-designed, attractive and healthy places.

5.17 **Chapter 12** of the NPPF seeks to demonstrate the Government’s commitment to good design in the built environment, and the role that high-quality design performs in ensuring sustainable development.

5.18 The NPPF provides guidance on all other key planning considerations for the purposes of this Application, including climate change, flood risk, and other sustainability and environmental considerations.



## Local Policy and Guidance

### Welwyn Hatfield District Plan (2005) – Saved Policies

- 5.19 WHBC formally adopted their District Plan in 2005. The District Plan is the current adopted Local Plan and provides a framework for planning decisions in the borough.
- 5.20 The District Plan was automatically saved for three years after its adoption. Following this, a request was made to the Secretary of State to save some policies beyond this period. This request was agreed in April 2008 and the District Plan saved policies continue to be part of the development plan.
- 5.21 The most relevant saved policies with regard to the proposed development are outlined below.

### Employment

- 5.22 **Policy EMP1 ‘Employment Areas’** allocates a range of Employment Areas within the borough including the 85ha Hatfield Business Park (EA6).
- 5.23 **Policy EMP2 ‘Acceptable Uses in Employment Areas’** states that development within Use Classes B1, B2 and B8 will be permitted within designated employment areas, subject to the following criteria:
- i. The proposal would not, due to the scale of employment generated, have an unacceptable impact on the demand for housing in the travel to work area;*
  - ii. The proposal would not have an unacceptable impact on the local and/or strategic transport infrastructure;*
  - iii. The proposal would not harm the amenities of any nearby residential properties;*
  - iv. The development would provide adequate parking, servicing and access;*
  - v. Any retail element of the development would clearly be ancillary to the main business use.*
- 5.24 The policy states that proposals for Class B8 development should also be well located in relation to the primary road network.

- 5.25 **Policy EMP9 ‘Training’** states that the Council will actively encourage the provision of employment training.
- 5.26 **Policy EMP11 ‘Local Recruitment’** states that the Council will seek to ensure that any large-scale employment generating development runs effective programmes to recruit local people. The Council will enter into Section 106 Planning Obligations to secure programmes of local recruitment, where appropriate.
- 5.27 **Policy HATAER2 ‘Mixed Use’** states that the redevelopment of the Hatfield Aerodrome Inset Site should provide for a variety of land uses. The principal uses of the site will be for employment, housing and educational purposes.
- 5.28 **Policy HATAER4 ‘Land Use Proposals for the Hatfield Aerodrome Site’** allocates areas for different land uses at the Hatfield Aerodrome site as can be seen on the Council’s Proposals Map. This includes 46.5 hectares (115 acres) of employment land and an indicative quantum of 191,000sqm.

#### Design

- 5.29 **Policy D1 ‘Quality of Design’** states that the Council will require the standard of design in all new development to be of a high quality. The design of new development should incorporate the design principles and policies in the Plan and the guidance contained in the Supplementary Design Guidance.
- 5.30 **Policy D2 ‘Character and Context’** states that the Council will require all new development to respect and relate to the character and context of the area in which it is proposed. Development proposals should as a minimum maintain, and where possible, should enhance or improve the character of the existing area.
- 5.31 **Policy D3 ‘Continuity and Enclosure’** states that the Council will require all new development to incorporate the principles of continuity and enclosure to distinguish between public and private spaces.
- 5.32 **Policy D6 ‘Legibility’** states that the Council will require all new development to enhance and contribute to the legibility of the development itself and of the area in which it is located.

- 5.33 **Policy D7 ‘Safety by Design’** states that the Council requires the design of new development to contribute to safer communities, to help with the reduction of the fear of crime.
- 5.34 **Policy D8 ‘Landscaping’** states that all development, other than changes of use of buildings, should include landscaping as an integral part of the overall design. This should reflect the strong tradition of urban landscape design in the district.
- 5.35 Landscaping schemes will require the use of materials which respect the character of the area, the planting of trees, hedgerows and shrubs and details of future maintenance. The retention and enhancement of existing key landscape features such as trees and shrubs, ponds and watercourses will be expected where feasible; where this is not possible, replacement planting should be carried out.
- 5.36 The design of landscaped areas should be such that maintenance is straightforward. On larger schemes, certain landscaped areas will be required to be designed in a manner capable of adoption.
- 5.37 **Policy D9 ‘Access and Design for People with Disabilities’** states that all new development should be designed to allow access by the disabled, young children in prams and pushchairs and those who are temporarily disabled through accident or injury. This includes access required to the site and access within the buildings and open spaces on the site. The Council will continue to provide for the movement needs of people with mobility restrictions in existing and proposed public areas and will support the promotion of mobility initiatives wherever possible.

#### Environment and Sustainability

- 5.38 **Policy SD1 ‘Sustainable Development’** states that development proposals will be permitted where it can be demonstrated that the principles of sustainable development are satisfied and that they accord with the objectives and policies of the District Plan.
- 5.39 **Policy HATAER1 ‘Sustainable Development of the Site’** states that development of the Inset Area will be based on the principles of sustainability, including layout, mix of uses, orientation and design of buildings, energy efficiency and the need to provide an integrated transport system. The sustainability tests and principles which were developed to assess the

content of the Hatfield Aerodrome masterplan, will be used to assess whether individual planning applications are in conformity with this policy.

5.40 **Policy R1 ‘Maximising the Use of Previously Developed Land’** states that in order to make the best use of land in the district, the Council will require development to take place on land which has been previously used or developed.

5.41 **Policy R2 ‘Contaminated Land’** states that the Council will encourage proposals for the development and reuse of land which is or may be contaminated. On such sites, applications must be accompanied by a full survey of the level of contamination and proposals for remediation measures. In considering whether planning permission should be granted, the Council will need to be satisfied that there will be no unacceptable risk to health or the environment arising from the remedial works or the proposed use of the site in relation to the type of contamination.

5.42 **Policy R3 ‘Energy Efficiency’** states that the Council will expect all development to include measures to maximise energy conservation through the design of buildings, site layout and provision of landscaping; and incorporate the best practical environmental option (BPEO) for energy supply.

5.43 **Policy R5 ‘Waste Management’** states that the Council will require applications for larger schemes to include details of the measures to be taken in the design, construction, operation, occupation and demolition of existing buildings on site to:

- i. Minimise the amount of waste generated;*
- ii. Re-use or re-cycle suitable waste materials generated;*
- iii. Minimise the pollution potential of unavoidable waste;*
- iv. Treat and dispose of the remaining waste in an environmentally acceptable manner; and*
- v. To maximise utilisation of appropriate secondary construction materials, including recycled aggregates.*

5.44 **Policy R7 ‘Protection of Ground and Surface Water’** states that planning permission will not be granted for development which poses a threat to the quality of both surface and/or

groundwater. Where proposals are acceptable the use of sustainable drainage systems will be encouraged, dependent on local site and underlying groundwater considerations.

- 5.45 **Policy R9 ‘Water Supply and Disposal’** states that permission will not be granted for proposals that would be detrimental to existing water abstractions, fisheries, amenity and nature conservation; or would cause adverse change in flows or levels in the groundwater, or any rivers, streams, ditches, springs, lakes or ponds in the vicinity.
- 5.46 Proposals should be consistent with the long term management of, and co-ordinated with, the provision of new water supply and disposal infrastructure.
- 5.47 **Policy R10 ‘Water Conservation Measures’** states that new development will be expected to incorporate water conservation measures wherever applicable, including sustainable drainage systems, water storage systems, soft landscaping and permeable surfaces to help reduce surface water run-off.
- 5.48 **Policy R11 ‘Biodiversity and Development’** states that all new development will be required to demonstrate how it would contribute positively to the biodiversity of the site by;
- i. The retention and enhancement of the natural features of the site;*
  - ii. The promotion of natural areas and wildlife corridors where appropriate as part of the design;*
  - iii. The translocation of habitats where necessary, where it can be demonstrated that the habitat or species concerned cannot be successfully accommodated within the development;*
  - iv. The use of locally native species in planting in accordance with Policy D8 Landscaping;*
  - v. Helping meet priorities/targets set out in the Local Biodiversity Action Plan.*
- 5.49 **Policy R17 ‘Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows’** states that the Council will seek the protection and retention of existing trees, hedgerows and woodland by the use of planning conditions, section 106 agreements, hedgerow retention notices and tree preservation orders where applicable. New development will be required to incorporate wherever appropriate new planting with locally native species and should be in accordance with Policy D8 Landscaping.

- 5.50 **Policy R18 ‘Air Quality’** states that the Council will have regard to the potential effects of a development on local air quality when determining planning applications. Consideration will be given to both the operational characteristics of the development and to the traffic generated by it. Any development within areas designated as Air Quality Management Areas must have regard to guidelines for ensuring air quality is maintained at acceptable levels as set out in the Air Quality Strategy.
- 5.51 **Policy R19 ‘Noise and Vibration Pollution’** states that proposals will be refused if the development is likely to generate unacceptable noise or vibration for other land uses; or to be affected by unacceptable noise or vibration from other land uses.
- 5.52 Planning permission will be granted where appropriate conditions may be imposed to ensure either an adequate level of protection against noise or vibration; or that the level of noise emitted can be controlled.
- 5.53 Proposals should be in accordance with the Supplementary Design Guidance.
- 5.54 **Policy R20 ‘Light Pollution’** states that in order to minimise light pollution, external lighting scheme proposals, including floodlighting, will only be approved where it can be demonstrated that all of the following criteria can be satisfied:
- i. The scheme proposed is the minimum needed for security and operational purposes or to enhance the external appearance of the building to be illuminated;*
  - ii. Glare and light spillage are minimised;*
  - iii. The amenity of residential areas is not adversely affected;*
  - iv. The visual character of historic buildings and conservation areas are not adversely affected;*
  - v. There would be no adverse impact on the character or openness of the countryside and green belt;*
  - vi. There would be no adverse effects on ecology and the natural environment including wildlife; and*
  - vii. There would be no dazzling or distraction of drivers using nearby roads.*

- 5.55 **Policy R29 ‘Archaeology’** states that where a proposal for development may affect remains of archaeological significance, or may be sited in an area of archaeological potential, developers will be required to undertake an archaeological assessment, if necessary with a field evaluation, and to submit a report on the findings to the Local Planning Authority, before an application is determined.
- 5.56 Planning permission will not be granted for development which adversely affects the site or setting of Scheduled Ancient Monuments, or other nationally important sites and monuments.
- 5.57 Where development proposals affect sites and monuments of less than national importance, the Council will seek preservation in situ of remains. In cases where this is neither feasible, nor merited, planning permission may be granted, subject to conditions requiring adequate provision being made for excavation and recording.
- 5.58 When planning permission is granted for development that would affect archaeological remains, taking into account the importance of the remains, conditions will be imposed to ensure that the remains are properly recorded, the results analysed and published and where practicable, the management and presentation of archaeological sites and their settings is enhanced.

#### Transport and Access

- 5.59 **Policy D5 ‘Design For Movement’** states that the Council will require all new development to take account of its impact on existing and proposed movement patterns. New development will be required to make provision for pedestrian, cyclist and passenger transport facilities. Parking and traffic management provision must be included in new development.
- 5.60 **Policy M1 ‘Integrating Transport and Land Use’** states that the Council will take every opportunity to integrate different modes of travel. Development proposals, except for those which are necessary in rural areas, will be permitted only in locations with accessibility to pedestrian and cycle routes and passenger transport services, or where this can be created, and where the environment and infrastructure can accommodate the amount and type of

transport movement likely to be generated. In considering development proposals, the Council will give priority to walking and more sustainable modes of travel.

- 5.61 **Policy M2 ‘Transport Assessments’** states that developers of major new traffic generating developments will be required to submit a transport assessment with the planning application. This must demonstrate the measures to be taken to minimise vehicular movements through improvements to passenger transport, pedestrian, and cycling facilities and state whether new highways works or traffic management measures will be required.
- 5.62 **Policy M3 ‘Green Travel Plans’** states that all new development at or above the thresholds set out in HTCOA's guidance on 'Developing a Green Travel Plan', should be supported by a Green Travel Plan. The implementation of measures included in a Green Travel Plan will be secured through planning conditions, or a Section 106 Agreement. The Council will also work with existing businesses to encourage the adoption and implementation of Green Travel Plans in line with the guidance.
- 5.63 **Policy M4 ‘Developer Contributions’** states that where development necessitates alteration to existing or the provision of new transport infrastructure or services, permission will be granted only if those works are environmentally acceptable and if the applicant agrees to meet, or where appropriate contribute to, the cost of the works or services. Planning conditions or a Section 106 Agreement or other legal agreement will be used to ensure the implementation of the works or obligations.
- 5.64 **Policy M5 ‘Pedestrian Facilities’** states that wherever possible and practical the Council will seek improvements in facilities for the safe and convenient movement of pedestrians. The Council will require proposals for new development to give priority to pedestrian access in their layouts through the inclusion of safe and direct routes linking to existing or proposed footpath networks and facilities. Developers may be required to provide or contribute towards off-site pedestrian facilities where this would be necessary to integrate it with surrounding areas. Development which would prejudice convenient and safe pedestrian movement will be refused.
- 5.65 **Policy M6 ‘Cycle Routes and Facilities’** states that the Council will require proposals for new development to encourage cycling through the inclusion of safe cycle routes and parking for



cycles, and where appropriate secure waterproof storage and changing and showering facilities for cyclists. New cycle routes should link with existing or proposed cycle paths. Developers may be required to provide or contribute towards off-site facilities and the overall planned cycle network.

5.66 **Policy M14 ‘Parking Standards For New Development’** states that the Council will require parking provision for new development to be made in accordance with the standards set out in the Council's supplementary planning guidance on parking. These standards represent the maximum allowable provision, except for cycle parking and car parking for disabled people where the standards represent the minimum allowable.

5.67 In urban areas of the district which are accessible by non-car modes, the Council will require parking standards for non-residential development to be reduced below the maximum allowable provision, in line with the methodology set out in the supplementary planning guidance on parking, unless it can be clearly demonstrated that such a limitation to the development would be detrimental to the economic viability of the area. The zones where such reductions will be applied are identified in the supplementary planning guidance.

#### Infrastructure

5.68 **Policy IM2 ‘Planning Obligations’** states that in order to satisfy the sustainability aims of the Plan and secure the proper planning of the area, development will be required to provide for the infrastructure, services and facilities which are directly related to it and necessary to the granting of planning permission. Developers will be required to provide or finance the cost of all such provision which is fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development, including:

- i. On-site facilities directly related to the proposed development in the interests of proper planning and to mitigate any possible adverse environmental impact;*
- ii. Off-site improvements, services and facilities necessary as a result of the development in order to avoid placing an additional burden on the existing community and to mitigate any possible adverse environmental impact arising from the development; and*
- iii. Affordable housing in accordance with Policy H7.*

5.69 This will be implemented through planning conditions and obligations agreed between the Council and developers under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and any related or subsequent legislation.

### **Supplementary Planning Documents/Guidance**

5.70 Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council (WHBC) and Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) have also published a number of Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) / Guidance (SPG) which comprise a material consideration in respect of planning applications. These include the following documents:

- **Hatfield Aerodrome SPG (1999)**

The SPG sets out the masterplan for the re-development of the Hatfield Aerodrome site and outlines the key principles that any development on the site should include.

- **Supplementary Design Guidance (2005)**

This document provides guidance on the design and layout of all new development in District and supplements policies in the District Plan.

- **Parking Standards SPG (2004)**

This document sets out parking standards for new developments, providing support for policy M14 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan.

- **Planning Obligations SPD (2012)**

The SPD expands on policy IM2 (planning obligations) of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan and provides detailed guidance on the type and scale of planning obligations sought in the borough, in addition to setting out the council's approach to securing planning obligations, with the aim of establishing a transparent, fair and consistent process for negotiating and monitoring planning obligations.

- **HCC Planning Obligations Guidance – Toolkit for Hertfordshire (2008)**

The guidance sets out how the County Council deals with the negotiation, preparation and completion of planning obligation agreements required to mitigate the impacts of development on education, highways and public transport infrastructure.

- **HCC Travel Plan Guidance for Businesses and Residential Development (2020)**

This document explains Hertfordshire County Council's requirements for Travel

Plans, ensuring developments across the county support sustainable transport and minimise their negative impacts.

### **Draft Planning Policy**

- 5.71 WHBC are currently in the process of preparing a new Local Plan which, once adopted, will supersede the Saved Policies in the current District Plan.
- 5.72 WHBC's draft Local Plan was submitted for examination in May 2017. Following a series of hearing sessions, the Examination Inspector has written a number of reports relating to the soundness of the Plan and the need for more sites to be added in to the Plan. It is understood that correspondence with the Inspector is ongoing with the latest written communication dated 18 November 2022.
- 5.73 Due to the advanced nature of the emerging Local Plan its policies are afforded some weight in the determination of the application. The most relevant emerging policies with regard to the proposed development are outlined below.

### **Employment**

- 5.74 **Policy SP 2 'Targets for Growth'** states that 294.1 hectares of employment land are identified to maintain a sufficient supply of jobs in the borough and provide the opportunity for new employment floorspace to be provided between 2013 and 2032, allowing for flexibility in the face of economic changes. Provision will be made for at least 116,400 sq.m of new floorspace for industry, offices and warehousing over the plan period from designated employment areas and mixed use sites.
- 5.75 **Policy SP 8 'The Local Economy'** states that the Council will support economic prosperity, encourage inward investment and the creation of a range jobs by (inter alia) ensuring that provision is made to meet the needs of business sectors that are already well represented in Welwyn Hatfield and those that are looking to invest in the area; maintaining a balance of types of employment so that opportunities are available for people with a range of different skills and levels of skill; and ensuring that provision is made for a range of opportunities, in terms of sites and premises, to allow new and emerging sectors to be accommodated.

- 5.76 New office, industry and warehousing development should be located in the designated employment areas defined on the Policies Map.
- 5.77 The provision of training facilities or other opportunities to improve the skills and qualifications of the resident workforce and help sections of the workforce that are disadvantaged in the labour market (particularly school leavers not in employment, education or training) will be promoted and contributions to support these schemes will be sought. Training initiatives will be also supported.
- 5.78 **Policy SADM 10 ‘Employment development’** allocates a range of designated employment areas, including previously developed parts of Hatfield Business Park which is allocated for B1, B2 and B8 uses, and undeveloped parts of Hatfield Business Park for B1 uses (area EA6).

#### Design

- 5.79 **Policy SP 9 ‘Place Making and High Quality Design’** states that proposals will be required to deliver a high quality design that fosters a positive sense of place by responding to a range of principles in an integrated and coherent way, including (inter alia): Respond to character and context; Legible, permeable and well connected; High quality public space and landscaping; Space for nature; Safe and secure.

#### Environment and Sustainability

- 5.80 **Policy SP 1 ‘Delivering Sustainable Development’** states that the Local Plan seeks to bring about sustainable development in the borough by applying a range of principles, including (inter alia) the need to plan positively for growth in a way which supports economic growth, increases the supply of housing and helps to reduce social and health inequalities in the borough – whilst recognising environmental and infrastructure constraints; and that the location of new development should deliver a sustainable pattern of development which prioritises previously developed land; minimises the need to travel by directing growth to those areas with good transport networks and which are well served by jobs, services and facilities; protects areas of highest environmental value; and avoids areas of high flood risk.
- 5.81 **Policy SP 10 ‘Sustainable Design and Construction’** states that proposals that adopt sustainable design and construction principles within an integrated design solution will be supported. This should be demonstrated via a Sustainable Design Statement and associated

plans. The policy outlines a range of sustainability principles including Materials and waste; Water sensitive design; Energy and climate change; and Landscape and biodiversity.

- 5.82 **Policy SADM 13 ‘Sustainability Requirements’** states that all major development proposals must demonstrate that they have sought to maximise opportunities for renewable and low carbon sources of energy supply where consistent with other Local Plan policies.
- 5.83 **Policy SADM 14 ‘Flood Risk and Surface Water Management’** states that all major development proposals, and all proposals in areas identified as being at risk of surface water flooding, will be required to manage surface water runoff and surface water flood risk via the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems.
- 5.84 All development proposals should seek to incorporate suitable source control measures at the building and plot-level. The loss of permeable surfaces and other features which help reduce and manage surface water flood risk without suitable compensatory provision will be resisted.
- 5.85 **Policy SADM 15 ‘Heritage’** states that an Archaeological Assessment will be required if the scale and nature of the proposal are likely to have an impact on the significance of all or part of the asset.
- 5.86 **Policy SADM 16 ‘Ecology and Landscape’** states that proposals will be expected to maintain, protect and wherever possible enhance biodiversity, the structure and function of ecological networks and the ecological status of water bodies. Proposals will be expected to help conserve and enhance the borough's natural and historic landscape and sit comfortably within the wider landscape setting.
- 5.87 **Policy SADM 18 ‘Environmental Pollution’** states that when considering development proposals, the Council will ensure that pollution will not have an unacceptable impact on human health, general amenity, critical environmental assets or the wider natural environment. Guidance is provided with regard to assessment of impacts in relation to Contaminated land and soil pollution; Air Quality; Noise and Vibration; and Light pollution.

#### [Transport and Access](#)

- 5.88 **Policy SADM 2 ‘Highway Network and Safety’** states that development proposals will be permitted provided:

- i. There would be no unacceptable impacts on the local and /or strategic transport network. Development proposals which generate a significant amount of traffic movements must be accompanied by either a Transport Assessment or Transport Statement as appropriate in accordance with the criteria in the Hertfordshire County Council Highway Design Guidance;*
- ii. There would be no negative impacts on highway safety;*
- iii. They are designed to allow safe and suitable means of access and site operation; and*
- iv. They provide satisfactory and suitable levels of parking.*

5.89 **Policy SADM 3 ‘Sustainable Travel for All’** states that all developments at or above the thresholds set out in Hertfordshire County Council’s Hertfordshire Travel Plan Guidance will be required to submit a Travel Plan as part of a planning application.

5.90 Development proposals should make provision where appropriate for (inter alia) cyclists, pedestrians, public transport, and servicing and emergency vehicles.

5.91 **Policy SADM 12 ‘Parking, Servicing and Refuse’** states that the type and quantum of vehicle and cycle parking provided within development proposals will be informed by the standards set out in the Council's parking standards taking account of: the site's location and accessibility to public transport, services and facilities; the nature and degree of parking demand likely to be associated with the development and opportunities for shared parking; and the need to promote more sustainable forms of travel within the borough.

5.92 Appropriate provision of service areas and refuse storage and collection areas should be made according to the nature of the development. Such areas and access to them should be appropriately sited and designed to ensure they can: perform their role effectively without prejudicing or being prejudiced by other functions and users; maintain an attractive and coherent street scene and protect visual amenity; and avoid creating risk to human health or an environmental nuisance.

#### Infrastructure

5.93 **Policy SP 13 ‘Infrastructure Delivery’** states that developers will be required to contribute to the reasonable costs of enhancing existing infrastructure or providing new physical, social

and green infrastructure, required as a result of their proposals, through either financial contributions (including planning obligations or the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)), or by direct provision of such infrastructure on-site within the development.

5.94 The Council will use the adopted Planning Obligations SPD, Section 106 agreements, unilateral undertakings, planning conditions, and when adopted, the Council's CIL Charging Schedule, to secure this.

5.95 Supporting infrastructure should be provided in advance of, or alongside, the development, unless there is sufficient existing capacity. The appropriate phasing for the provision of infrastructure will however be determined on a case by case basis.

### **Other Material Considerations**

#### The National Design Guide

5.96 First published in October 2019, The National Design Guide is "*Planning practice guidance for beautiful, enduring and successful places*". The guide sets out ten characteristics of good design. These are:

1. Context – enhances the surroundings.
2. Identity – attractive and distinctive.
3. Built form – a coherent pattern of development.
4. Movement – accessible and easy to move around.
5. Nature – enhanced and optimised.
6. Public spaces – safe, social and inclusive.
7. Uses – mixed and integrated.
8. Homes and buildings – functional, healthy and sustainable.
9. Resources – efficient and resilient.
10. Lifespan – made to last.

5.97 Further details can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-design-guide>.

## **Summary**

5.98 This Planning Application has been developed with regard to the suite of national and local policies set out above. The accompanying Design and Access Statement provides full details of the Application’s design principles and attributes.



## 6 Planning Assessment

- 6.1 This section considers the key matters relating to the proposed development in the context of relevant planning policy, as well as material considerations. It is important to emphasise that Section 38(6) of the Planning & Compulsory Act 2004 states that applications must be determined in accordance with the relevant Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 6.2 This section of the statement begins with the principle of development with regard to the Site's strategic allocations and constraints. This is followed by a summary of the other key planning and design considerations.

### **Principle of Use**

- 6.3 The proposal as a flexible light/general industrial/storage and distribution development at this allocated employment site accords with the spatial strategy within the development plan, namely Policy EMP2.
- 6.4 In line with the policy guidance, the proposals by virtue of employment generation will not have unacceptable impact on the demand for housing nor on transport infrastructure, while the impacts to residential properties through careful layout and lighting design are minimised. The proposals will provide appropriate levels of parking and servicing while utilising the existing estate road access arrangements.
- 6.5 The Site is also ideally located with regard to the primary road network for Class B8 development. The Site's well-connected nature would mean its enhanced use would accord with sustainable patterns of development in line with draft Policy SP 1.
- 6.6 The Site benefits from outline planning permission for employment uses at the wider Hatfield Business Park (ref. S6/1999/1064/OP) including B1, B2, B8 and Sui-Generis uses, a more recent outline planning permission for employment uses at the Site (ref. 6/2015/2043/OUTLINE), and a detailed employment scheme granted in 2019 (ref. 6/2018/3255/FULL) which have together further established the precedent for the proposed use.
- 6.7 The proposal provides a mix of uses in line with Policy HATAER2 and will further enhance the long term sustainability of the business park through its diversity of uses in line with the spirit

of the Hatfield Aerodrome SPG (1999) and guidance contained within the emerging Local Plan (Policy SP 8).

6.8 Pre-application advice received from officers states:

*“... the Local Planning Authority accepts that a flexible approach needs to be taken to the development of this site, in accordance with paragraph 1.2 of the Hatfield Aerodrome SPG and paragraph 81 of the NPPF. It is acknowledged that over twenty years on from when original outline permission was granted and the Section 106 Agreement was signed, the economic climate and employment practices have changed significantly.*

*The proposed development represents an important employment investment in the area, which would create jobs, from both the development and construction of the development, in accordance with the aims and objectives of the Hatfield Aerodrome SPG.”*

6.9 It is therefore considered that the principle of use is wholly justified in seeing the completion of this section of the business park following an interim informal parking use, and the delivery of important economic benefits including employment, skills and training opportunities, as are explored in more detail within the accompanying Economic Statement.

### **Quantum**

6.10 The pre-application response received from officers details how the earlier overarching outline planning permission (ref. S6/1999/1064/OP) set out a total of “197,996sqm of development floorspace on the Hatfield Business Park”, while advising that “the cumulative quantum of floor-space for the Business Park has been increased through a number of supplemental deeds as a result of high market demand for B8 uses in recent years.”

6.11 The pre-application response continues as follows:

*“The Section 106 agreement to the original application defined Units of Development (UD) as a calculation based on floorspace in order to control pressure on the local road network arising from new development at the former Hatfield*

*Aerodrome. A set quota of UD was permitted across a number of Use Classes, the majority of which has now been delivered as equivalent floorspace.*

...

*Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) have previously been acceptant of applications for flexibility within the use classes, noting that the maximum limit of UD's (and therefore vehicle trips associated with the operation of the park) remained unchanged to the original consent.*

*Under the previous permissions a substitution formula was applied and this involved reallocating use class B1c/B2 to B8 floorspace and recalculating the amount of B1c/B2 floorspace remaining on the site, using the UD calculation, set out at schedule 16 of the Section 106 Agreement for planning permission S6/1999/1064/OP.*

*Class B2 floorspace has since been exceeded, but there remains an unutilised allocation of class B1 floor space. In this case, it would be reasonable to apply a similar substitution formula to reallocate the floorspace under use class B1.*

*In accordance with the table set out in schedule 16 of the Section 106 Agreement, where any individual development is a mixed-use development then the conversion of floorspace into UD will be based on the most onerous standard applicable to any individual component within that mixed use development.”*

6.12 As detailed by the WHBC pre-application response, the maximum number of Units of Development have yet to be reached, with 190 Units of Development remaining for the B1 a/b use class. Applying the Units of Development approach set out within the overarching S106 agreement, the proposals at 4,181sqm would equate to 35 Units of Development (4,181 divided by 120). Therefore, the remaining Units of Development is 155 Units of Development (190 minus 35). This conclusion was supported in the pre-application response received from WHBC, and is discussed in more detail within the accompanying Transport Statement.

### **Design, Layout and Massing**

6.13 The design team in conjunction with feedback from WHBC planning officers has sought to optimise the layout of the Site to deliver a high quality employment development.

- 6.14 Existing site services have been avoided while the landscaping buffer around the site perimeter is retained so as to deliver a plot in keeping with the wider business park aesthetic.
- 6.15 Building A on the eastern portion of the plot is free of constraints and comprises the largest of the 2 warehouses, set adjacent the very large Toolbank unit to the south. Service doors are located closest the existing vehicular entrance to the south while the office entrance is located closest to the car parking and proposed pedestrian site entrance.
- 6.16 Building B as the smaller of the 2 units is located south of a large existing drainage pipework easement and set within the southernmost tip of the Site. A suitable buffer is retained around both units.
- 6.17 The layout strategy seeks to maximise efficiency of the business park plot while safeguarding existing easements, ensuring efficient access and vehicular circulation and delivering a logical and sympathetic completion of this section of the business park.
- 6.18 The buildings have been designed in keeping with the commercial context of the area while seeking to provide a transition from the larger existing Toolbank building to the south to the smaller scale residential development to the north. As such, the office components are lower in height than the warehouse units, which reduces the perceived scale and minimises the visual impact from surrounding locations.
- 6.19 The design incorporates a common language used throughout the site which applies different material treatments to the building dependent on function, site position and context.
- 6.20 To further reduce the impression of massing, the office elevations have been defined by a horizontal band of cladding with ribbon windows punched through. Below the windows a different profile cladding is proposed to break up the mass of the building.
- 6.21 The warehouse elevations have been kept simple using a horizontal blue cladding as these are subservient to the office elevations and do not require windows. Large roller shutter doors will be used to articulate these elevations. Long elevations have also been broken up by vertical slot windows to create a rhythm and break up the building mass.
- 6.22 Double height glazing has been used to define the building entrances. Additional definition to the entrances such as a canopies and indicative signage articulate the elevations.

6.23 The proposals are considered to achieve a high quality of design sympathetic the existing character of the area in line with Local Plan guidance including Saved Policies D1 and D2 and draft Policy SP 9.

### **Landscaping**

6.24 The Landscaping Strategy is provided within the accompanying DAS and has been prepared by Macgregor Smith.

6.25 The Landscape Proposals are designed to create a green frame to the Site. Planting has been maximised and trees have been planted where possible, adhering to the constraints of the easements and respecting the requirement for structural landscape to the site edge.

6.26 The landscape treatment to the new plot road frontage along the north eastern and eastern boundaries of Hatfield Avenue and Gypsy Moth Avenue, would respond to and visually extend the parkland style landscape of the wider business park.

6.27 The Site's biodiversity value is currently limited. The western edge currently comprises a dense tree and shrub belt. A thick buffer of proposed mix of berry bearing native shrubs would extend this edge and maximise biodiversity. Bird boxes would also be installed.

6.28 The proposals require the removal of 4 trees, but 23 trees will be planted in their place in a mix of native and non native species.

6.29 A layering of trees and shrub planting to the perimeter of the site will help soften and screen views of the warehouses and associated parking and settle the development into the landscape.

6.30 The plot currently reads as left-over space which has previously been used as an informal parking area. The development of a distribution depot is in keeping with the character of this part of the business park and would create definition and purpose for this space. It would enable the site boundaries to be strengthened with planting, increase the quality of the edges and tie into and perpetuate the wider business park landscape, which is well maintained and maturing. The landscape proposal provides a fresh and simple approach to balance aesthetics, biodiversity value, and maintenance.

- 6.31 It is envisaged that detailed hard and soft landscape proposals will be developed at planning condition stage. The high quality landscaping proposals are considered entirely consistent with the Local Plan including Saved Policy D8 and draft Policies SP 9 and SADM 16.

### **Transport & Highways**

- 6.32 A Transport Statement and Travel Plan have been prepared by i-Transport and are submitted in support of this Application to consider the transport and highways impacts of the proposed development, and to set targets for reduction in single occupancy car trips.
- 6.33 The Transport Statement identifies that the Site is conveniently located in terms of access to the local highway network, dedicated access already being provided via an estate road off Gypsy Moth Avenue. The Site connects to the strategic highway network through the A1001 which leads to junctions 3 and 4 of the A1(M).
- 6.34 The Site also benefits from good walking facilities in the vicinity of the Site, while cycling acts as a viable alternative to short car trips, particularly those journeys under 5km and as part of longer journeys by public transport.
- 6.35 Bus stops located c. 225m to the south on Gypsy Moth Avenue currently represent the closest bus stops to the existing site. Bus stops on Hatfield Avenue are currently situated 400m walking distance to the northeast, however this will reduce to circa 25m for the westbound bus stop and 170m for the eastbound bus stop as a result of the new pedestrian / cycle access point on the northern site boundary.
- 6.36 Hatfield Railway Station is located directly 2km east of the Site and provides access towards Cambridge, London Kings Cross, Welwyn Garden City, Moorgate and Letchworth Garden City. The Site can be accessed from Hatfield Rail Station via the 341, 602, 641 and the 644 bus services.
- 6.37 The vehicular access for the Site will remain as per the existing consented access arrangements, with a vehicular access to be taken via a gated access from a spur of the Site Access Road which connects to Gypsy Moth Avenue. The swept path analysis of two articulated vehicles accessing the Site is shown within the Transport Statement,

- demonstrating vehicles can enter the site, manoeuvre such that they may offload, and turn so that they egress in forward gear.
- 6.38 The proposed parking provision of 62 parking spaces is within the Hatfield Aerodrome SPG maximum and reflects a sensible level of provision based upon the B2 / B8 mixed use proposals, the sustainable nature of the proposals and the sustainable location of the Site.
- 6.39 The proposed parking quantum would include 4 disabled (blue badge holder) spaces. This equates to 6.5% disabled parking provision which is in excess of the 5% required by the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan Review Supplementary Planning Guidance Parking Standards. Disabled parking is located next to the internal pedestrian network, close to unit entrances, to facilitate safe access to the units.
- 6.40 Of the total parking provision, 10 spaces would be provided with active electric vehicle charging infrastructure, with 8 spaces provided with passive cable routes. The proposed car parking is provided within the Site which is private and secure via a gated access. Parking will only be utilised by staff and visitors to the Site.
- 6.41 The Proposed Development will provide a total of 16 cycle parking spaces, comprising of 8 Sheffield Cycle Stands. It is considered that the total number of cycle parking spaces are in line with the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan Review Supplementary Planning Guidance Parking Standards.
- 6.42 As set out within the analysis on Quantum above, the Proposed Development equates to 35 Units of Development. Therefore, the remaining Units of Development is 155 Units of Development (190 minus 35). Thus, the Proposed Development will stay within the remaining permitted Units of Development and therefore the net highways impact of the Development Proposals will not increase above the permitted quantum of development or permitted traffic flows.
- 6.43 The Transport Statement further demonstrates that there are no existing road safety issues within the vicinity of the Site. The Proposed Development would generate cars and HGVs in a similar way to the current road users in the vicinity and would use Gypsy Moth Avenue to access the wider highway network. Therefore, there is nothing to suggest that the Proposed Development would alter the injury accident rates within the vicinity of the Site and it is

therefore considered that the Proposed Development would not result in an unacceptable impact on road safety.

- 6.44 The submitted Travel Plan meanwhile aims to promote sustainable lifestyles amongst employees of the site, through reducing single occupancy car journeys, providing non-car mode travel options for local journeys; and influencing modal choice.
- 6.45 To achieve the aims and objectives outlined in the document, a package of measures has been set out to encourage the uptake of sustainable travel modes, including walking, cycling and the use of public transport and reducing the number of single occupancy car journeys to/from the Site. Three and five year targets have been set for the development in order to monitor the progress of the Travel Plan, in comparison with the baseline levels. These are designed to accord with the Green Transport Master Plan for Hatfield Business Park.
- 6.46 Initial baseline data will be collected within three months of the development opening. The survey data will be used to validate the baseline data (obtained from the Census) which has been used in the Travel Plan, with the surveys then repeated annually for at least a five-year period. These survey results will be used to assess the progress of the Travel Plan against the targets set. If the targets within the Travel Plan are not achieved, then remedial measures will be introduced in order to get the Travel Plan ‘back on track’.
- 6.47 A framework for management and implementation of the Travel Plan is proposed. A Travel Plan Co-ordinator will be appointed for a period of 5 years from first occupation. The Travel Plan Coordinator will be a member of staff and will oversee the implementation of the proposed measures. A suggested action plan for the implementation of these measures has been put forward.
- 6.48 As such, the redevelopment proposals are considered to be in accordance with the relevant national, regional and local transport policies relating to land use development, and there are no transport reasons why the development should not be permitted.

## **Air Quality**



- 6.49 An Air Quality Assessment has been prepared by Hawkins Environmental Limited to determine whether the Site is suitable for use, and to determine whether the proposed development would have an adverse impact on the surrounding environment.
- 6.50 The assessment identifies that the proposed development is not located within or close to an Air Quality Management Area, nor does it introduce new high sensitivity receptors; therefore, an assessment of the impacts of the local area on the development is not required.
- 6.51 Trip generation data supplied by i-Transport indicate that there will be an increase in trips generated by the proposed development, including HGVs, and therefore an assessment of the impacts of the development on the local area has been undertaken.
- 6.52 To characterise the change in air quality as a consequence of the proposed development, predictions of air pollutant concentrations at sensitive receptors have been carried out for the proposed opening year of the development (2023) both with and without the proposed development traffic. The results show that the impact of the increase in traffic flow is very small at the worst affected sensitive receptors, such that the percentage change in concentrations relative to the Air Quality Assessment Level (AQAL) is very small. Consequently, the proposed development will not have an impact on the air quality of the local area and the impact is considered to be “negligible”.
- 6.53 A Construction Dust Impact Assessment also forms part of the report to analyse risks and appropriate mitigation measures related to control of dust during the construction period. Dust Emission Magnitude is identified as “Medium” for earthworks and “Small” for construction and trackout, while the Sensitivity of the area of is identified as “Low” for dust soiling, human health and ecological impacts. The Site is considered a “Low Risk Site” in respect of earthworks, with negligible risk of impacts from construction and trackout. It is therefore considered a “Low Risk Site” overall. A Dust Management Plan is recommended incorporating a number of specific mitigation measures based on the site-specific risks as are set out within the report. With risk appropriate mitigation, residual effects will not be considered significant.
- 6.54 Since it has been shown that in terms of air quality, the proposals adhere to local and national planning policy including (inter alia) Saved Policy R18 and draft Policy SADM 18, it is

considered that air pollution should not be a constraint on the proposed commercial development.

### **Noise**

6.55 An Acoustic Impact Assessment has also been prepared by Hawkins Environmental Limited in order to determine whether there are any acoustic constraints on developing the Site for the proposed commercial use.

6.56 In order to determine the extent to which the Site is affected by sound, a detailed sound measurement study was carried out on the proposed development site on 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2022. Sound measurements have been carried out in order to determine the background sound levels for the day and night time periods, and are considered representative of nearby dwellings, without the contribution of the proposed development.

6.57 The following potential sources of noise associated with the proposed development have then been considered against the background noise level:

- The impact of Delivery Vehicles;
- Noise from fixed plant and machinery;
- Noise from traffic generated by the development; and
- Construction noise.

6.58 With regard to delivery vehicles, the difference between the rating sound level and background sound level gives an indication of the likelihood of complaint. It is identified that the background noise level is equal to the rating noise level, and therefore possible to conclude that lorry movement associated with the proposed development is likely to have a low impact.

6.59 With regard to plant noise, this can generally be easily mitigated. Acoustic enclosures, barriers, louvres and other technology can be employed to mitigate plant noise to achieve any required noise criteria. Consequently, it is highly unlikely that noise from fixed plant or machinery would be a constraint upon the development of the Site, providing that the plant is appropriately mitigated. Therefore, it is recommended that once plant and machinery has been identified and the location of the closest affected receptors have also been identified,

background noise measurements are carried out at a location representative of these receptors, in order to set plant noise limits.

- 6.60 Using the changes in traffic flow, the changes in noise levels have been calculated using the methodology contained within the calculation of Road Traffic Noise (CRTN). The analysis demonstrates that at all receptors, the change in noise levels as a consequence in changes in traffic flows is likely to be “negligible” and is therefore likely to be considered insignificant.
- 6.61 Due to the size of the development and early stage of the proposals, a quantitative construction noise and vibration assessment has not been carried out. Instead, a qualitative assessment focusing on best practicable means has been completed. The recommendations will be followed by the contractor to ensure noise as a result of construction activity is kept to a minimum.
- 6.62 It is therefore considered that noise does not pose a constraint to the development of this allocated employment site and the proposals are consistent with relevant policy guidance including Saved Policy R19 and draft Policy SADM 18.

### **Drainage Strategy**

- 6.63 A Proposed Drainage Strategy has been prepared by Eastwood Consulting Engineers in support of this planning application.

#### **Surface Water Drainage**

- 6.64 The report explains that ground conditions are not expected to be suitable for the use of large-scale soakaways for the disposal of surface water. This assertion is further supported by the presence of the surrounding surface water drainage systems providing positive drainage.
- 6.65 As there are no watercourses on or immediately adjacent to the Site, the only remaining option for surface water disposal is to the public sewer network.
- 6.66 The application site is part of Plot 5600 outlined on the original estate wide drainage plan appended to the submitted Drainage Strategy (Appendix 3), and shows that the allowable discharge rate from this plot is stated as 75 litres/second, discharging into a collector drain within Gypsy Moth Avenue to the east.

- 6.67 Plot 5600 has subsequently been subdivided, with the southern part now occupied by a warehouse building with associated service yard and parking. Having viewed the information available on the Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council planning portal, it has been found that the adjacent development has surface water flows restricted to a peak rate of 45 litres/second. Therefore, the maximum permitted surface water discharge rate from the current application site is taken to be 30 litres/second (75 - 45).
- 6.68 It has been found that new lengths of pipework and manholes have been constructed extending into the south-east corner of the current application plot, with the intention of this being the point of discharge for surface water from any future development of the plot. Therefore, it is proposed that surface water from the current application plot is discharged into the head of this system and conveyed to the public surface water sewer within Gypsy Moth Avenue.
- 6.69 It is proposed that attenuated volumes of run-off are retained on site for all rainfall events up to and including the 1 in 100 year return period plus an allowance of 40% for climate change.
- 6.70 The Drainage Strategy shows that 335m<sup>3</sup> of storage is required in order to prevent flooding from the Site with the above design criteria. It is proposed that the storage is provided within proprietary below ground voided storage units which are to be located in the service yard to the west of Building A.
- 6.71 The use of SuDS source control methods has been considered as set out within the report, however are found to be largely impractical here. It should be noted however that the existing site wide surface water drainage system discharges into a detention basin and subsequently into a watercourse, therefore following SuDS principles.

#### Foul Water Drainage

- 6.72 In a similar manner to the surface water, the existing foul drainage system was also extended into the south-east corner of the current application plot. Therefore, it is proposed that foul drainage from the current application plot is discharged into the head of this system and conveyed to the public surface water sewer within Gypsy Moth Avenue.

- 6.73 Due to the relative levels of the head of the existing foul drainage system and the necessary floor level of Building B, it is not possible to drain all of the foul discharge from the proposed development by gravity alone. Therefore, it is proposed that the foul discharge from Building B is collected within a traditional gravity system and conveyed to a package pumping station located near the north-east corner of Building A. From here it will be pumped into the head of a second gravity system which discharges to the existing foul drainage system. All foul discharge from Building A will be drained directly into this second gravity system.
- 6.74 The drawing appended at Appendix 6 of the report shows the proposals for foul and surface water disposal based upon the strategies described above. All of the new foul and surface water drainage systems are to remain private and will be maintained by the developer in accordance with the Maintenance Schedule enclosed at Appendix 7 of the report.
- 6.75 The proposed drainage strategy and mitigation measures are therefore considered to fully accord with relevant national and local policy guidance, including (inter alia) Saved Policy R7 and draft Policy SADM 14.

### **Energy and Lighting Strategies**

- 6.76 An Energy Statement has been prepared by D&d Building Services Consulting Engineers Ltd in support of this planning application to provide an overview of the design approach which aims to reduce energy consumption and carbon emissions in line with Saved Policy R3 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan (2005).
- 6.77 It has been a primary aim of the project from the outset to reduce the buildings' energy consumption and carbon emissions using passive measures and the incorporation of high efficiency building services.
- 6.78 As well as reducing in use carbon emissions, this approach also ensures that the buildings are economical to run by reducing energy and hence costs for heating, cooling, ventilation, and lighting.
- 6.79 To minimise heat gains in summer and to reduce heat losses in winter the thermal transmittance (UValues) for external walls and the roof will be specified to exceed the

- minimum requirements of Part L. The reduction in heat gains will reduce energy requirements for cooling and the reduction of heat losses will reduce energy used for heating.
- 6.80 In order to minimise heat loss during winter the glazing will be double glazed insulated units with argon filled cavity. To reduce the heat gains during summer the glazing will be selected with a low total transmittance (G-Value) which goes beyond the notional requirement for glazing. This will reduce cooling plant load and also reduce occupant discomfort.
- 6.81 The buildings will be carefully modelled to ascertain the impact of various permeabilities and the use of natural ventilation to achieve lower cooling loads will be considered.
- 6.82 High efficiency LED lighting is proposed throughout the development. The proposed LED luminaires proposed will have a lighting efficacy, luminaire lumen/circuit watt, which is a significant improvement over the Part L recommended minimum efficacy. Lighting shall generally be controlled via an absence detection strategy to ensure lights are switched off automatically when a room is unoccupied.
- 6.83 The heating and cooling to buildings will be via high efficiency VRV air source heat pump systems with high seasonal efficiencies. These shall be installed as part of the tenant fit-out.
- 6.84 Carbon reductions will primarily be achieved through the use of passive measures as detailed above. To further reduce carbon emissions roof mounted photo voltaic panels will be installed providing a cost-effective solution introducing renewable energy to the to the Site.
- 6.85 The lighting plan and specification is also provided with the application to demonstrate that a suitable lighting strategy has been devised. The lighting strategy has sought to balance operational requirements and site security with appropriate sensitivity to ecology, road users and residential uses in line with Saved Policy R20 and draft Policy SADM 18.

### **Ecology**

- 6.86 An Ecological Appraisal prepared by Ecology Solutions is submitted in support of this Planning Application. A desk study was accompanied by Phase 1 Habitat surveys undertaken at the Site in August 2022 in order to ascertain the general ecological value of the Site and to identify the main habitats and associated plant species.

- 6.87 There are no statutory designated sites of nature conservation interest within or adjacent to the Site. The nearest statutory designated sites are that of Stanborough Reedmarsh Local Nature Reserve (LNR) which is located approximately 1.7km to the northeast of the Site. Howe Dell Local Nature Reserve is located approximately 2km to the southeast of the Site. The LNRs are sufficiently removed and buffered from the Site as to be unaffected by the proposed development.
- 6.88 There are a number of non-statutory designated sites in the vicinity of the Site, although none are present either within or adjacent to the boundaries of the Site. The nearest non-statutory designation is Furzefield Wood LWS approximately 1.2km north-west of the Site at its closest point. It is considered that all locally present non-statutory designated sites are sufficiently removed from the Site as not to be affected either directly or indirectly by the proposed development.
- 6.89 The majority of the habitats within the Site are of negligible intrinsic ecological interest and their loss to facilitate the proposed development would be of no significance. It is recommended that new landscape planting associated with the proposed development include a high proportion of native species.
- 6.90 Other mitigation measures are set out for specific species including bats, hedgehogs and birds including with regard to landscape design and guidance surrounding site clearance. These standard measures have been followed with regard to scheme design and construction related measures will be adhered to by the developer.
- 6.91 The proposals are as such considered fully compliant with all relevant national and local guidance regarding ecology and biodiversity including (inter alia) Saved Policies R11 and R17 and Draft Policy SADM 16.

### **Arboriculture**

- 6.92 An Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA) prepared by EnviroArb-Solutions Ltd is submitted in support of this Planning Application. The report provides a record of the condition of all the existing trees and hedgerows on and around the Site and highlights which are worthy of retention and which could be removed. The report also includes a Tree Protection Plan which sets out the measures needed to carry out works around the existing trees.

6.93 24 individual trees, 2 tree groups and 2 hedge groups were surveyed on the Site or immediately adjacent to the site boundary. Of the trees, there were 13 Category B trees and 11 Category C trees. Of the groups, there were 2 Category B tree groups and 2 Category C hedge groups.

6.94 The hedges identified on the site are not likely to be classified as ‘important’ within the Hedgerow Regulations 1997. We have not been informed that trees on the Site are subject to statutory protection.

6.95 A qualitative analysis of the Site is provided within the report as follows:

*“The site is located within an urban commercial landscape setting. There are some trees of low to modest amenity value on or adjacent to mostly the site boundaries. The dominant individual tree species on this site is Willow, Birch, Pine, Poplar and Oak as well as other standard trees present. It is not confirmed if any trees are protected by statutory protection. Most of the trees are in need of some basic crown pruning works due to their lack of recent management.”*

6.96 The proposed development involves the removal of only four individual trees and one hedge group which are all ‘C’ category trees. Any trees or groups felled as a result of the development proposal will be mitigated by replacement planting to at least the same percentage canopy cover as that removed.

6.97 Retained trees will be fully protected by at least sturdy tree protection fencing, as described at Appendix 8 of the AIA. Where encroachment into theoretical RPA is unavoidable temporary ground protection measures will be used which can utilise 3D ‘Reduced-Dig’ cellular confinement sub-base systems.

6.98 The AIA concludes that, subject to appropriate controls, the development can be implemented without undue impact on retained trees. The proposals are considered compliant with all relevant national and local requirements and planning guidance, including Saved Policy R17 and draft Policy SADM 16.



## **Archaeology**

- 6.99 A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for an archaeological investigation has been prepared by Cotswold Archaeology in support of this planning application. The requirement for an excavation was defined in discussions with Hertfordshire County Council’s Historic Environment Team (HCCHET), the archaeological advisors to WHBC. Further discussion with the HCCHET will be required to define the scope of the excavation.
- 6.100 The report outlines the archaeological background of the Site before a detailed proposed methodology for archaeological investigations to be undertaken including with regard to handling of artefacts, environmental remains, treasure and/or human remains. An overview of project staff is also provided alongside a methodology for post-excavation, reporting and archiving which is to be undertaken in line with relevant guidance.
- 6.101 It is considered that the proposed methodology outlines a proportionate response to the archaeological potential identified and with regard to relevant national and local policy guidance, including Saved Policy R29 and draft Policy SADM 15. The applicant team welcomes further dialogue with HCCHET following submission of this planning application.

## **Contamination**

- 6.102 A Phase 2 Ground Investigation report was undertaken by Ian Farmer Associates in June 2013 on behalf of a previous applicant for an earlier proposed development of the Site. The report provides a detailed overview of the Site’s geology and contamination risks and is considered valid for the purposes of this planning application.
- 6.103 Published geological and hydrogeological records indicate the Site to be located above unproductive strata relating to the negligibly permeable superficial deposits of the Lowestoft Formation, which is underlain by a Principal aquifer relating to the highly permeable Nodular Chalk Formation and the Seaford Chalk Formation.
- 6.104 The assessment did not identify any contamination within shallow soils that would represent a significant risk to the proposed commercial development. Very marginally elevated leachate results for petroleum hydrocarbons were identified in one sample, though the concentrations are not considered to represent a significant risk to controlled waters.

However, elevated carbon dioxide was identified and therefore, gas protection measures may be required in the new building(s). Further monitoring is recommended to comply more closely with current guidelines prior to final design being undertaken.

6.105 These investigations can be secured by way of planning condition(s) attached to a grant of planning permission. The proposals are therefore consistent with policy guidance including Saved Policy R2 and draft Policy SADM 18.

## 7 Planning Benefits

- 7.1 This planning application accords with adopted policies at a national, regional and local level. Beyond the technical compliance, this chapter summarises the key benefits that would result from the approval of this application.

### **Delivery of long-term flexible employment premises**

- 7.2 The Site has been allocated for employment development since adoption of the Hatfield Aerodrome SPG in 1999 and the associated approval of the overarching outline planning permission (S6/1999/1064/OP) in December 2000. A range of proposals have come forward for employment use however none to date have been implemented. The Site has most recently been used for informal vehicle storage, creating an impression of left-over space not in keeping with the well maintained and landscaped business park setting.
- 7.3 The proposals subject of this application seek to deliver the long-term employment premises that this important plot befits within well designed, sustainable and flexible commercial units attractive to a range of contemporary occupiers in line with the economic vision of the emerging Local Plan. The proposals effectively complete this section of the business park and deliver the economic and employment benefits that to date have not been realised. This is particularly important in light of recently rising unemployment levels and the threat to employment uses regarding changes to planning legislation via permitted development rights<sup>3</sup>, and the challenge of rebounding following the Covid-19 pandemic.

### **Utilisation of well-connected employment land**

- 7.4 The proposals seek the efficient use of a well-connected Site benefitting from direct access to strategic highways infrastructure and well served by public transport and walking/cycling routes. Traffic impacts will be minimised by utilisation of key traffic routes and keeping operational HGV traffic away from the predominantly residential areas elsewhere in the borough.

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<sup>3</sup> WHBC Draft Local Plan Proposed Submission (August 2016)

- 7.5 The utilisation of allocated employment/previously developed land is preferential to the large swathes of undeveloped countryside and agricultural land in the borough and helps to protect these highly valued areas of protected countryside.

### **Employment and economic benefits**

- 7.6 The development will support construction jobs in the economy during the construction period, and an estimated range of between 72-320 FTE jobs during operation, depending on final mix of employment uses. This is expected to produce significant indirect benefits in the local economy through local net spend and associated multiplier effects, together with indirect environmental benefits in a reduced need for out-commuting of residents which is understood to be a common occurrence locally<sup>4</sup>.
- 7.7 The proposals will include a commitment to local labour and training to be enshrined within a S106 Agreement. Further details of economic benefits are provided within the supporting Economic Statement.

### **Landscape and visual improvements**

- 7.8 The plot currently reads as left-over space which has previously been used as an informal parking area. The proposed commercial development is in keeping with the character of this part of the business park and would create definition and purpose for this space. It would enable the site boundaries to be strengthened with planting, increase the quality of the edges and tie into and perpetuate the wider business park landscape, which is well maintained and maturing. The landscape proposal provides a fresh and simple approach to balance aesthetics, biodiversity value, and maintenance.

### **High quality design**

- 7.9 The proposals seek to deliver the high quality employment scheme that this prominent plot has long warranted. A through consideration of the plot's opportunities and constraints has been considered in the development of the proposed design, with a sympathetic

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<sup>4</sup> Supporting text paragraph 12.45 of the current Local Plan states that *“Nearly half of the district's population of working age and in employment work outside the Welwyn Hatfield District.”*

development offering a transition from the large functional form of the Toolbank unit to the south and residential uses to the north.

- 7.10 Detailed design treatment has sought to further break up the massing with the use of graduated elevations and glazing treatment. Sustainable design is at the heart of the proposals with passive measures and solar PVs to reduce carbon emissions within a high quality landscaped setting.
- 7.11 This is considered to be highly beneficial to the wider business park as a whole considering the Site's location on such a prominent and highly trafficked gateway into the employment area. The regeneration of the Site demonstrates the continued inward investment and economic activity of the area, serving us a vital physical demonstration of the success and appeal of Hatfield in which to do business.

## 8 Summary & Conclusion

8.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared by Sphere25 LLP on behalf of Cambria Property Investments Limited. The description of development for the proposals is as follows:

*“Erection of two industrial units for light industrial processes (E(g)(iii)) / general industrial (B2) / storage & distribution purposes (B8) and ancillary office space, with associated parking, access and supporting infrastructure.”*

8.2 This statement has provided an overview of the proposed development, the relevant planning policy framework and an assessment of the proposals against material planning considerations of relevance.

8.3 The proposals seek to deliver a high quality commercial development on land allocated for employment use but that has sat largely vacant for over 20 years since approval of the overarching outline planning permission for redevelopment of the Aerodrome site.

8.4 The full range of opportunities and constraints have been considered in the development of the proposal. As confirmed through pre-application discussions, the proposed quantum is in keeping with the Unit of Development limits set by the outline permission ref. S6/1999/1064/OP while delivering a flexible mix of units attractive to a range of contemporary occupiers. The proposals comprise a sympathetic proposal to complete this section of the business park, offering a transition from the large functional form of the Toolbank unit to the south and residential uses to the north.

8.5 Overall, the benefits of the scheme can be summarised as follows:

- Delivery of long-term commercial premises at a site that has long been allocated for employment development
- Utilisation of well-connected land
- Employment and economic benefits
- Landscape and visual improvements
- High quality design

8.6 The pre-application response received by officers in October 2022 concludes:

*“Although this proposal would not fully accord with the approved masterplan in respect of floorspace allocation for land uses, it is considered that the proposed development would likely gain favourable recommendation should an application be submitted, subject to conditions and a legal agreement.”*

8.7 In light of the above material considerations and planning benefits, the proposed development is considered to weigh favourably in the planning balance. This Planning Application has likewise been prepared with full regard to the relevant planning policy framework.

8.8 It is therefore respectfully requested that Planning Permission be granted.

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