

Plot 5100, Hatfield Business Park

**Proposed Development of a Multi-franchise
Car Dealership Facility with associated workshops,
vehicle storage, landscaping and infrastructure**

Planning Statement

In Support of Proposed Development

March 2019

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This statement has been prepared by Arlington Business Parks GP Limited on behalf of HR Owen Plc in support of a Full Planning application for the erection of a new multi-franchise car dealership facility with associated workshops, vehicle storage, landscaping and infrastructure at Plot 5100, Hatfield Business Park.

The Development will be for HR Owen, Britain's leading luxury motor dealer, and the world's largest retailer in Rolls-Royce, Bentley, Lamborghini and Bugatti brands. The building will enable the business to expand its operations and relocate its UK Headquarters to Hatfield Business Park.

The proposed development for which this application seeks permission is described as follows:

'Erection of a multi-franchise car dealership (sui generis use) with offices (B1 use class), workshops (B2 use class) and car storage (B8 use class), together with car parking, cycle parking, boundary treatment, landscaping, lighting and access'.

The proposed development represents the sustainable re-use of a previously developed brownfield site to provide a high quality employment facility for HR Owen. The scheme has been carefully designed having regard to its context and in terms of materials and landscaping. Specific studies have been undertaken to investigate ecology, transportation, archaeology, arboriculture, noise and flood risk.

Due to the nature of the use of the building, vehicle movements will be low in comparison to the office use which is approved under the outline planning permission. The application site benefits from outline planning permission which was granted on 5 July 2016 (ref: 6/2015/2043/OUTLINE). This particular plot is zoned for B1, B2, Sui Generis and Hotel uses. Whilst the proposed development does not fall strictly within the parameters of the extant outline planning permission, it is considered that the proposed development reflects the guidelines set down by the Hatfield Aerodrome SPG and the scheme will provide a valuable source of local employment.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This statement has been prepared by Arlington Business Parks GP Limited on behalf of HR Owen Plc in support of a Full planning application for the erection of a new multi-franchise car dealership on Plot 5100, Hatfield Business Park.
- 1.2 The Development will be for HR Owen Plc, Britain's leading luxury motor dealer. The development will enable the business to expand and relocate its Headquarter to Hatfield Business Park.
- 1.3 The building will provide high quality office, showroom and workshop accommodation in two distinct, attractive buildings.
- 1.4 This application site forms part of the outline permission (reference: 6/2015/2043/OUTLINE) granted in July 2016 for the wider Hatfield Aerodrome site.
- 1.5 The purpose of this statement is to set out the relevant aspects of the proposal, including the planning policy framework, and to show how the development responds to the site constraints, the context set by the outline permission and wider Policy objectives.
- 1.6 This statement should be read in conjunction with the accompanying Design and Access Statement prepared by Louis de Soissons, and other supporting documents listed below:
- Duly completed planning application forms and certificates
 - Application Drawings
 - Transport Statement
 - Land Quality Assessment
 - Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy Report
 - Noise Impact Assessment
 - Ecological Assessment
 - External Lighting Scheme

Outline Planning Permission

- 1.7 The application site forms part of the Hatfield Aerodrome site. The original outline planning permission (Ref. S6/1999/1064/OP), was granted in December 2000 on Hatfield Aerodrome site for the following:

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

- 1.8 The outline planning permission was granted in accordance with adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG), November 1999 for the whole of the Hatfield Aerodrome site. 26 Conditions were attached to the permission which was also subject to a Section 106 legal agreement. The Hatfield Aerodrome SPG envisages a certain level of development floorspace for each use class. The SPG allows the proportion of uses to be reviewed formally every 5 years after the commencement of development, to take account of the prevailing economic climate, market demand and take-up rates. In practice a formal review hasn't been necessary to keep up with demand, with sufficient floorspace available for each development to date. Plot 5100 was originally envisaged to be the site for a B1, B2, Sui Generis or Hotel use. However, to date, the landowners have been unable to secure an office occupier for this plot.
- 1.9 The Business Park is now largely complete. A total of 197,996 sq m of development (plus hotel) was permitted at the Business Park. A total of 161,803 sq m has been developed and is now occupied.
- 1.10 The Proposed Use includes B1, B2, B8 and Sui Generis use. Whilst the B2 and B8 floorspace will exceed the original approved quantum of development, the total floorspace of the development is well within the permitted total floorspace which remains under the outline planning permission. The proposed use provides for an acceptable swap in land use terms, whilst still safeguarding the ability to deliver employment to support the principles of the Development Plan and deliver against the framework of the outline planning permission. At the same time the proposed development will deliver much needed inward investment to the Borough providing economic development and employment opportunities.
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The Application

1.11 The proposed development for which this application seeks permission is described as follows:

‘Erection of a multi-franchise car dealership (sui generis use) with offices (B1 use class), workshops (B2 use class) and car storage (B8 use class), together with car parking, cycle parking, boundary treatment, landscaping, lighting and access’.

Pre-application Consultations

1.12 Pre-application meetings took place on 21st June 2018 and 8th March 2019 with planning officers at Welwyn Hatfield Council regarding the proposals, the various procedural issues raised and the relationship of the proposals to nearby development and the rest of the Business Park.

2. SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 The application site comprises 5.41 acres (2.19 ha) of land on the northernmost part of Plot 5000, now referred specifically as Plot 5100. The site lies within the context of the much wider Hatfield Business Park development and in particular, the central area which is now well established for a range of commercial uses, including offices and warehouses. The site is located approximately 1km west of Hatfield town centre.

Site Boundaries and Context

2.2 The Plot is bound to the north-west by the IO Centre (industrial development), the new multi franchise dealership of Aston Martin and McLaren on Plot 4100 to the north-east, the recently completed Air Business headquarters to the south-west and Easai's campus to the south-east.

2.3 A footpath and cycleway run along the southern-eastern and north-eastern boundaries of the Plot as part of the Business Park's existing infrastructure network. Vehicular access to the site will be from the new entrance from Mosquito Way which was installed last year.

2.4 The site's landscape is broadly level and consists mainly of short grass and boundary shrub planting.

2.5 There are no Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) or Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) within the vicinity of the site. There are no Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA) designated within the local area.

Access

2.6 Mosquito Way bounds the site to the south-east and runs from the A1057 St Albans Road to the south to the junction with Hatfield Avenue to the north.

2.7 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.

3. KEY DEVELOPMENT DETAILS

- 3.1 The planning application seeks permission for a total 21,170 sq m of floorspace Gross External Area (GEA).
- 3.2 The boundary of existing formal landscaping bordering the site will be conserved with some changes made to improve visibility and to tie in with the further landscaping proposed inside the application site.
- 3.3 The existing road junctions will be used for access in to the site where parking will be provided for customers and employees. Principal showroom facades have been positioned on the boundaries visible from the road. The hierarchy of the layout is to have public facing spaces as close to the highway boundaries of the site as possible and then to concentrate the workshop and servicing spaces to inward looking spaces at the rear.
- 3.4 A landscaping screen and gate will separate the two parking areas to ensure a high-quality feel to the visiting customers and a functional service yard screened from view behind.
- 3.5 The East portion of the site will house four car showrooms, head offices and workshop building. The showrooms and the administration spaces will surround a shared mall area which will be the main customer entrance to the building off the curved access road.
- 3.6 The West portion of the site will accommodate a larger building. The elevation facing Mosquito Way will contain a further showroom on the ground and first floor. The rear of this building will contain additional workshop spaces for group operations, pre-delivery inspection, smart paint repairs, wheel refurbishments and valet etc at ground floor. This will have 2 storeys of internal private vehicle storage above and parking at roof level for staff. These levels will be accessed by a vehicle ramp at the back of the building on the Northern boundary of the site.
- 3.7 Finally, a small valet building is proposed at the rear of the service yard where the wet activities can be undertaken and also where refuse can be provided. A further ancillary building is proposed within the south-eastern corner of the service yard which will accommodate the electricity sub-station and cycle storage.
- 3.8 The accompanying Design and Access Statement provides a detailed description of the proposals and demonstrates that the proposed development can be satisfactorily accommodated across the site given the surrounding context. The proposed building incorporates a high quality finish in the use of appropriate materials that reflect the locality and the function of the building. Further landscape details are set out in the Landscaping Section of the Design and Access Statement.
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- 3.9 The proposals accord with the Urban Design Principles outlined in Section 14 of the adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance for Hatfield Aerodrome. It will assist in the overall aim of creating a high quality business park environment and the creation of employment opportunities in the area.

Access, Parking and Servicing

- 3.10 There are two site accesses for all vehicles from the new bell-mouth accesses immediately off Mosquito Way. One of the accesses will be shared with the existing Air Business warehouse.

- 3.11 The proposed parking provision within the site will be as follows:

Staff and Customer Car Parking - 271 spaces

Long-term Storage - 215 spaces

Cycle - 20 spaces

Employment Generation

- 3.12 The proposed development will represent an important employment investment in the area. The Buildings will enable HR Owen to expand their operations and increase its employment base at Hatfield Business Park. The Business will employ 63 office-based employees and 59 operational employees. This will comprise a mixture of positions involving a variety of skill sets. This is set out in more detail in the table below:

Job Type	Number of Jobs
Head Office Staff	25
Sales Executives	7
Sales & General Managers	4
Business Manager	2
Receptionist	6
Sales Administrators	3
Service Administrators	3
Part Administrators	2
Parts Manager	1
Service Manager	3
Service Advisors	8
Workshop Controllers	4
Technicians	24
Body Repair and Smart Repair Technicians	4
Wheel Repair Technicians	4
Parts Advisors and Warehouse Controllers	6
Preparation Centre Controller	2
Warranty Administrators	2
Drivers	12
Total	122

- 3.13 A number of construction jobs will also be created during the construction phase of the project. A number of supplier related jobs associated with both the construction and operational phases of the development will also be created to the benefit of the Hatfield area.

External Lighting

- 3.14 Details of external lighting are included as part of this planning application. The principles of the lighting scheme will ensure that no light spill will be generated on to the nearby residential properties.

Landscaping and Boundary Treatment

- 3.15 Landscaping proposals for the site are identified on the accompanying Plans and other illustrative material which accompanies this application.

4. PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

National Policy

- 4.1 The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government published the revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) on 24 July 2018.
- 4.2 This was the first revision of the NPPF since 2012. It implemented around 85 reforms announced previously through the Housing white paper, the planning for the right homes in the right places consultation and the draft revised National Planning Policy Framework consultation.
- 4.3 Following a technical consultation on updates to national planning policy, minor changes were made to the text and an updated Framework was published on 19 February 2019.
- 4.4 Paragraph 11 of the NPPF confirms that *'Plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development. For decision-taking this means... approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay'*.
- 4.5 The NPPF does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making. Proposed development that accords with an up-to-date Local Plan should be approved and proposed development that conflicts should be refused unless other material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 4.6 The NPPF places considerable emphasis on the need to build a strong and competitive economy. Paragraph 80 states that planning *'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'*.
- 4.7 Finally, the sentiment set out in Paragraph 38 should be taken into consideration: *'Local planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way. They should...work proactively with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. Decision-makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible'*. The merits of the proposed development (which includes a significant B1 office component and a mix of uses including B2, B8 and sui generis) as an alternative to the B1, B2, Hotel and Sui Generis development remaining under the framework of the outline permission and SPG will

improve the social and economic conditions of Hatfield Business Park, without leading to any demonstrable harm to the wider environmental conditions.

The Development Plan

- 4.8 The relevant Development Plan for the site comprises the saved policies of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005.

Principle of Land Use

- 4.9 The proposed development site is situated within the context of the wider Hatfield Business Park, which is designated as an employment area (EA6), under Policy EMP1 of the adopted Welwyn Hatfield District Plan (2005).
- 4.10 Paragraph 12.3 sets out the fundamental need to make jobs, goods and services available: *‘The Council wants to encourage development which stimulates employment and prosperity in the area, but it must be clearly related to the needs of the area and respect the environmental limits of the locality and the global environment’.*
- 4.11 Paragraph 12.8 states that *‘the Hatfield Aerodrome site provides by far the largest opportunity for meeting the district’s future business and employment needs. It is likely to provide the majority of new floorspace supply over the plan period. Due to the emphasis on the high quality of the development and its resultant rental levels, it is likely to attract employment uses with higher land values, such as financial and business services, software and IT, telecommunications, biotechnology and pharmaceuticals’.*
- 4.12 Paragraph 12.19 states that ‘employment land is a very valuable resource. Policy 14 of the Hertfordshire Structure Plan Review 1991-2011 seeks to foster economic growth in existing employment areas through planned regeneration. It provides for the re-use of existing employment land and buildings for Class B uses.
- 4.13 Paragraph 12.21 states that: *‘The Council will give favourable consideration to proposals for the redevelopment of existing employment sites, in the designated Employment Areas, which would update and improve the quality of the employment stock in the district’.* This opportunity for a headquarters facility for HR Owen supports these objectives.
- 4.14 Policy EMP1 identifies EA6 Hatfield Business Park, Hatfield as an Employment Area. Policy EMP2 (Acceptable Uses in Employment Areas) states that *‘in the designated employment areas, proposals for development within Use Classes B1, B2 and B8 will be permitted, 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.

Proposals for Class B8 development should also be well located in relation to the primary road network.

- 4.15 As set out in Paragraph 14.2 of the District Plan, ‘a masterplan for the site was adopted by Welwyn Hatfield Council in November 1999’ which provides ‘the detailed guidance for determining planning applications for the redevelopment of the site in future years’. Moreover, Paragraph 14.21 recognises that there will be ‘a need to keep the masterplan up to date and review it formally. Whilst the masterplan should be sufficiently flexible to deal with minor changes, should there be a significant change of circumstances of relevance to the development of the site, for instance as the result of changes in national, regional or structure planning guidance, there will be a need to carry out a formal review of the masterplan’.

Design and Landscaping

- 4.16 Policy D1 – Quality Design states that ‘the Council will require the standard of design in all new developments to be of high quality’.
- 4.17 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’.
- 4.18 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. 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. 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’.

- 4.19 Policy D11 - Design Statements states that *‘Applicants will be required to submit a design statement with all applications for business, commercial or residential. The statement should justify how the development meets the design principles, policies and guidance set out in the Development Plan’.*
- 4.20 Supplementary Design Guidance (February 2005) – This document provides guidance on the design and layout of all new development in District and supplements policies in the District Plan.

Transportation

- 4.21 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’.*
- 4.22 Policy M3 - Green Travel Plans states that *‘All new development or above the thresholds set out in HTCOAs 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’.*
- 4.23 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 legal agreement will be pursued to ensure the implementation of the works or obligations’.*
- 4.24 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. The Council has published a walking strategy for the district, setting out its proposals for improving the pedestrian network and promoting walking and to provide guidance on the priorities for new development’.

- 4.25 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. The Council has reviewed the Welwyn Hatfield Cycling Strategy, to ensure that it continues to provide an adequate framework to guide investment in the infrastructure necessary to create a comprehensive network of routes and facilities in the district’.*
- 4.26 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. 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’.*
- 4.27 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’.*

Sustainability

- 4.28 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 this plan. To assist the Council in determining this, applicants will be expected to submit a statement with their planning application*

demonstrating how their proposals address the sustainability criteria in the checklist contained in the Supplementary Design Guidance’.

Environment

4.29 Policy R5 - Waste Management states that *‘the Council will require applications for larger schemes (as defined in paragraph 5.24) 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’.*

4.30 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’.*

4.31 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’.*

- 4.32 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'*.
- 4.33 Policy R19 - Noise and Vibration Pollution states that *'proposals will be refused if the development is likely:*
- i. To generate unacceptable noise or vibration for other land uses; or*
 - ii. To be affected by unacceptable noise or vibration from other land uses.*
- 4.34 *Planning permission will be granted where appropriate conditions may be imposed to ensure either:*
- iii. An adequate level of protection against noise or vibration; or*
 - iv. That the level of noise emitted can be controlled.*
- 4.35 *Proposals should be in accordance with the Supplementary Design Guidance'*.
- 4.36 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’.*
- 4.37 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 rising from the development; and*
 - iii. *Affordable housing in accordance with Policy H7.*
- 4.38 *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’.*

Other Material Considerations

- 4.39 Other material considerations in the assessment of these proposals include the Hatfield Aerodrome SPG adopted November 1999 and the Welwyn Hatfield Emerging Core Strategy.

The Hatfield Aerodrome SPG

- 4.40 The site is covered by the Hatfield Aerodrome SPG (1999), which sets out the masterplan to guide the redevelopment of the area.
- 4.41 Paragraph 1.12 of the SPG recognises the need to review the mix of uses over the course of the redevelopment of the Business Park: *‘Minor variations of the Masterplan may be required as a consequence of a change in the circumstances which prevailed when the Masterplan was originally prepared... variations or alterations of a minor nature may be allowed at the discretion of the relevant local planning authorities’.* Given the scale of the development in relation to the overall quantum of development permitted, this variation is deemed of a minor nature.

4.42 The SPG sets out the quantum of development envisaged for each use class. The following table is included in the SPG:

Use Class	Area (Acres)	Area (Hectares)	Floorspace (sq ft)	Floorspace (sq m)
B1a/b	57	23.1	1,036,600	96,300
B1c/B2	20	8.1	348,075	32,400
B8	28	11.3	488,075	45,342
Sui Generis	10	4.1	182,500	16,954
Totals	115	46.5	2,055,250	190,996

4.43 Paragraph 14.6 of the SPG states that: *‘the proportion of uses (as referred to in the above table) will be reviewed every 5 years after the commencement of development. The reviews will include the following:*

- *The prevailing economic climate*
- *Labour supply*
- *Market demand and take up rates*
- *Environmental and sustainable considerations*
- *The possibility of alternative uses’*

4.44 A formal review of the proportion of uses has never been undertaken or required. However the circumstances have changed since the SPG was adopted in 1999, particularly in respect of the market demand for each use class. This sets the background for considering a marginal increase in the amount of B2 and B8 development.

4.45 The S106 Agreement for the outline planning permission for Hatfield Business Park sets out the following car parking standards of relevance to this proposal, which are as follows:

B8 Use: 1 space per 100 square metres

B2 Use: 1 space per 60 square metres

B1 Use: 1 space per 40 square metres

Sui Generis: 1 space per 40 square metres

5. POLICY ASSESSMENT

5.1 This section considers how the proposal fits with planning policy relevant to Hatfield Business Park. The following key issues are addressed in this report:

- Principle of allowing a mix of B1, B2, B8 and Sui Generis uses on the site
- Design, Layout, Form, Scale and Massing
- Traffic Impact
- Ecology and Biodiversity Impact
- Sustainability
- Economic Impact

Principle of Use

5.2 The proposals for HR Owen represents a mix of B1, B2, B8 and Sui Generis use. Whilst the B2 and B8 floorspace will exceed the original approved quantum of development, the total floorspace of the development is well within the permitted total floorspace which remains under the outline planning permission. Therefore, the principle of use has been considered in the context of Policy EMP2 of the District Plan and considered acceptable.

5.3 The application site forms part of a larger area of land allocated for employment development within the District Plan and the site benefits from outline permission (ref. 6/2015/2043/OUTLINE). It is considered that the proposed development is an appropriate land use for this location, as an alternative to the uses anticipated for the site under the extant outline planning permission, which include B1 Offices, B2 General Industrial, C1 Hotel and Sui Generis uses.

The proposals are expected to provide 122 jobs to the Borough, which are split between office based employees and operational employees. It will also enable the relocation of HR Owen's Headquarters function to the Borough.

5.4 Therefore, it is concluded that the principle of this proposed employment-generating use is in accordance with the extant and emerging Development Plan.

Design, Layout, Form, Scale and Massing

- 5.5 The proposals align with the objectives of District Plan Policy D1, with high design quality being promoted in the development. The proposed palette of materials is consistent with those within existing developments at the Business Park.
- 5.6 The development proposal is for buildings of a scale that are respectful of the surrounding environment and that will be of a lower height and massing to other nearby buildings in the business park. The proposal responds to the site constraints and has been carefully designed to help mitigate the visual impacts to nearby residential buildings through a combination of the layout and also through landscaped screening. Therefore, the development is considered to meet the objectives of District Plan policies D2 and D8.
- 5.7 The accompanying Design and Access Statement sets out further details and justifies how the development meets the design principles, policies and guidance of the Development Plan, thus aligning with Policy D11.

Traffic Impact

- 5.8 The site is well located with regard to local bus services, footways and cycleways. Numerous bus services run through the Business Park from surrounding areas. A summary of the services is included in the Transport Statement.
- 5.9 Access is proposed from Mosquito Way for pedestrian, cyclists, cars and servicing vehicles.
- 5.10 The potential impact of the proposed site operation has been assessed in the context of the existing vehicular traffic flows already existing on the highway network along Mosquito Way.
- 5.11 The Transport Statement demonstrates that the proposed development can be accommodated in this location without detriment to existing traffic conditions on the local highway network. The development promotes inclusive access and the proposals are deemed acceptable in respect of parking, highway safety, traffic generation, pedestrian and cycle movements. The proposals are not considered to result in demonstrable harm in terms of transport impact and therefore in accordance with District Plan policies M2, M3, M6 and M14.

Ecology and Biodiversity

- 5.12 Accompanying this application is an Ecological Assessment, which concludes that the site supports no species of ecological significance and accordingly no mitigation would be required. Therefore, the development proposals are considered to comply with District Plan policy R11

Sustainability

- 5.13 The proposed development represents the sustainable re-use of a previously developed site to provide a new Headquarters and multi-franchise car dealership within the Business Park. The development has been designed to respond positively to the sustainability requirements of Welwyn Hatfield Sustainability Checklist and is considered to comply with District Plan policies SD1 and R3.

Economic Impact

- 5.14 The proposal will secure and create employment opportunities. The proposal is for a bespoke development designed for HR Owen and represents an important employment investment in the area, providing up to 122 jobs or full time equivalent. This will comprise a mixture of positions involving a variety of skill sets.
- 5.15 A large number of construction jobs will also be created during the construction phase of the project. A number of supplier related jobs associated with both the construction and operational phases of the development will also be created to the benefit of the Hatfield area.

6. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

6.1 This Supporting Statement has presented the case for allowing a new Headquarters multi-franchise car dealership (B1, B2, B8 and Sui Generis use classes) at Hatfield Business Park.

6.2 Since the outline permission was granted, a series of reserved matters applications have been submitted and development has proceeded. The Business Park is now largely complete. A total of 197,996 sq m of development (plus hotel) was permitted at the Business Park. A total of 161,803 sq m has been developed and is now occupied.

6.3 The proposal has been assessed against the relevant saved Development Plan policies of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan (2005). Arlington concludes that the proposed employment generating use accords with the Development Plan.

6.4 These proposals have been assessed against the specific criteria set out in saved policy, EMP2 for development within Use Classes B1, B2 and B8, and it is concluded that the proposed showroom, office and workshop facility will:

- Not, due to the scale of employment generated, have an unacceptable impact on the demand for housing in the travel to work area;
- Not have an unacceptable impact on the local and/or strategic transport infrastructure;
- Not harm the amenities of any nearby residential properties;
- Provide adequate parking, servicing and access.

Moreover, the proposals are well located in relation to the primary road network, given the immediate access off Mosquito Way.

6.5 The NPPF does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making.

6.6 It is considered that the proposed development reflects the guidelines set down by the Hatfield Aerodrome SPG as the split between different land uses reflects '*what is envisaged*' rather than setting a maximum cap of development for each use class.

6.7 The scheme will provide a valuable source of local employment, whilst bringing economic investment to the area. This will not harm the vision set out in the emerging Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan, and therefore, we commend these proposals to the Council.