

Plot 5000, Hatfield Business Park

Proposed Development of a Warehouse Facility

Planning Statement

In Support of Proposed Development

March 2017

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This statement has been prepared by Arlington Business Parks GP Limited in support of a Full Planning application for the erection of a new headquarters warehouse and office facility at Plot 5000, Hatfield Business Park.

The Development will be for Air Business, a UK-based distribution and subscriptions management company which offers subscriptions management, cross-border shipping, international mail and fulfilment for magazine subscriptions. The building will enable the business to expand its operations and increase its employment base at Hatfield Business Park.

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

‘Erection of a headquarters warehouse (Use Classes B8 and B1), 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 Air Business. 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. While the proposed high-office content warehouse (B8 and B1 use) does not fall strictly within 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 in support of a Full planning application for the erection of a new headquarters warehouse and office facility on part of Plot 5000, Hatfield Business Park.
- 1.2 The Development will be for Air Business, a UK-based distribution and subscriptions management company which offers subscriptions management, cross-border shipping, international mail and fulfilment for magazine subscriptions. The building will enable the business to expand its operations and increase its employment base at Hatfield Business Park.
- 1.3 The building will provide high quality warehouse accommodation with offices at first- and second-floor level.
- 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 AJA Architects, and other supporting documents listed below:
- Duly completed planning application forms and certificates
 - Application Drawings
 - Statement of Community Involvement
 - Transport Statement
 - Land Quality Assessment
 - Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy Report
 - Energy 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 5000 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 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 152,830 sq m has been developed and is now occupied.
- 1.10 The Proposed Use of principally B8 use with ancillary B1 offices provides for an acceptable swap in land use terms, whilst still safeguarding the ability to deliver the remaining quantum of B1a/b development of the remaining undeveloped land, to support the principles of the Development Plan and deliver against the framework of the outline planning permission. At the same time it will deliver much needed inward investment to the Borough providing economic development and employment opportunities.

The Application

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

‘Erection of a headquarters warehouse (Use Classes B8 and B1), together with car parking, cycle parking, boundary treatment, landscaping, lighting and access’.

Pre-application Consultations

1.12 A pre-application meeting took place on 1 March 2017 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.

1.13 A public exhibition was held on 21 March 2017 within the Park Management and Marketing Office at Hatfield Business Park. The exhibition boards remained on site from 21 March to 24 March inclusive. The Statement of Community Involvement details the pre-application consultation exercise and the outcome.

2. SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 The application site comprises 2.98 acres (1.21 ha) of land on the southernmost part of Plot 5000. 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 west by the Howe Dell Primary School's playing fields, the IO Centre (industrial development) to the North, the remaining undeveloped land of Plot 5000 to the East, and Mosquito Way and an office building occupied by Affinity Water to the South.

2.3 A footpath and cycleway runs along the southern boundary 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 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 6,712 sq m of floorspace Gross External Area (GEA)
- 3.2 Given the sites proximity to the sensitive boundary of the Howe Dell Primary School playing fields and the residential properties of Dragon Way, the site layout has been designed to minimise any environmental impact on the surrounding properties. The car parking areas and building service areas are positioned away from the primary school and the residences of Dragon Way beyond. The layout ensures that the western boundary is protected from any noise and overlooking. The building's orientation is such that it would provide a visual and acoustic barrier to the servicing activities, thus ensuring that the amenity of residential properties on the opposite side of Dragon Road is preserved.
- 3.3 The western boundary is buffered by trees and hedgerows and structured landscaping runs along the southern (front) boundary.
- 3.4 Access for vehicles is from Mosquito Way, via a newly constructed bell-mouth entrance which is intended to serve this Application Site and the adjacent undeveloped part of Plot 5000.
- 3.5 The footprint of the building measures approximately 51m wide by 99m in depth, with a maximum height of 15.5m. A total of 100 car parking spaces are proposed for employees and visitors.
- 3.6 The following measures have been taken to ensure that the proposals provide a high quality development, in keeping with the character of the existing architecture within the Business Park. Fundamental to this objective, is to ensure that the building form is carefully detailed and articulated, so as to provide interesting and attractive views from both the immediate and more distant surroundings.
- 3.7 Working alongside this approach, high quality soft landscaping areas are being provided to soften the views, particularly from the southern boundary of the site along Mosquito Way.
- 3.8 The external wall treatment comprises a carefully selected palette of materials, including horizontally spanning composite cladding and vertically and horizontally spanning built up cladding. These have been composed to create a clearly articulated rhythm of subtly varying textures and neutral colours, with the dark grey of the eaves to the front elevation, glazing frames and service doors used to provide an accent.

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- 3.9 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.
- 3.10 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

- 3.11 There is a single site access/egress for all vehicles from the new bell-mouth access immediately off Mosquito Way. Access will be shared with the future development on the adjacent undeveloped part of Plot 5000.
- 3.12 The proposed parking provision within the site will be as follows:

Car Parking 100 spaces (including 3 disabled spaces)

Cycle 10 spaces

Employment Generation

- 3.13 The proposed development will represent important employment investment in the area. The Building will enable Air Business to expand its operations and increase its employment base at Hatfield Business Park. The Business will employ 96 office based employees and 83 operational employees. This will comprise a mixture of positions involving a variety of skill sets. The
- 3.14 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

- 3.15 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 neighbouring residential properties.

Landscaping and Boundary Treatment

- 3.16 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 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) came into force on the 27 March 2012, and replaces all existing national planning policy statements with the exception of the relevant national policy documents on major infrastructure, gypsies and travellers, and waste, with immediate effect.
- 4.2 The NPPF does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making. Paragraph 12 of the NPPF states that *'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'*.
- 4.3 The proposals accord with the core land-use planning principles set out in Paragraph 17, and in particular, that planning should *'proactively drive and support sustainable economic development to deliver the homes, business and industrial units, infrastructure and thriving local places that the country needs'*.
- 4.4 This is also in line with the sentiments of Paragraph 19, which states: *'Planning should operate to encourage and not act as an impediment to sustainable growth. Therefore significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth through the planning system'*. Whilst Goodman has been successful in attracting bespoke development to Hatfield Business Park it should be noted that this has been very much the exception in the North M25 Arc.
- 4.5 Moreover, Paragraph 21 states that *'investment in business should not be over-burdened by the combined requirements of planning policy expectations... policies should be flexible enough to accommodate needs not anticipated in the plan and to allow a rapid response to changes in economic circumstances'*. This has particular relevance to the proposal to Air Business.
- 4.6 Relevant to the Business Park and the demonstrable limited interest in Hotel, General Industrial and Sui Generis occupiers, Paragraph 22 states that: *'where there is no reasonable prospect of a site being used for the allocated employment use, applications for alternative uses of land or buildings should be treated on their merits having regard to market signals and the relative need for different land uses to support sustainable local communities'*.
- 4.7 Finally, the sentiment set out in Paragraph 187 should be taken into consideration: *'Local planning authorities should work proactively with applicants to secure developments that improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area'*. The merits of the

proposed B8 development (which includes a significant B1 office component) 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 Air Business 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'*.
- 4.29 Policy R3 - Energy Efficiency states that *'the Council will expect all development to:*
- i. include measures to maximise energy conservation through the design of buildings, site layout and provision of landscaping; and*
 - ii. incorporate the best practical environmental option (BPEO) for energy supply'.*

Environment

- 4.30 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'.*
- 4.31 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'*.
- 4.32 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’.*
- 4.33 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’.*
- 4.34 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.*
- 4.35 *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.*
- 4.36 *Proposals should be in accordance with the Supplementary Design Guidance’.*
- 4.37 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’.*

4.38 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.*

4.39 *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

4.40 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

- 4.41 The site is covered by the Hatfield Aerodrome SPG (1999), which sets out the masterplan to guide the redevelopment of the area.
- 4.42 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 at 3.5% of the permitted floorspace, this variation is deemed of a minor nature.
- 4.43 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

- 4.44 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’*
- 4.45 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 B8 development.

4.46 The SPG sets out the following car parking standards of relevance to this proposal, which are as follows:

B8 Use: 1 space per 100 square metres

B1 Use: 1 space per 40 square metres

The proposals include the provision of 100 no. car parking spaces, which is marginally higher than the car parking standards if applied to the office and warehouse elements of the building.

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 B8 and B1 use 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 Air Business represent a B8 use with a significant B1 element. 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 proposal will provide 179 jobs to the Borough, which are split between 96 office based employees and 83 operational employees.

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 warehouse and office facility 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 Air Business and represents an important employment investment in the area, providing up to 179 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 warehouse and office facility (Class B8 and B1) 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 152,830 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). Goodman 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 warehouse and office 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 for Class B8 development 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, and in particular, Paragraph 12 states that *'Proposed development that accords with an up-to-date Local Plan should be approved'*.

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. The proposal will not affect the delivery of further high quality office and research and development floorspace, as this can be achieved on the remaining part of Plot

5000 and Plot 4000. This will not harm the vision set out in the emerging Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan, and therefore, we commend these proposals to the Council.