

<u>Application Number:</u>	WNN/2021/0466
Location:	Land North of, Bedford Road, Northampton
Proposal:	Outline Planning Application (all matters reserved except access) for the development of up to 24,000 sqm (GEA) of employment land (Use Classes E(g), B2 and B8) with new vehicular access, associated parking, highway infrastructure and other ancillary works. Application accompanied by an Environmental Statement.
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Applicant:	Duncan Investments Ltd
Agent:	Lichfields
Case Officer:	Adam Walker
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Ward:	Nene Valley Unitary Ward
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Reason for Referral:	Major development comprising of commercial development of more than 10,000 square metres.
Committee Date:	12/12/2022
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS AND RECOMMENDATION

RECOMMENDATION: APPROVAL IN PRINCIPLE SUBJECT TO CONDITIONS AND WITH THE DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY TO THE HEAD OF PLANNING DELIVERY FOR PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT TO APPROVE ANY AMENDMENTS TO THE CONDITIONS AS DEEMED NECESSARY AND FOR THE COMPLETION OF A SECTION 106 AGREEMENT TO SECURE THE FOLLOWING:

- Financial contribution towards construction training
- Travel Plan monitoring fee
- Council's Section 106 monitoring fee
- Arrangements for the future maintenance and management of the open space and green and blue infrastructure within the site

Proposal

Outline application for up to 24,000m² (gross external area) of employment land (Use Classes E(g), B2 and B8) with new vehicular access, associated parking, highway infrastructure and other ancillary works. All matters are reserved except for access.

Consultations

The following consultees have raised **no objection** or **raise comments** on the application:

- Arboricultural Officer
- Archaeological Advisor
- Anglian Water

- Conservation Officer (North Northants)
- Ecology Advisor
- Environment Agency
- Environmental Health
- Local Highway Authority
- Lead Local Flood Authority
- National Highways
- Natural England
- Northamptonshire Police
- Strategic Planning

The following consultees have raised **objections** to the application:

- Conservation Officer (West Northants)
- Great Houghton Parish Council
- Little Houghton Parish Council

Ten representations have been received in response to the publicity of the application, which raise objections and concerns.

Conclusion

The application has been assessed against the relevant policies in the NPPF, the adopted Local Plan and other relevant guidance as listed in detail at Section 8 of the report.

The key issues arising from the application details are:

- The principle of development on the site
- Employment and other economic considerations
- Landscape character and visual impact
- Heritage issues
- Highway impacts
- Ecology
- Residential amenity
- Flood risk and drainage
- Air quality and contamination

The report looks into the key planning issues in detail, and Officers conclude that the proposal is acceptable, subject to conditions.

Members are advised that the above is a summary of the proposals and key issues contained in the main report below which provides full details of all consultation responses, planning policies, the Officer's assessment and recommendations, and Members are advised that this summary should be read in conjunction with the detailed report.

MAIN REPORT

1. APPLICATION SITE AND LOCALITY

- 1.1 The application site comprises of just over 20 hectares of agricultural land consisting of two fields with hedging and post and wire fencing to the boundaries. It was formerly a gravel extraction site which was subsequently filled with inert waste materials in the late 1990s and latterly reinstated.

- 1.2 The general topography of the site has a shallow gradient falling from the south to the north with the site being broadly level from east to west. The site's high point is the south east corner and the low point is the north east corner.
- 1.3 There is an existing drainage ditch running through the central part of the site and field boundary drainage ditches to the east and west. A line of overhead power cables on pylons runs through the site along the northern boundary.
- 1.4 The application site is located immediately to the north of the A428 Bedford Road, adjacent to Brackmills Industrial Estate. This neighbouring industrial estate includes a range of businesses including several distribution centres for national retailers.
- 1.5 The site is bound to the north by Hardingstone Dyke with the Upper Nene Gravel Pits lying beyond.
- 1.6 To the west of the site is a public house and a hotel which form part of the Lakeside Business Park. Agricultural land lies to the east and further to the east and to the south of the site are the villages of Little Houghton and Great Houghton respectively.

2. CONSTRAINTS

- 2.1. The Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits lie immediately to the north of the site. This area is designated as a Special Protection Area (SPA) and Ramsar site as well as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).
- 2.2. The northern part of the application site falls within a Bird Sightline Protection Zone associated with the Gravel Pits, as identified in the emerging Northampton Local Plan Part 2.
- 2.3. The historic core of the nearby villages of Little Houghton and Great Houghton are designated as Conservation Areas and include several listed buildings.
- 2.4. The site is within flood zone 1 but the land immediately to the north of the site is flood zone 3.

3. DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 3.1. The application seeks outline planning permission for up to 24,000m² (gross external area) of employment land for Use Classes E(g), B2 and B8, including new vehicular access, associated parking, highway infrastructure and other ancillary works.
- 3.2. The means of access to the site is the only matter that has been applied for. All other matters, namely the layout, scale, appearance and landscaping of the site, are reserved for future approval.
- 3.3. The proposed access to the site is via a new priority junction off Bedford Road which would be located towards the western part of the site. A dedicated right turn lane into the site is proposed within the Bedford Road carriageway.
- 3.4. The application is supported by an illustrative site layout plan, parameters plan and a landscape strategy plan. The illustrative layout demonstrates how the site could be developed and shows the commercial development concentrated in the southern part of

the site with the northern part of the site given over to a 'habitat enhancement zone' and landscaping to provide a buffer zone to the SPA.

- 3.5. A total of 18 industrial/warehouse units are indicated which would provide a variety of unit sizes ranging from 450m² up to 9,500m² (GEA). There are two blocks of smaller sized units, a pair of semi-detached units and five larger stand-alone units of varying sizes. All the units are shown to include ancillary office space.
- 3.6. The submitted parameters plan indicates that there would be a maximum building height of 12 metres above existing ground level, and this would be reduced to a maximum of 10 metres for the units adjacent to the eastern boundary.
- 3.7. The units are shown as being served off a spine road running east-west across the centre of the site, with each unit having a service yard and associated parking.
- 3.8. The illustrative layout shows a 20m deep landscaped boundary along the full frontage of the site and a 10m deep landscape boundary to a proportion of the eastern boundary. A double width hedge is also shown within the site, separating the built development from the proposed habitat enhancement zone.
- 3.9. The proposal includes some off-site highway works, including a scheme of pedestrian and cycle improvements along Bedford Road within the vicinity of the site.

4. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

- 4.1. A request for an Environmental Impact Assessment Scoping Opinion for proposed employment scheme was submitted in February 2019 (reference N/2019/0195). The request sought to determine the extent of issues to be considered in the assessment and reported on in the Environmental Statement for the purposes of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (England and Wales) Regulations 2017. The Scoping Opinion was issued by the Council in March 2019 and confirmed the requisite contents of the EIA. The current planning application is accompanied by an Environmental Statement prepared in accordance with the Scoping Opinion.
- 4.2. A formal pre-application enquiry for proposed development of employment land (Use Classes B1c, B2 and B8) with new vehicular access, associated parking, highway infrastructure and other ancillary works was submitted in August 2020 (reference PA/2020/0264). Advice was sought on a prospective outline application for up to 30,000m² of employment land with all matters reserved except for access. Advice was provided on relevant planning policy requirements, technical matters and planning obligations.

5. RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY AND GUIDANCE

Statutory Duty

- 5.1. Planning law requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

- 5.2 Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires Local Planning Authorities when considering development that affects the setting of a listed building or its setting to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.
- 5.3 Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires Local Planning Authorities when considering development to pay special attention to preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area.
- 5.4 Where an Environmental Statement (ES) is submitted with an application there is a legal duty for the Local Planning Authority to have regard to it. This means examining the environmental information, reaching a reasoned conclusion on the significant effects, integrating that conclusion into the planning decision and, if granting permission, considering whether to impose monitoring measures. An ES which has been submitted in support of this application considers the proposal in detail against a range of planning considerations.

Development Plan

- 5.5 The Development Plan comprises the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy Local Plan (Part 1) which was formally adopted by the Joint Strategic Planning Committee on 15th December 2014 and which provides the strategic planning policy framework for the District to 2029, the adopted Local Plan (Part 1 – saved policies) and adopted Neighbourhood Plans. The relevant planning policies of the statutory Development Plan are set out below:

West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy Local Plan (Part 1) (LPP1)

- 5.6 The relevant policies of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy Local Plan (Part 1) are:
- Policy SA – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
 - Policy S1 – The Distribution of Development
 - Policy S4 – Northampton Related Development Area
 - Policy S7 – Provision of jobs
 - Policy S8 – Distribution of jobs
 - Policy S10 – Sustainable Development Principles
 - Policy S11 – Low Carbon and Renewable Energy
 - Policy C2 – New Developments
 - Policy E1 – Existing Employment Areas
 - Policy BN2 – Biodiversity
 - Policy BN4 – Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits Special Protection Area
 - Policy BN5 – The Historic Environment and Landscape
 - Policy BN7A – Water Supply, Quality and Wastewater Infrastructure
 - Policy BN7 – Flood Risk
 - Policy BN8 - The River Nene Strategic River Corridor
 - Policy BN9 – Planning for Pollution Control
 - Policy BN10 – Ground Instability
 - Policy INF1 – Approach to Infrastructure Delivery
 - Policy INF2 – Contributions to Infrastructure Requirements

Northampton Local Plan (1997) – Saved Policies

5.7 Due to the age of the plan, the amount of weight that can be attributed to its policies is diminished, however, the following policies are material to this application:

- Policy E7 – Skyline development
- Policy E9 – Locally important landscape areas
- Policy E20 – New developments (design)
- Policy T12 – Servicing by commercial vehicles

Great Houghton Neighbourhood Development Plan

5.8 West Northamptonshire Council made the Great Houghton Neighbourhood Development Plan on 6 May 2022. The Plan sets out the objectives and planning policies to manage development in the Parish of Great Houghton up to 2029. The following policies are of particular relevance:

- Policy GHNDP1 – Protecting Village Character and the Rural Environment
- Policy GHNDP2 – Great Houghton Conservation Area
- Policy GHNDP3 – Sustainable Design and Construction
- Policy GHNDP6 – Conserving and Enhancing the Landscape
- Policy GHNDP9 – Traffic Management and Transport Improvements

Material Considerations

5.9 Below is a list of the relevant Material Planning Considerations

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The NPPF should be read as one complete document. However, the following sections are of particular relevance to this application:

- Paragraphs 7-12 – Presumption in favour of sustainable development
 - Section 6 – Building a strong, competitive economy
 - Section 8 – Promoting healthy and safe communities
 - Section 9 – Promoting sustainable transport
 - Section 11 – Making effective use of land
 - Section 12 – Achieving well-designed places
 - Section 14 – Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change
 - Section 15 – Conserving and enhancing the natural environment
 - Section 16 – Conserving and enhancing the historic environment
- Northampton Local Plan Part 2 (2011-2029) (Emerging)

Following the decision at the Full Council on 18 January 2021, the former Northampton Borough Council submitted the Northampton Local Plan Part 2 (2011 – 2029) and supporting documents to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government (now Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities) on 4 February 2021 for examination. This is in accordance with Regulation 22 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended).

In line with Paragraph 48 of the National Planning Policy Framework, the policies contained within the emerging Northampton Local Plan Part 2 are therefore a material

consideration in the determination of planning applications. The weight afforded to the policies relevant to this application are set out below:

- Policy 1 – Presumption for sustainable development (Significant weight)
 - Policy 2 – Placemaking and design (Moderate weight)
 - Policy 5 – Carbon reduction, community energy networks, sustainable design and construction, and water use (Moderate weight)
 - Policy 6 – Health and wellbeing (Significant weight)
 - Policy 7 – Flood risk and water management (Significant weight)
 - Policy 17 – Safeguarding existing employment sites (Significant weight)
 - Policy 17A – Employment allocations (Significant weight)
 - Policy 18 – Supporting new employment developments and schemes outside allocated sites (Significant weight)
 - Policy 29a – Supporting and Enhancing Biodiversity (Moderate weight)
 - Policy 29b – Nature Conservation (Moderate weight)
 - Policy 27 – Sustaining and enhancing existing green and blue infrastructure and supporting the creation of new green and blue infrastructure (Significant weight)
 - Policy 30 – Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits Special Protection Area (Moderate weight)
 - Policy 32 – Designing Sustainable Transport and Travel (Significant weight)
 - Policy 33 – Highway network and safety (Significant weight)
 - Policy 35 – Parking standards (Significant weight)
 - Policy 37 – Infrastructure Delivery and Contributions (Significant weight)
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- Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits Special Protection Area (SPA) Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) (November 2021)
 - Addendum to the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA SPD: Mitigation Strategy (March 2022)
 - Biodiversity Supplementary Planning Document for Northamptonshire (2015)
 - Northampton Parking Standards Supplementary Planning Document (2019)
 - Northamptonshire County Parking Standards (2016)
 - Planning Obligations Strategy Supplementary Planning Document (February 2013)
 - Planning Out Crime in Northamptonshire Supplementary Planning Guidance (2004)
 - Great Houghton Conservation Area Appraisal & Management Plan (2018)
 - Little Houghton Conservation Area Appraisal & Management Plan (2015)

6. RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION

Below is a summary of the consultation responses received at the time of writing this report.

Consultee Name	Comment
Archaeology Advisor	No objection subject to a condition to secure a programme of archaeological recording.
Arboricultural Officer	No objection. There are not considered to be any features of particular arboricultural merit within the site.
Anglian Water	No objection subject to a condition requiring detailed design of the foul drainage system.
Conservation Officer (West Northants)	Object on the grounds of the impact on the character and appearance of the Great Houghton Conservation Area through encroachment and erosion of open land that contributes to its setting. The level of harm would be less than substantial, but would not be outweighed by wider public benefits.
Conservation Officer (North Northants)	The proposed development would neither sustain or enhance the setting of the Little Houghton Conservation Area and the Grade II* listed Church of St Marys the Virgin. The proposal would cause harm to the setting of these designated heritage assets, albeit that harm would be less than substantial. In accordance with Paragraph 202 of the NPPF, the harm needs to be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.
Construction Futures	A Financial contribution towards construction training is sought from this development.
Ecology Advisor	No objection. Satisfied that the Council can rule out likely significant effects on the SPA. The applicant has provided further clarification on the issue of great crested newts and on this basis no further information is required.
Environment Agency	No objection subject to conditions relating to contamination and development being carried out in accordance with the submitted Flood Risk Assessment.
Environmental Health	No objection subject to conditions relating to land contamination, noise, air quality mitigation and a Construction Environmental Management Plan.
Great Houghton Parish Council	Object. The proposal conflicts with the WNJCS in that it is not within the Principal Urban Area and would lead to an eastward extension of the built-up area into open countryside, leading to a significant negative impact on the distinctive character of Great Houghton village and the area's tranquillity. Furthermore, there is no economic imperative to find additional employment land, underlined by the fact that the application site is not allocated in the LPP2. Concerns raised with the impact on the river Nene corridor and local green infrastructure, the impact on biodiversity including the adjacent SPA, the impact on the Great Houghton

	Conservation Area, and potential harm to highway safety. The site is not suitable for employment use and is not accessible by sustainable modes of transport. The development would also have a negative impact on the regeneration of Northampton.
Little Houghton Parish Council	Object on the grounds that the site is unsuitable for the proposed development due to its proximity to the adjacent SPA, the visual impact within the landscape, the impact on historic views from the Little Houghton Conservation Area, the impact on the local highway network and noise disturbance from the proposed uses.
Lead Local Flood Authority	No objection subject to conditions requiring detailed design for the surface water drainage system, arrangements for the future maintenance and management of the surface water drainage infrastructure and a verification report for the installation of the approved drainage system.
Local Highway Authority	No objection subject to a condition to secure technical details for the proposed right turn lane and site access junction and a condition requiring the speed limit on Bedford Road to be moved (as proposed within the application) before the development is brought into use. The submitted Framework Travel Plan is approved. Monitoring of the development's Travel Plan will be required.
National Highways	No objection. A condition is recommended for a Construction Traffic Management Plan.
Natural England	No objection.
Northamptonshire Police	No objection. Security matters will be addressed at detailed design stage. The reserved matters should include a security statement.
Strategic Planning	A financial contribution towards fire hydrants is sought and a condition for the provision of fire hydrants and sprinkler systems is recommended. Advice provided on broadband fibre.
Ward Councillors	No comments received
Wellingborough Borough Council	Has no comments or objections to the application.
Refuse (Veolia)	No comments received

7. RESPONSE TO PUBLICITY

7.1 A total of 10 representations have been received in response to the publicity of the application, which raise objections and concerns. A summary of the comments received is provided below.

Highways

- Increase in traffic movements on an already busy and dangerous road
- Road infrastructure cannot support more traffic
- Cumulative impact with planned housing development in this area
- Concerns that large vehicles will use narrow village roads as a cut through
- Traffic through Little Houghton will be increased and the existing roads are unable to cope with the current amount of traffic
- Impact of introducing a roundabout on fuel usage and travel time (officer response: It is no longer proposed to install a roundabout on Bedford Road)
- Site lies along a busy cycle route – impact on safety of cyclists
- Transport Assessment focuses on rush hour traffic but the bigger impact will be felt as a result of light and heavy goods vehicles outside of rush hour

Landscape/visual amenity issues

- Proposal represents urban sprawl and will erode the countryside that separates Northampton from Little Houghton
- Little Houghton may eventually become joined onto Northampton and would no longer be a rural area.
- Great Houghton has already been swallowed up by Brackmills and should the proposal go ahead it's only a matter of time before the same happens to Little Houghton
- Erosion of village separation
- Impact on the natural beauty of the Nene valley
- Impact on outlook from surrounding conservation areas
- Spoiling the countryside

Residential amenity

- Noise – concerns with operating hours and nature of the businesses occupying the site

Ecology

- Impact on the Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA
- Loss of habitat for wildlife / Loss of fields used by wetland birds

Other matters

- Development on a floodplain. The proposal will increase flood risk
- Air pollution from increased freight traffic / decline in local air quality from increased traffic movements
- Increased traffic noise
- Increased light pollution
- Loss of green space will impact on the mental health of the population who use the local area for recreation
- The proposed buildings should have roof top solar panels to help avoid further solar farms in the countryside

- Commercial space on the outskirts of towns is not a positive development. Improving existing sites would be a better use of land rather than new development on Greenfield sites.
- Loss of view
- Impact on property values
- Site notices displayed poorly
- The new footway and cycle paths are welcomed

8. APPRAISAL

Principle of Development

Policy Context

Policy context

- 8.1 The Development Plan comprises the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy Local Plan (Part 1), the Northampton Local Plan (Part 1 – saved policies) and the Great Houghton Neighbourhood Development Plan. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that planning applications are determined in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 8.2 Whilst not adopted policy, the Northampton Local Plan Part 2 (LPP2) is a material consideration. The emerging plan has reached an advanced stage of preparation and its policies therefore attract increased weight.
- 8.3 In considering the principle of development on the site, the most relevant policies are contained within the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy (WNJCS) and the emerging Local Plan Part 2.
- 8.4 Policy S1 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy (WNJCS) sets out the strategy for the broad distribution of development and economic activity across West Northamptonshire. It states that development will be concentrated primarily in and adjoining the Principal Urban Area of Northampton.
- 8.5 The site lies within the Northampton Related Development Area (NRDA), as identified within the WNJCS, and Policy S4 of the WNJCS relates to development in the NRDA. This policy principally concerns the scale of housing development to be provided in the NRDA but it also confirms that Northampton’s employment needs will be met primarily within Northampton’s existing urban area and at the sustainable urban extensions within the Northampton Related Development Area boundary. Additional development to meet Northampton’s needs will be supported only if it meets the vision, objectives and policies of the WNJCS.
- 8.6 Policy S7 of the WNJCS sets out a requirement for a minimum net increase of 28,500 jobs within the West Northamptonshire area during the plan period of 2008-2029.
- 8.7 Policy S8 of the WNJCS states that the majority of new job growth will be concentrated within the Principal Urban Area of Northampton and the policy goes on to identify a series of options as to how this will be met.
- 8.8 Policy 17 of the LPP2 seeks to safeguard all existing employment sites within the office, general industrial and warehousing and distribution sectors.

- 8.9 Policy 17A of the LPP2 allocates sites for employment use. The application site is not allocated within the emerging plan. Indeed, the site was assessed as part of the LPP2 site selection process for employment use and was found to be unsuitable for allocation due to the impact on the village of Great Houghton and its heritage assets and due to its proximity to the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA and Ramsar Site.
- 8.10 To ensure a vibrant economy, Policy 18 of the LPP2 seeks to support new employment developments and schemes outside of safeguarded areas. The policy states that proposals for new employment provision will be supported provided they meet the following criteria:
- i. The site has been comprehensively assessed and is consistent with other relevant policies in this plan and other development plan documents, and the proposed uses and associated employment activities can be carried out without causing harm to adjoining land uses and occupiers, including residential amenity. The Council supports windfall employment development proposals provided the site has been comprehensively assessed as being suitable for employment purposes. These assessments should include a statement detailing the nature of the proposal, the number of jobs expected to be created, the potential impacts on the uses and occupiers of the surrounding area, and environmental (such as noise and pollution) and traffic considerations. The potential impacts on the surrounding areas should also cover matters such as impacts on the natural environment and heritage and non-heritage assets.*
- ii. The site can demonstrate good accessibility by walking, cycling and public transport.*
- 8.11 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the current aims and objectives for the planning system and how these should be applied. In delivering sustainable development, decisions should have regard to the mutually dependent economic, social and environmental roles of the planning system. So that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development.
- 8.12 The economic objective of the planning system is 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.
- 8.13 Paragraph 81 of the NPPF states that planning decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt, with significant weight placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development. Paragraph 82 states that planning decisions should recognise and address the specific locational requirements of different sectors, including making provision for storage and distribution operations at a variety of scales and in suitably accessible locations.

Assessment

- 8.14 The application site is a greenfield site that lies to the north east of Brackmills Industrial Estate. The existing industrial estate forms part of a safeguarded employment area which extends up to the south western boundary of the application site. The application site also abuts a hotel and public house along part of its western boundary, with the Lakes Business Park lying beyond that.

- 8.15 The WNJCS does not define a physical boundary for Northampton's Principal Urban Area. However, given the site's proximity and relationship to the built-up area of Northampton, including Brackmills Industrial Estate, it is considered that the site adjoins the Principal Urban Area of Northampton and therefore the application is in accordance with Policy S1 of the WNJCS.
- 8.16 Turning to Policy S4 of the WNJCS, this identifies that Northampton's employment needs will be met primarily within the existing urban area and at the Sustainable Urban Extensions. The policy goes on to state that additional development to meet Northampton's needs will be supported only if it meets the vision, objectives and policies of the WNJCS.
- 8.17 The site is not considered to be within the existing urban area, with it being a greenfield site adjoining the edge of the built-up part of Northampton. The proposal therefore represents 'additional development' in the context of Policy S4. The principle of the proposed development can therefore be accepted provided it is necessary to meet an identified need and subject to the proposal aligning with the Joint Core Strategy's vision, objectives and policies. The need for the development and the extent to which the proposal meets the vision, objectives and policies in the WNJCS is set out within the remainder of this appraisal.
- 8.18 The proposal is for employment development outside of any safeguarded employment sites and it is not allocated for employment use within the LPP2. The proposal therefore represents a windfall employment development. Policy 18 of the LPP2 supports such development provided that the site has been comprehensively assessed as being suitable for employment purposes.
- 8.19 The site has previously been subject to an assessment as to its suitability for employment use through a Sites Allocation Methodology and Land Availability Assessment as part of the LPP2 process. This concluded that the site was unsuitable for allocation as an employment site on the grounds of the impact on the setting of the village of Great Houghton and its heritage assets and the site's proximity to the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA and Ramsar Site. Notwithstanding the findings of this previous assessment, Policy 18 establishes support in principle for the proposed development, subject to consideration of the matters set out in criterion i and ii of the policy. It is therefore necessary to undertake a comprehensive assessment of the site against the requirements of Policy 18, taking account of the information submitted in support of the planning application and having regard to all other relevant material planning considerations. This report provides such an assessment, including consideration of the reasons for the site being rejected as an employment allocation.
- 8.20 In terms of national planning policy, the proposed provision of new employment land would provide opportunities for businesses to grow and would help to create direct and indirect job opportunities. The proposal is therefore considered to be consistent with the overarching economic objective of the NPPF.
- 8.21 Based on the above assessment, the general principle of the proposed development is considered acceptable.

Employment considerations

Context

- 8.22 The West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy requires the creation of around 28,500 jobs over the plan period to 2029 to ensure that there is a balance between labour

supply and housing growth. Northampton is expected to deliver the majority of new jobs in West Northamptonshire.

- 8.23 The Joint Authorities Monitoring Report for 2019/20 concluded that a net gain of 19,500 net jobs were created between 2008 and 2019 compared to 22,500 in the period 2008 to 2018. This is the first fall in the number of new jobs since 2012. There are further job losses expected as a result of the Covid pandemic but the overall net gain up to 2019 indicates that West Northamptonshire is still on track to deliver the target set by the Joint Core Strategy.
- 8.24 Property market evidence shows that the distribution and general industrial sectors remain the main thrust of the commercial market in Northampton, with the office market weaker in comparison. Class B uses (general industrial, storage and warehousing) and offices provide a substantial proportion of Northampton's employment, but an increasing proportion of employment occurs in other uses, such as retail, leisure and the construction industry. The ongoing demand for the more traditional employment land within the B Use Classes therefore needs to continue to be accommodated to ensure that there is a balance in the economy in terms of job supply across the sectors.
- 8.25 To ensure a vibrant economy, Policy 18 of the LPP2 provides support for new employment provision outside of safeguarded employment sites and explicitly recognises the importance of windfall employment development. The supporting text to the policy also identifies that to support net job creation, it is important to ensure that employment schemes outside the designated employment sites, but which are compatible with their surrounding uses, are considered positively. Policy 18 thereby provides flexibility and makes an allowance for windfall employment development.

The proposal

- 8.26 The parameters of the proposal are for a maximum of 24,000m² (GEA) of employment floorspace within small to medium sized units of between 450m² and 9,500m², together with open storage uses. The proposed Use Class mix is as follows:
- Use Class E(g): 33.3%
 - Use Class B2 (general industry): 16.7%
 - Use Class B8 (storage and distribution): 50%

Use Class E(g) covers: (i) offices, (ii) the research and development of products or processes and (iii) any industrial process which can be carried out in any residential area without causing detriment to the amenity of the area.

The application proposes to limit the amount of office space to a maximum of 10% of the overall floorspace.

Assessment

- 8.27 In considering the need for the proposed development, regard has been had to the West Northamptonshire Housing and Economic Needs Assessment (HENA) dated July 2021, which forms part of the evidence base for the West Northamptonshire Strategic Plan. The Strategic Plan will eventually replace the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy and guide development in the period up to 2041.
- 8.28 Jobs will need to be created to align with the housing need number that has been identified in the HENA. The Employment Background Paper for the Strategic Plan

(September 2021) summarised the conclusions from HENA which state, amongst others, that there is a surplus of 70 hectares of B1 office [now Use Class E(g)(i)] and a shortfall of 47 hectares of B2/B8 over the period 2020-2050. Importantly, the residual need has been identified in the former Daventry and Northampton areas rather than in former South Northamptonshire and therefore the West Northamptonshire Strategic Plan will need to consider this when identifying potential options across the area. The proposed development of the application site would therefore contribute towards the delivery of B2/B8 jobs within the West Northamptonshire area, which the study predicts to be in deficit.

- 8.29 Two thirds of the proposed floorspace is proposed to be for B2/B8 use with the remainder being within Use Class E(g), which covers offices, research and development and light industrial type uses. The application proposes to limit the office space to a maximum of 10% of the overall floorspace. A restriction to limit the office space to a maximum of 10% of the floorspace within any one unit is considered necessary to ensure that the office provision is an ancillary element of the other uses. This is to ensure that the proposal is adequately meeting the identified shortfall of B Use Class employment uses and considering the surplus of office land identified in the HENA. Furthermore, offices are classified as a main town centre use and the site is in an out of centre location. The inclusion of a proportion of research and development and light industrial use on the site would diversify employment opportunities and help to support a balanced and mixed economy, consistent with the vision, objectives and policies of the WNJCS.
- 8.30 On the basis on the above, there is considered to be an identified need for the proposed new employment land. This need for the proposed development is further supported by the Employment Land Needs Assessment (November 2020) provided by the applicant as part of the planning application submission. This concludes that, *inter alia*, there is a gap between current supply and demand for industrial and warehousing land, resulting in a substantial projected shortfall of B-Class floorspace to 2029.
- 8.31 In considering the need for the proposed development, it is also relevant to consider the format of the proposed employment development. The layout of the site is a reserved matter however the proposed parameters of the development specify that the proposed floor space would be accommodated in a range of unit sizes of between 450m² and 9,500m², with the units being classed as small to medium. The illustrative site layout indicates a total of 18 units.
- 8.32 Whilst it is now somewhat dated, the Northampton Employment Land Assessment (February 2018) formed part of the technical evidence base that informed the preparation of the LPP2. The report concluded that, with regards to light industry, general industry and warehousing, there is substantial demand for new industrial distribution development across all unit sizes in Northampton. Furthermore, if new land is provided it will be viable and developed.
- 8.33 The demand for new industrial and warehousing floorspace across all unit sizes is affirmed within the applicant's Employment Land Needs Assessment (ELNA), which includes an analysis of market demand and take up for industrial and warehousing development. The ELNA is dated November 2020, but the aforementioned analysis was updated June 2021. It identifies that there is a substantial level of latent demand for new industrial/warehousing floorspace in Northampton and there is insufficient existing or proposed product (industrial/warehouse units 1,000 – 120,000 sq ft) to satisfy current and future local/incoming occupier demand.

- 8.34 The proposal would therefore contribute to meeting the need for small to medium sized units as identified within the Northampton Employment Land Assessment, as well as the applicant's ELNA.
- 8.35 Turning to employment generation, the application is supported by an Economic Benefits Assessment (EBA) dated February 2021 which seeks to quantify the economic impacts of the proposal and includes estimated employment job creation figures.
- 8.36 The proposal would provide direct employment opportunities as well as indirect and induced employment opportunities.
- 8.37 When operational, the proposed amount of employment floorspace is predicted to support 279 full-time equivalent (FTE) jobs once potential job displacement has been factored in.
- 8.38 This net direct employment would also support additional indirect and induced jobs. The EBA estimates that the proposed development would support an additional 81 FTE indirect and induced jobs within Northampton Borough, and an additional 123 FTE indirect jobs within West Northamptonshire.
- 8.39 In addition to the employment opportunities resulting from the operation of the site, the development would also support jobs associated with the construction of the development. The EBA estimates that the proposal would support 134 direct FTE jobs annually over the two year construction phase. Furthermore, it is estimated that an additional 149 FTE indirect and induced jobs could be supported per year of construction by the proposed development in sectors throughout the UK economy.
- 8.40 Officers consider the methodology used for the employment generation figures to be sound and robust and as such represent an accurate estimation of the likely employment benefits.
- 8.41 The submitted Environmental Statement also provides an assessment of the likely significant socio-economic effects of the proposed development. It concludes that during the construction phase, the proposed development is expected to deliver a minor beneficial effect in the local and wider impact areas, providing direct jobs for the existing construction workforce alongside supporting indirect jobs within the local supply chain. Once operational, the new employment floorspace in the development is expected to generate a permanent minor beneficial effect through job creation and additional economic output in the local and wider impact areas.

Conclusion on employment considerations

- 8.42 The proposed development would contribute towards the delivery of B2/B8 jobs within the Northampton area, where the latest available evidence predicts a deficit of such provision over the period of 2020-2050. The proposed development would therefore help to meet an identified need for new employment land.
- 8.43 The proposal would deliver small and medium sized units where there is an identified demand for such units, providing opportunities for businesses to invest, expand and adapt. The scheme would provide a mixture of employment uses across the site which would provide a range of employment opportunities and help to support a balanced economy. It is estimated that the site could support around 279 FTE jobs once it is operational and would make a positive contribution towards the job requirement for the West Northamptonshire area as set out in Policy S7 of the WNJCS. This is a significant

benefit that weighs in favour of the application. The scheme is also estimated to provide other indirect and induced employment benefits which is of further benefit.

- 8.44 The proposal represents a windfall employment opportunity and emerging Policy 18 of the LPP2 indicates that such schemes should be considered positively. The policy requires that sites such as this are comprehensively assessed as being suitable for employment purposes, including assessment of the nature of the proposal and the number of jobs expected to be created. This element of emerging Policy 18 is therefore considered to have been satisfied.
- 8.45 In summary, it is considered that the application accords with Policies S4 and S7 of the WNJCS, Policy 18 of the emerging LPP2 and guidance contained within the NPPF.

Other economic considerations

- 8.46 In addition to the employment benefits discussed above, the application identifies other economic benefits that are expected to result from the proposed development.
- 8.47 The applicant considers that the proposal would represent new capital investment of circa £29.3 million and the submitted EBA provides an indication of the economic output associated with the development based on its contribution towards Gross Added Value (GVA). GVA is a measure of the difference between what is produced as an output (goods and services) and the inputs (raw materials, semi-finished products etc) used in the production of the output. It represents the additional value that is added through economic activity.
- 8.48 It has been estimated that the development could result in a net direct GVA per annum of £19.2 million when it is operational. For the construction phase, it is estimated that the development could generate approximately £10.0 million of direct GVA and £11.9 million of indirect GVA during each year of construction, although not all of this would be retained locally.
- 8.49 The above figures give an indication of the broader economic benefits that would arise from the proposal. The NPPF states that 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 wider economic benefits that have been identified therefore add weight in favour of the proposed development.

Landscape issues

Policy context

- 8.50 The site is allocated as Greenspace in the Northampton Local Plan 1997, although the Policy relating to development in Greenspace areas has not been saved. Landscape policies within the Northampton Local Plan that have been saved and are relevant to the current application are Policy E7 (Skyline development) and Policy E9 (Locally important landscape areas).
- 8.51 Saved Policy E7 of the Northampton Local Plan states that when considering the impact of proposed development upon the landscape, special importance will be attached to its effect upon the skyline of [certain specific areas]. One of the areas

identified within the policy is between Great Houghton and Hardingstone (as seen from the Nene Valley to the north) and is of relevance here.

- 8.52 Saved Policy E9 of the Northampton Local Plan identifies locally important landscape areas where special importance is to be attached when considering a proposed development's impact on the landscape. One of the areas is identified as 'Brackmills-Great Houghton' "which forms part of the open space which separates Brackmills industrial estate from Great Houghton village". The western part of this area has now been developed and contains employment units which form an extension to Brackmills Business Park.
- 8.53 Saved Policy E20 of the Northampton Local Plan relates to the design of new development. It states that planning permission for new development will be granted subject to, *inter alia*, the design of any new building or extension adequately reflecting the character of its surroundings in terms of layout, siting, form, scale and use of appropriate materials.
- 8.54 Policy BN5 of the WNJCS relates to the historic environment and landscape. It seeks to secure and enhance the significance of the area's heritage assets and their settings and landscapes. Development in areas of landscape sensitivity and/or known historic or heritage significance will be required to sustain and enhance the heritage and landscape features which contribute to the character of the area, including Conservation Areas and the skyline and landscape settings of towns and villages.
- 8.55 Policy GHNDP1 of the Great Houghton Neighbourhood Plan seeks to protect the character and identity of Great Houghton village and the rural character of the area and Policy GHNDP6 seeks to conserve and enhance the local landscape, including by minimising the encroachment of development into visually exposed landscapes.
- 8.56 Emerging Policy 2 of the LPP2 relates to placemaking and design. It states that development should be designed to contribute to good placemaking through high quality, innovative beautiful and sustainable design which encourages the creation of a strong, locally distinctive sense of place. The policy goes on to set out how this will be achieved, including:
- Responding to and enhancing locally distinct townscape, landscape and historic environment characteristics
 - Retaining, enhancing and creating important views and vistas into, out of and through the site responding to topography and landform where such opportunities arise
 - Sustaining, protecting and enhancing heritage and natural environment assets
 - Having regard to safeguarding or enhancing the setting of locally distinct places, including those found in Conservation Area Appraisals, in terms of scale, design, landform and integration within the existing local context to protect their identified important and unique characteristics based on sound, consistent analysis.
- 8.57 Paragraph 174 of the NPPF states that planning decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by, *inter alia*, protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan, and by recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services.

Assessment

- 8.58 The application has been submitted in outline form and the detailed matters of the layout, scale, appearance and landscaping of the site are all reserved for approval in the future.
- 8.59 The application site comprises of two reclaimed semi-improved grassed fields within the Nene Valley. It is positioned within a broad river valley landscape, with gently undulating valley slopes rising up to higher ground in the south and south-east.
- 8.60 The local landscape context includes large-scale modern buildings at the edge of the Brackmills Industrial Estate to the south west of the site. The Brackmills Industrial Estate occupies a low-lying position in a natural, shallow 'bowl' surrounded to the south and west by higher land. To the west of the site are leisure and commercial buildings within the Lakes Business Park. The site is bound to the south by the A428 Bedford Road and layby with fields further to the south separated by trees and vegetation. The wetland landscape of the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits lies to the north of the site, separated by Hardingstone Dyke. Open fields exist to the east.
- 8.61 Within this wider context, Great Houghton village is positioned on subtly rising land, enclosed by higher ground to the south. The village of Little Houghton sits within tree cover to the east. More distantly to the north, across the Nene Valley, are relatively elevated settlement areas on the edge of Northampton.
- 8.62 The application includes a Landscape Strategy Plan which shows built development concentrated in the southern half of the site with the northern part of the site forming a substantial landscaped buffer to the Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA. The landscaped buffer includes an expanse of meadow grassland containing two balancing ponds alongside an area of shrubs and grassland and a double hedgerow. In addition, a belt of broadleaved tree planting in combination with low mounding is shown to the eastern boundary and a 20m wide landscaped buffer is indicated along the site's frontage incorporating retained and reinforced boundary hedges, new tree planting and low mounding. The retained and new landscaping represents approximately 65% of the total site area.
- 8.63 Existing site levels are proposed to be altered to achieve the required development plateaus, although the overall building plateau levels would remain within the existing site levels. Building heights are proposed to be restricted to a maximum of 12m, reducing to 10m in the easternmost part of the site.
- 8.64 The submitted Environmental Statement includes a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LIVA) which provides a detailed analysis of the landscape and visual impacts of the proposed development. The assessment includes a series of photomontages based upon the Illustrative Masterplan and Landscape Strategy Plan. These show the proposed development within its landscape context from a range of different vantage points, including from Great Houghton village, the area around the western edge of Little Houghton village, the Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA and from Bedford Road. The photomontages are shown upon full completion and 15 years post full completion. The 15 years post full completion photomontage is used to convey the residual effect of the landscape and planting proposals after 15 years of growth and appropriate management.
- 8.65 The LIVA confirms that the site is within an undesignated landscape with no special protected status. It describes that the proposal would change the character of the site and would involve the partial loss of semi-improved grassland across approximately 35% of the site, to be replaced with new employment units, parking areas and associated infrastructure. For the developed part of the site, the loss of the existing

farmland use would be permanent and irreversible. It goes on to highlight that the proposed landscaping – amounting to approximately 65% of the site area – would provide mitigation and would become increasingly apparent and visible as it matures.

8.66 The LIVA provides an assessment of the visual effects of the proposed development from different receptors and seeks to quantify the impact using established methodology. It identifies that:

- From rising ground away from the site, there is the potential for views from limited locations and residential properties within Great Houghton and the western edge of Little Houghton. There is also the potential for distant views from elevated properties within the built-up area of Abington to the north.
- The majority of properties at Great Houghton would have no views towards any element of the proposed development. In the limited number of cases where there would be views towards the development area, the most visible features would be the landscaped buffer to the south east corner of the site, with the upper elevations of the tallest employment units beyond.
- From the western edge of Little Houghton, the highest parts of the employment units together with the outer mounding and associated landscape proposals would be seen across the intervening farmland as part of an expansive and varied view and against the backdrop of the Brackmills Industrial Estate.
- The open flat nature of the landform to the north of the site - with limited existing vegetative screening - provides the opportunity for some longer distance views over the wider landscape. This is particularly evident looking south from public rights of way to the north of the Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA and from public rights of way to the west of Little Houghton and Great Houghton.
- A range of views towards the site are possible from a number of public rights of way. The extent of available view varies with proximity and presence of intervening vegetation cover. The clearest and most open views are from Public Footpath KU3 north of Bedford Road.
- The Premier Inn and Lakeside Public House adjacent to the site has close easterly views.
- The development would be visible to differing extents by workers at nearby employment units.
- Views of the proposed development would be available to users travelling along Bedford Road.
- There would be some limited views from a short section of High Street immediately to the south of the Bedford Road junction. There would also be some distant and fleeting views from the A45.

8.67 The LIVA also identifies several existing factors that combine to limit the extent of the proposed development's visibility. These include the localised topography and established development at Brackmills reducing viewing opportunities of the site from the south and south west; existing vegetation along the A428 limiting views across the site

to some extent from the road corridor; the wider surrounding landform, particularly to the south and south west providing visual containment; and the landform, existing vegetation and existing built form at Lakeside Business Park and Brackmills Industrial Estate acting as a backdrop to views of the site from the north and north east.

8.68 In addition to these existing factors, the proposed landscape strategy is intended to mitigate the visual impact of the proposed development, with the retained and new landscaping serving to contain, filter and soften the built form.

8.69 Officers recognise that the proposal would significantly alter the established character of the site and affect the wider landscape through the loss of open land and the provision of additional built form that would effectively extend the established urban area in this location. The visual impact of the proposal would nevertheless be mitigated by the site's landscape context, including the local topography, landform, existing vegetation and the presence of the Brackmills Industrial Estate. What is more, substantial visual mitigation could be provided through the landscaping of the site and a limitation on building height, as proposed within the application. As a consequence of these mitigating factors, officers consider that the impact on visual receptors would be relatively limited and would not result in any unacceptable degree of harm – subject to future consideration of the reserved matters. As such, the application is considered to comply with the policies as detailed within this section of the report.

Heritage issues

8.70 Saved Policy E26 of the Northampton Local Plan, Policy BN5 of the WNJCS, Policies GHNDP1, GHNDP2 and GHNDP6 of the Great Houghton Neighbourhood Plan, emerging Policy 31 of the LPP2 and chapter 16 of the NPPF are of direct relevance when considering heritage matters. Policy HE1 (Significance of Heritage Assets), Policy H5 (Listed Buildings) and H6 (Conservation Areas) of the South Northamptonshire Local Plan Part 2 are also relevant in considering the impact on heritage assets that fall within the former South Northamptonshire area (i.e. within Little Houghton).

8.71 It is necessary to consider the impact of the proposed development on the setting of the Great Houghton Conservation Area, the setting of the Little Houghton Conservation Area as well as the setting of nearby listed buildings, notably the Grade II* Listed Church of St Mary the Virgin at Great Houghton and the Grade II* Listed Church of St Mary the Virgin at Little Houghton.

8.72 Setting is defined in Historic England guidance as the surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced and can be affected by changes to surroundings, land use or character.

Great Houghton

8.73 The Great Houghton Conservation Area Appraisal & Management Plan identifies the significance of Great Houghton as a self-contained, distinct village, separate from the built-up area of Northampton and surrounded by fields; it is the last of the separate Nene valley villages within the former Northampton Borough area. Due to its location on rising ground, there are important views of Great Houghton from Northampton across the open Nene valley and from the village northwards and which reinforce the semi-rural setting. It identifies the view northwards across the Nene valley from High Street as an important feature.

- 8.73 The application relates to land to the north of Great Houghton, the historic core of which is designated as a Conservation Area and lies approximately 200m from the application site. The village is located on rising ground to the south east of Northampton and is detached from the urban part of the town and surrounded by open countryside. The open land surrounding Great Houghton contributes to its setting and sense of place as a separate village. The elevated position of the village on the edge of Northampton results in important views of it from the Nene Valley.
- 8.74 The proposal would result in the loss of open land that contributes to the setting of the Conservation Area and would result in changes to distant oblique views of the Conservation Area from the north and north-east. Some mitigation of the development's impact on the setting of the Conservation Area would be provided by the proposed landscape buffers.
- 8.75 Officers have assessed the level of harm to the setting of the Conservation Area as "less than substantial" in the context of the NPPF. This is on the basis that the site does not immediately adjoin the Conservation Area.
- 8.76 There are numerous listed buildings within the Conservation Area. The nearest listed buildings to the site are the former stables of Great Houghton Hall (c 220m south of the site) and No.1 Cherry Tree Lane (c 290m south east of the site); both of these are Grade II listed. Of particular significance is the Church of St Mary's (listed Grade II*) which is around 325m from the application site.
- 8.77 Given the separation distances to listed buildings within the Conservation Area, the level of harm to their setting is also considered to be less than substantial.

Little Houghton

- 8.78 Little Houghton is characterised as a nucleated village and its historic core is designated a Conservation Area in recognition of its special architectural and historic interest. The village is surrounded by open countryside and the views out from the Conservation Area over the open fields and down to the River Nene are a defining characteristic. The rural agrarian setting of the Conservation Area makes a positive and notable contribution towards its significance.
- 8.79 Within Little Houghton there are a number of listed buildings including the Grade II* Church of St Marys the Virgin which is located in centre of the village around 1300m from the application site. Due to the topography of the area the church is a prominent feature in the valley landscape. The development is not considered to affect the setting of other listed buildings within the village.
- 8.80 Officers considered that development of the site would have an adverse visual impact on the setting and significance of the Conservation Area as well as the wider setting of the Grade II* listed church. The agricultural fields between the Little Houghton settlement and the site combined with the proposed landscaping would maintain the rural setting of the Conservation Area and church and as such the level of harm is deemed to be 'less than substantial' within the context of the NPPF.

Assessment

- 8.81 Having established that the level of harm to identified heritage assets would be less than substantial, paragraph 202 of the NPPF is engaged and it is therefore necessary to weigh this harm against the public benefits of the proposal. The main public benefit associated with the proposal would be the employment and wider economic benefits

that have been discussed earlier within this appraisal and which would contribute towards local economic growth. Significant weight is attached to the economic benefits of the proposal and officers consider that this public benefit outweighs the less than substantial harm.

- 8.82 In principle, the application is considered to comply with the policies and guidance referred to in paragraph 8.70. Further consideration of the impact on the setting of heritage assets would be necessary at reserved matters stage, including details of the material palette for the buildings.
- 8.83 With regards to archaeological heritage, the Council's Archaeological Advisor has recommended that a condition be imposed on any permission to secure a programme of investigation and recording because there is the potential for archaeological remains to be present on this site.

Highways and accessibility issues

- 8.84 The application is seeking approval for the means of access to the site. Access to the site was originally proposed in the form of a 3-arm roundabout on A428 Bedford Road. However, the Local Highway Authority (LHA) raised concerns with the impact of this on the free flow of traffic and the access has now been changed to a ghost island priority junction. The point of access is located towards the western part of the site off Bedford Road.
- 8.85 The proposal also includes a pedestrian and cycle strategy that involves a series of off-site works comprising of:
- A new 3m shared-use pedestrian and cycle route on the southern side of A428 Bedford Road, between the Liliput Road roundabout and High Street, Great Houghton. To the west of Liliput Road, this will connect into the wider network of cycle routes continuing into Northampton.
 - A new 3m shared-use pedestrian and cycle route on the northern side of Bedford Road along the site frontage and continuing to the east of the site to a new crossing point.
 - Widening of the existing footway on the northern side of Bedford Road to the west and east of the site.
 - Providing three new pedestrian refuges to assist crossing Bedford Road.
 - Reduction of the speed limit within the site frontage and to the east of the junction with High Street, Great Houghton to 40mph.
 - Upgrading a bus stop on the northern side of Bedford Road to a bus shelter.
- 8.86 The application is supported by a Transport Assessment which has modelled the impact of the proposed development on the local highway network, including the Barnes Meadow (A45 / A428/ A5095) junction and the Brackmills junction (A45 / Rhosili Road / Eagle Drive). The assessment of the development's impact on the A45 concludes that the development would have a minimal impact on the capacity of the highway network.

- 8.87 The application has been assessed by the Local Highway Authority (LHA) and National Highways. Both consultees accept the modelling undertaken by the applicant and consider that the impact of the proposed development on the capacity of the highway network would be minimal. As such, the development is considered acceptable in terms of its impacts on the road network and no specific mitigation is required.
- 8.88 The proposed access junction into the site is considered acceptable by the LHA and a condition requiring full engineering and construction details is recommended.
- 8.89 The proposed pedestrian and cycle strategy would enhance accessibility for users of the site via sustainable and active transport modes whilst also benefiting local residents. The proposed works are welcomed and considered to be proportionate to the development proposed.
- 8.90 The site is considered to be in a sustainable location, being directly adjacent to an established employment area and well-served by public transport during typical daytime working hours. Given the size of the proposed development and indicative size of individual employment units, officers consider that the development is unlikely to result in significant levels of shift working outside of existing public transport service hours. As such, it is not considered that a bespoke shuttle bus service would need to be provided. The LHA has recommended that the developer provides Megarider bus tickets for the local area (one per new employee for a period of time of 6 months) to promote the use of public transport. It is recommended that this forms part of a condition requiring full Travel Plans for the development.
- 8.91 In summary, the traffic generated by the proposed development can be accommodated on the highway network without any undue detriment to highway safety or resulting in any severe cumulative impacts on the road network. Furthermore, the site is considered to be in an accessible location and the scheme also proposes measures to facilitate opportunities for travel by walking, cycling and public transport. The application is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy S10 of the WNJCS, Policies GHNDP3 and GHNDP9 of the Great Houghton Neighbourhood Plan, emerging Policies 18, 32 and 33 of the emerging Local Plan and the NPPF.

Ecology

- 8.92 The main ecological issue is the impact of the development on the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits Special Protection Area (SPA) / Ramsar Site that lies adjacent to the northern boundary of the application site. This adjacent area is also a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). The northern part of the application site falls within the 'SPA, Ramsar Bird Sightline Protection Zone' as identified on the emerging LPP2 Proposals Map.
- 8.93 Local Planning Authorities have a duty as competent authorities under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) (known as the Habitats Regulations) to ensure that planning application decisions comply with the Habitats Regulations.
- 8.94 Special Protection Areas are protected in UK law by the Habitats Regulations and development proposals must not give rise to adverse effects on the integrity of the SPA, either alone or in combination with other plans and projects, and if they are likely to, measures must be secured to avoid or mitigate this impact, otherwise the competent authority is obliged to refuse permission in the absence of satisfying exacting derogation tests.

- 8.95 The Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA was designated in April 2011 under the regulations due to its number and type of bird species present.
- 8.96 Policy BN4 of the WNJCS sets out that new development will need to demonstrate through the development management process that there will be no significant adverse effects upon the integrity of the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA and Ramsar Site. If Habitats Regulations are not met and impacts not mitigated, then development must not be permitted.
- 8.97 Emerging Policy 30 of the LPP2 relates to the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits Special Protection Area. The policy requires that proposals ensure that there is no adverse impact either alone or cumulatively on the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA and Ramsar site. Developments that are likely to have significant effects alone or in combination on the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits Special Protection Area must satisfy the requirements of the Habitats Regulations, determining site specific impacts and avoid or mitigate where impacts are identified. Where development is likely to have significant effects on the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits Special Protection Area, a Habitats Regulations Assessment will be required.
- 8.98 The Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits Special Protection Area SPD and associated addendum are also relevant when considering the impact on the SPA.
- 8.99 When assessing ecological matters, Policy BN2 (Biodiversity) of the WNJCS is relevant along with Policy BN8 (The River Nene Strategic River Corridor). Policy GHNDP3 (Sustainable Design and Construction) of the Great Houghton Neighbourhood Plan and emerging Policies 27 (Sustaining and Enhancing Existing, and Supporting the Creation of, Northampton's Green Infrastructure), 29A (Supporting and Enhancing Biodiversity) and 29B (Nature Conservation) of the LPP2 are also applicable, along with guidance in chapter 15 of the NPPF.
- 8.100 The Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits Special Protection Area SPD and associated addendum are relevant.
- 8.101 The applicant has provided a Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) and Appropriate Assessment. It assesses the potential effect on the designated features of the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA, Ramsar Site and Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). Alongside the HRA, a Breeding Bird Report and Winter Bird Report have been provided and give an assessment of the likely effects of the development on the bird assemblages recorded within the application site. The HRA submitted by the applicant has been adopted by the Council as part of its statutory duty as the Competent Authority for assessing the impacts of the proposed development on the SPA/Ramsar Site.
- 8.102 The potential effects on the designated site to the north include:
- Direct effects of habitat loss and loss of supporting habitat (Functionality Linked Land)
 - The potential effects on bird sightlines
 - The potential effects of noise and lighting over the construction and operational periods
 - The potential hydrological effects and water quality changes
 - The potential effect of dust during the construction and operational phases

- 8.103 The HRA details a range of measures to mitigate the ecological impacts of the proposal. Of greatest significance is the proposed 250m buffer zone that would be maintained with the boundary to the SPA within which no buildings would be constructed, and development limited to access roads and parking only. This is shown on the Illustrative Masterplan and Landscape Strategy Plan.
- 8.104 The buffer zone would comprise an area of habitat enhancement that would include a double hedgerow to screen the development along the boundary with the buffer zone, drainage attenuation features that would create wetland habitat and retained and created grasslands. Currently the habitats in this area, and indeed across the site, are homogeneous in nature and managed for agricultural purposes. The proposed habitat enhancements would provide a range of optimal habitats for birds, specifically golden plover and lapwing. Further ecological mitigation and enhancements are proposed such as structured tree planting and other soft landscaping to the site frontage and a proportion of the eastern boundary. The proposed limitation on the building heights would mitigate interference with the sightlines of birds. It is also proposed to design the buildings so that the roofs would be attractive to golden plover for resting and roosting.
- 8.105 Natural England have been consulted on the application and have advised that they have no objection to the proposal. Natural England considers that the proposed development would not have likely significant effects on statutorily protected sites, including the loss of functionally linked land. This is based on the proposed mitigation measures within the application. The Council's Ecology Advisor concurs with Natural England's conclusion. On this basis, the application is therefore considered to be acceptable in the context of the SPA/Ramsar Site and SSSI. To secure the necessary ecological mitigation for the operational development a planning condition is recommended requiring full details of the proposed measures to be submitted alongside the reserved matters. A condition is also recommended in relation to the proposed mitigation measures for the construction phase in the form of a Construction Environmental Management Plan.
- 8.106 The proposed ecological enhancement zone in the northern half of the site and the proposed landscaped buffers to the southern and eastern boundaries provide ample opportunity for the development to deliver a net gain for biodiversity, particularly considering the makeup of the existing site which is predominantly species poor semi-improved grassland. These areas would also enable the development to deliver Green and Blue Infrastructure.
- 8.107 Ecology advice confirms that the development would not harm any protected species and there are not considered to be any other significant ecological issues associated with the proposal. In conclusion, officers are satisfied that the proposed development would not prejudice the statutorily protected nature conservation sites or landscapes to the north – subject to appropriate mitigation. Furthermore, the proposed scheme provides an opportunity to deliver a net gain to biodiversity. The application is therefore considered to be policy compliant in relation to ecology.

Residential amenity

- 8.108 A Noise Assessment has been submitted to support the application proposals which assesses the potential impact of noise and vibration from the construction and operational phases of the proposed development on nearby noise sensitive receptors, which include residential properties to the south of the site on High Street and a hotel adjacent to the north-west boundary of the site.

- 8.109 The information has been assessed by the Council's Environmental Health team. It is acknowledged that the work undertaken at this stage is only an "indication" of impacts as the detailed design of the site is a reserved matter. Nevertheless, officers are satisfied that a scheme can come forward at reserved matters stage that would not result in any significant detrimental impacts on sensitive receptors. To ensure that appropriate noise mitigation is provided, a condition is recommended requiring a further noise assessment and modelling work to be submitted with the reserved matters that reflects the final design. A specific condition is also recommended in relation to noise from plant.
- 8.110 To mitigate the impact of the construction phase on sensitive receptors, a condition is recommended for a Construction Environment Management Plan.
- 8.111 Subject to conditions, the application is considered to comply with Policies S10 and BN9 of the WNJCS, Policy GHNDP3 of the Great Houghton Neighbourhood Plan, Policy 6 of the emerging Local Plan Part 2 and guidance in the NPPF.

Flood risk and drainage issues

- 8.112 The application site is within flood zone 1 and is therefore at low risk of flooding. The Hardingstone Dyke that lies to the northern boundary of the site and the land beyond the dyke is within flood zone 3.
- 8.113 The proposed industrial development is classified as "less vulnerable" in accordance with Planning Practice Guidance and is therefore appropriate within Flood Zone 1.
- 8.114 A Flood Risk Assessment which includes a surface water drainage strategy has been provided as part of the submitted Environmental Statement. The document states that due to the location, level and gradient of the site, the development should not be affected by flooding of the Hardingstone Dyke or adjacent field ditches up to 1 in 200-year return period including climate change. Proposed finished levels are proposed to be set at a minimum of 150mm above surrounding ground levels to suit practical access arrangements and to promote the existing above ground water flow in a northerly direction towards the proposed drainage ponds and outfall.
- 8.115 The Environment Agency has been consulted and no concerns have been raised on flood risk grounds, subject to a condition requiring that the development be carried out in accordance with the submitted Flood Risk Assessment, including minimum finished floor levels for the new buildings and a restriction on any development within 8m of Hardingstone Dyke (aside from any surface water outfalls and pipe connections).
- 8.116 Turning to surface water drainage, the proposed surface water drainage strategy involves on-site attenuation to restrict the rate of discharge to the greenfield run-off rate and accommodate the worst-case duration 1 in 200-year storm event including climate change. The proposed scheme would also incorporate permeable paving, filter strips, deep trapped gullies, oil separator and balancing ponds to limit potential pollution effects and improve the discharge quality, thus limiting impacts on the receiving watercourses.
- 8.117 The Lead Local Flood Authority have advised that they have no objections to the surface water drainage scheme for the proposed development. Some reservations have been raised with regards to some of the methods used in the drainage calculations, however, it is likely that these could be addressed through the landscaping layout of the buffer zone in the northern part of the site. This could potentially involve

resizing the balancing ponds. In any event, it would be necessary to secure the detailed design of the surface water drainage scheme through conditions.

- 8.118 Anglian Water have also been consulted and have raised no issues with the application other than to recommend a condition regarding foul drainage.
- 8.119 Subject to conditions, the application accords with Policies S10 and BN7 of the WNJCS, Policy 7 of the emerging Local Plan and guidance in the NPPF.

Contamination

- 8.120 The submitted Phase 1 Assessment comprehensively identifies the previous historical uses of the site the likely site condition. Potential contaminants are discussed and a conceptual model for the site is presented with source-pathway-receptor linkages. Recommendations for further intrusive investigations into ground conditions are presented and such investigations are necessary to fully quantify the risks to human health and to surrounding controlled waters. Suitable conditions to secure this further work and any necessary remediation are recommended – this is in line with the advice from the Council’s Environmental Health team and the Environment Agency.

Air Quality

- 8.121 The Environmental Statement provides an assessment of the likely impact that the proposed development would have on air quality within the surrounding area, and this has been assessed by the Council’s Environmental Health team.
- 8.122 The applicant’s assessment includes predictions of site traffic impacts on local air quality using recognised modelling techniques and impact descriptors. Overall, impacts are not shown to be significant for the development alone. However, the Low Emissions Strategy adopted by West Northamptonshire Council requires developers to consider cumulative and incremental changes in air quality caused by successive developments such as this. The proposed development is classified as “Major” and as such Type 1, 2 and 3 mitigation needs to be considered in the design phases. Methods of potential mitigation have been identified and a damage costs calculation has been provided by the applicant. It is considered necessary to impose a condition to ensure that appropriate air quality mitigation measures, to the figures set out in the damage costs calculation, are secured as part of the development.
- 8.123 There would inevitably be some overlap between air quality mitigation measures and other planning requirements such as Travel Plans and electric vehicle recharging provision. This would need to be considered as part of the final air quality mitigation measures but it is considered necessary to impose standalone conditions for a Travel Plan and electric vehicle charging provision.
- 8.124 Suitable mitigation measures for the construction phase can be addressed through a Construction Environmental Management Plan.

Climate change

- 8.125 Climate change is considered within the Environmental Statement and seeks to demonstrate how the proposed development could mitigate its impact on climate change through high levels of sustainable design and measures to utilise energy efficiency and renewable technologies. Such measures would need to be considered through the detailed design at reserved matters stage and to this end a condition is recommended requiring a Sustainability Statement to be submitted with the reserved

matters detailing how the final design mitigates the impact on climate change (as well as the other environmental considerations set out in emerging Policy 5 of the LPP2). To accord with Policy S11 of the WNJCS, the development would need to achieve a minimum rating of at least BREEAM (BRE Environmental Assessment Method) Very Good Standard (or equivalent) or any future national equivalent zero carbon standard.

Representations

- 8.126 The issues raised within representations and by Great Houghton and Little Houghton Parish Councils are considered to have been directly addressed within this appraisal.

Other matters

- 8.127 There are no protected trees within or close to the site. The Council's Arboricultural Officer has commented that there are no trees or arboricultural features of any particular merit on the site and as such there are no concerns with the proposal from an arboricultural perspective.
- 8.128 Northamptonshire Police do not raise any issues at this stage of the planning process as crime and security matters would be considered as part of the reserved matters.
- 8.129 External lighting would need to be considered once the final layout has been approved.
- 8.130 The proposal involves the loss of agricultural land. An Agricultural Land Quality Survey has been submitted which identifies that the land is deemed to be of Grade 2 quality, which means that the land falls within the category of best and most versatile (BMV) agricultural land. Whilst the proposal would result in the loss of around 19 hectares of BMV land, it is considered that the wider economic benefits of the proposal outweigh its loss in this case. Furthermore, a substantial proportion of the site would remain undeveloped which enables some of the benefits that are derived from BMV land to be retained, including landscape, geodiversity (including soil) and biodiversity value.
- 8.131 The Strategic Planning team (former County Planning team) has recommended a financial contribution towards fire hydrants as well as a condition requiring details for the provision of fire hydrants and sprinkler systems. However, there is no policy basis to secure this and as such these measures could not be sought through this planning application

9. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 9.1 Financial contributions are sought from the development in respect of, construction training, Travel Plan monitoring and the Council's Section 106 monitoring fee.

10. PLANNING BALANCE AND CONCLUSION

- 10.1 The proposed development represents a windfall employment opportunity that would contribute towards meeting an identified need for employment land within the Northampton area. The proposal is capable of delivering a mixture of unit types that would provide opportunities for businesses to invest, expand and adapt and thereby provide opportunities for jobs and support economic growth.
- 10.2 This report provides a comprehensive assessment of the site's suitability for employment use and considers the potential significant environmental effects of the proposed development. It is concluded that the impacts of the development can be suitably mitigated subject to the future detailed design and the imposition of relevant

planning conditions. In particular, the impact on the adjacent SPA/Ramsar Site has been found to be acceptable following consultation with Natural England. With regards to the impact on heritage, it is concluded that the harm caused would be less than substantial and this harm would be outweighed by the wider public economic benefits.

- 10.3 The proposed access is acceptable in highway terms. The site is also considered to be accessible, and the development would provide pedestrian and cycle improvements.
- 10.4 Officers are satisfied that a scheme can come forward at reserved matters stage that would ensure that there would be no undue detriment to residential amenity.
- 10.5 For the reasons set out within the report, the proposed development is considered acceptable and is therefore recommended for approval.

11. RECOMMENDATION / CONDITIONS AND REASONS

- 11.1 Detailed recommendation here and full list of conditions and reasons here

RECOMMENDATION – APPROVAL OF THE DEVELOPMENT SUBJECT TO THE COMPLETION OF A SECTION 106 AGREEMENT AND THE CONDITIONS SET OUT BELOW WITH DELEGATED AUTHORITY TO THE HEAD OF PLANNING DELIVERY FOR PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT TO APPROVE ANY AMENDMENTS TO THOSE CONDITIONS AS DEEMED NECESSARY.

DRAFT CONDITIONS

Submission of reserved matters

- 1. Approval of the details of the appearance, landscaping, layout and scale ("the reserved matters") shall be obtained from the Local Planning Authority in writing before any development is commenced.

Reason: This permission is in outline only granted under Article 5(1) of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) Order 2015 (as amended).

Time limit for reserved matters submission

- 2. Application for approval of the reserved matters shall be made to the Local Planning Authority before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with Section 92 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990

Time limit for implementation

- 3. The development hereby permitted shall be begun either before the expiration of five years from the date of this permission, or, if later, before the expiration of two years from the date of approval of the last of the reserved matters to be approved.

Reason: To comply with Section 92 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

Parameters for reserved matters submission

- 4. The details submitted pursuant to condition 1 ("the reserved matters") shall be provided in accordance with the parameters indicated on drawing number 18-221-SGP-XX-XX-DR-A-11102 Rev O (Proposed Parameters Plan).

Reason: To ensure that the reserved matters accord with the terms of the outline application in the interests of biodiversity, visual amenity, heritage, highway safety and residential amenity.

Use Class restriction for offices

5. No more than 10% of the floorspace within any individual unit shall be used for purposes falling within Use Class E(g) (i) of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended) (or in any provision equivalent to that Class in any statutory instrument revoking and re-enacting that Order with or without modification).

Reason: To accord with the terms of the application and to ensure that the development is adequately contributing to the identified shortfall in B Use Class employment land and to protect the vitality of town centres because offices are classified as a main town centre use. This is to accord with Policy 18 of the emerging Local Plan Part 2 and guidance in the National Planning Policy Framework.

Highway works

6. No development above floor slab level shall take place until full engineering, drainage and constructional details of the proposed works to form: the vehicular access off Bedford Road; the dedicated right turn access to the development site; and the proposed pedestrian and cycle improvement scheme, as indicated on drawing number 04946 SK 0003 P01 and 04946 SK 0002 P08, have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The highway works so approved shall be provided in full before any part of the development is first brought into use and shall thereafter be retained as such.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and to promote opportunities for sustainable and active travel, in accordance with Policies C2 and S10 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy, Policies 6, 18, 32 and 33 of the emerging Local Plan Part 2 and guidance in the National Planning Policy Framework.

Speed limit

7. No part of the development shall be brought into use until the speed limit on Bedford Road has been moved in accordance with drawing number 04946 SK 0003 P01.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and to accord with Policies 18 and 33 of the emerging Local Plan Part 2 and guidance in the National Planning Policy Framework.

Flood risk

8. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the submitted flood risk assessment (ref dated May 2021; reference number 190091-RGL-ZZ-XX-RP-C-0001; compiled by Rolton Group) and Drawing (Reference number 190091-RGL-ZZ-XX-DR-D-120-0001; Titled Proposed Drainage and Levels Strategy) and the following mitigation measures it details:

- Finished floor levels shall be set no lower than 56.025 metres above Ordnance Datum (AOD)
- There shall be no development (aside from the proposed surface water outfalls and pipe connections) within 8m of the landward to of the bank of Hardingstone Dyke.

These mitigation measures shall be fully implemented prior to occupation and subsequently in accordance with the scheme's timing/phasing arrangements. The measures detailed above shall be retained and maintained thereafter throughout the lifetime of the development.

Reason: To reduce the risk of flooding to the proposed development and future occupants and to accord with Policy BN7A of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy, Policy 7 of the emerging Local Plan Part 2 and guidance in the National Planning Policy Framework.

Surface water drainage scheme

9. Before any above ground works commence, full details of the surface water drainage scheme for the site, based on the submitted flood risk assessment (ref dated May 2021; reference number 190091-RGL-ZZ-XX-RP-C-0001; compiled by Rolton Group) and Drawing (Reference number 190091-RGL-ZZ-XX-DR-D-120-0001; Titled Proposed Drainage and Levels Strategy), shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall subsequently be implemented in accordance with the approved details before the development is completed and thereafter retained as such. The scheme shall include:
- i. Details of all elements of the proposed drainage system, to include pipes, inspection chambers, outfalls/inlets and attenuation structures (including full designs, diameters, invert and cover levels, gradients, dimensions)
 - ii. Full and appropriately cross-referenced supporting calculations.
 - iii. Cross sections of the control chambers (including site specific levels mAOD) and manufacturers' hydraulic curves should be submitted for all hydrobrakes and other flow control devices.
 - iv. Infiltration test results to BRE 365, if infiltration is proposed.

Reason: To reduce the risk of flooding, both on and off site, by ensuring the satisfactory means of surface water attenuation and discharge from the site, and to accord with Policies BN7A and BN7 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy, Policy 7 of the emerging Local Plan 2 and guidance in the National Planning Policy Framework. This is a pre-commencement condition to ensure timely submission of details.

Maintenance and management of surface water infrastructure

10. No development shall take place until a detailed scheme for the ownership and maintenance for every element of the surface water drainage system approved pursuant to condition 9 has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

The maintenance plan shall be carried out in full thereafter.

The scheme shall include details of which organisation or body will be the main maintaining body where the area is multifunctional (e.g. SuDS) with evidence that the organisation/body has agreed to such adoption. The scheme shall include, a maintenance schedule setting out which assets need to be maintained, at what intervals and what method is to be used along with a site plan including access points, maintenance access easements and outfalls.

Maintenance operational areas to be identified and shown on the plans, shall ensure there is room to gain access to the asset, maintain it with appropriate plant and then handle any arisings generated from the site.

Details of expected design life of all assets with a schedule of when replacement assets shall also be provided where necessary.

Reason: In order to ensure that the drainage systems associated with the development will be maintained appropriately and in perpetuity, to reduce the risk of flooding due to failure of the drainage system. This is to accord with Policies BN7A and BN7 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy, Policy 7 of the emerging Local Plan 2 and guidance in the National Planning Policy Framework. This is a pre-commencement condition to ensure timely submission of details.

Verification report for installed surface water infrastructure

11. The development shall not be brought into use until a Verification Report for the installed surface water drainage system as approved pursuant to condition 10 has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The details shall include:
- a) Any departure from the agreed design is keeping with the approved principles
 - b) As-Built Drawings and accompanying photos
 - c) Results of any Performance testing undertaken as a part of the application process (if required / necessary)
 - d) Copies of any Statutory Approvals, such as Land Drainage Consent for Discharges etc.
 - e) CCTV Confirmation that the system is free from defects, damage and foreign objects.

Reason: To ensure the installed Surface Water Drainage System is satisfactory and in accordance with the approved reports for the development site. This is to accord with Policies BN7A and BN7 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy, Policy 7 of the emerging Local Plan 2 and guidance in the National Planning Policy Framework.

Foul drainage

12. Prior to construction above damp proof course, a scheme for on-site foul water drainage works, including connection point and discharge rate, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Prior to occupation of any phase, the foul water drainage works relating to that phase shall be carried out in complete accordance with the approved scheme.

Reason: To ensure suitable provision is made for the disposal of foul drainage in the interests of amenity and environmental well-being and to accord with Policies BN7A and BN7 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy, Policies 6 and 7 of the emerging Local Plan 2 and guidance in the National Planning Policy Framework.

Archaeology

13. No development shall take place until the applicant or their agents or successors in title, has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of archaeological research in accordance with Policies BN5 and S10 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy, Policies 2 and 27 of the emerging Local Plan 2 and guidance in the National Planning Policy Framework. This is a pre-commencement condition to ensure timely submission of details.

Noise

14. Any subsequent reserved matters applications shall include a noise assessment report in accordance with BS4142:2014+ A1 2019 for the proposed development. The report shall include consideration of all newly proposed structures, vehicle movements and buildings capable of emitting noise within the development site. The report assessment and conclusions, together with any mitigation required to deliver a “Low Impact” as set out in BS4142:2014+A1 2019” (at the nearest LPA agreed noise sensitive receptor), shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved mitigation shall be implemented at the application site prior to the development being brought into use (or prior to any phase of the development to which the mitigation relates). The approved mitigation shall thereafter be retained.

Reason: In the interests of the residential amenity of the end users of the development and to accord with Policies BN9 and S10 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy, the Great Houghton Neighbourhood Plan, Policies 4 and 6 of the emerging Local Plan Part 2 and guidance in the National Planning Policy Framework.

Plant noise

15. Prior to the occupation of any individual employment unit on the site, a noise assessment of any plant and equipment associated with the use of that unit shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Plant noise (rating level) limits as set out in Table 13.12 -Chapter 13 of the submitted Environmental Statements shall be met at the nearest LPA agreed noise sensitive receptors. Any noise mitigation required to comply with this condition shall be specified in writing as part of the noise assessment. The approved plant and equipment to serve the unit together with any necessary noise mitigation measures shall be provided in accordance with the approved details prior to occupation and thereafter retained.

Reason: In the interests of the residential amenity of the end users of the development and to accord with Policies BN9 and S10 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy, the Great Houghton Neighbourhood Plan, Policies 4 and 6 of the emerging Local Plan Part 2 and guidance in the National Planning Policy Framework.

Contamination (investigation)

16. Prior to the commencement of the development hereby permitted, an investigation and risk assessment, in addition to any assessment provided with this planning application, shall be completed in accordance with a scheme to assess the nature and extent of any contamination on the site, whether it originates on the site or not. The contents of the scheme and a written report of the findings of the investigation and risk assessment shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority before development commences. The report of the findings shall include:

- (i) a survey of the extent, scale and nature of contamination;

- (ii) an assessment of the potential risks to:
- human health;
 - property (existing or proposed) including buildings, crops, livestock, pets, woodland and service lines and pipes;
 - adjoining land;
 - ground waters and surface waters;
 - ecological systems;
 - archaeological sites and ancient monuments.
- (iii) an appraisal of remedial options, and proposal of the preferred option(s).

Reason: To ensure the effective investigation and remediation of contaminated land sites and in the interests of health and safety and the quality of the environment in accordance with Policy BN9 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy, Policy 6 of the emerging Local Plan Part 2 and guidance in the National Planning Policy Framework. This is a pre-commencement condition to ensure timely submission of details.

Contamination (remediation scheme)

17. Prior to the commencement of the development hereby permitted, a detailed remediation scheme to bring the site to a condition suitable for the intended use by removing unacceptable risks to human health, buildings, and other property and the natural and historical environment shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall include all works to be undertaken, proposed remediation objectives and remediation criteria, timetable of works and site management procedures.

Reason: To ensure the effective investigation and remediation of contaminated land sites and in the interests of health and safety and the quality of the environment, in accordance with Policy BN9 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy, Policy 6 of the emerging Local Plan Part 2 and guidance in the National Planning Policy Framework. This is a pre-commencement condition to ensure timely submission of details.

Contamination (implementation and verification of remediation)

18. The remediation scheme approved pursuant to condition 16 shall be carried out in accordance with its terms prior to the commencement of development, other than that required to carry out remediation. The Local Planning Authority shall be given two weeks written notification of commencement of the remediation scheme works. Following completion of the measures identified in the approved remediation scheme, a verification report that demonstrates the effectiveness of the remediation carried out shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority before any dwelling is first occupied.

Reason: To ensure the effective investigation and remediation of contaminated land sites and in the interests of health and safety and the quality of the environment in accordance with Policy BN9 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy, Policy 6 of the emerging Local Plan Part 2 and guidance in the National Planning Policy Framework.

Unexpected contamination

19. In the event that unexpected contamination is found at any time when carrying out the

approved development that was not previously identified, it shall be reported in writing to the Local Planning Authority within two working days. An investigation and risk assessment of the contamination shall be undertaken in accordance with the requirements of Condition 16, and where remediation is necessary, a remediation scheme shall be prepared in accordance with the requirements of Condition 17, and which is subject to the approval in writing of the Local Planning Authority. Following completion of measures identified in the approved remediation scheme, a verification report shall be prepared, which is subject to the approval in writing of the Local Planning Authority in accordance with Condition 18.

Reason: To ensure the effective investigation and remediation of contaminated land sites and in the interests of health and safety and the quality of the environment in accordance with Policy BN9 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy, Policy 6 of the emerging Local Plan Part 2 and guidance in the National Planning Policy Framework.

Construction management plan (highways and amenity)

20. A Construction Management Plan (CMP) to mitigate the impacts of the construction of the development shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority before development commences. The CMP shall include details of:

- Measures to control the emission of dust during the construction period;
- Measures to control noise and vibration from construction activities and machinery;
- Hours of construction work (including deliveries);
- Measures to prevent mud and other such material migrating onto the highway from construction vehicles;
- Routing of construction traffic;
- Design of any temporary construction access;
- Loading and unloading arrangements for any large vehicles;
- Parking arrangements for workers and visitors.

The approved CMP shall be adhered to throughout the construction of the development.

Reason: To mitigate the impact of the construction of the development in the interests of residential amenity and highway safety. This is a pre-commencement condition to ensure timely submission of details.

Full Travel Plans

21. A Site-Wide Travel Plan Coordinator shall be appointed in accordance with Section 5 of the approved Framework Travel Plan (Ref Project Code: 04946, June 2021, Rev B). Within one month of the occupation of each individual unit approved pursuant to condition 1, a full Travel Plan for that unit shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The full Travel Plan for each individual unit shall be based on the approved Framework Travel Plan (Ref Project Code: 04946, June 2021, Rev B) and shall include the provision of a 4-week/one month 'Megarider' ticket for each new employee occupying the unit to allow for travel by public transport within the West Northamptonshire area for a continuous period of 6 months. The approved full Travel Plan for each individual unit shall be implemented at all times that the unit is occupied and shall be appointed prior to the The full Travel Plans for

all the units within the development shall be approved travel plan shall be implemented at all times that the development is occupied. The

Reason: To reduce the reliance on the private car for journeys to work in accordance with Policies S10 and C2 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy, Policy 6 of the emerging Local Plan Part 2 and guidance in the National Planning Policy Framework.

Air quality

22. Notwithstanding the submitted information, a scheme to offset the air quality impacts from the development and which is based on the Damage Cost Calculation within the submitted Environmental Statement, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority before any development above floor slab level. The approved air quality mitigation measures shall be provided before the development is first brought into use and thereafter retained.

Reason: To mitigate the impacts of the development on air quality and to accord with Policies S10 and BN9 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy, Policy 6 of the emerging Local Plan Part 2 and guidance in the National Planning Policy Framework.

EV Charging Points

23. Notwithstanding the requirements of Condition 22, prior to the first occupation of the development hereby permitted, full details of a scheme for the provision of electric car charging points (including a timetable for implementation) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details and retained as such.

Reason: In the interests of creating a sustainable form of development in accordance with the requirements of Policy S10 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy and the Northampton Parking Standards SPD.

Construction Environment Management Plan (Biodiversity)

24. No development shall take place (including demolition, ground works, vegetation clearance) until a construction environmental management plan (CEMP: Biodiversity) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The CEMP (Biodiversity) shall be based on the adopted Habitat Regulations Assessment and the following:

- a) Risk assessment of potentially damaging construction activities.
- b) Identification of "biodiversity protection zones".
- c) Practical measures (both physical measures and sensitive working practices) to avoid or reduce impacts during construction (may be provided as a set of method statements).
- d) The location and timing of sensitive works to avoid harm to biodiversity features.
- e) The times during construction when specialist ecologists need to be present on site to oversee works.
- f) Responsible persons and lines of communication.
- g) The role and responsibilities on site of an ecological clerk of works (ECoW) or similarly competent person.
- h) Use of protective fences, exclusion barriers and warning signs.

The approved CEMP shall be adhered to and implemented throughout the construction period strictly in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To mitigate the impact of the construction of the development on the adjacent Nene Valley Gravel Pits Special Protection Area and Ramsar Site and to accord with Policies BN2 and BN4 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy, Policies 29A, 29B and 30 of the emerging Local Plan Part 2 and guidance in the National Planning Policy Framework. This is a pre-commencement condition to ensure timely submission of details.

25. Any submission of reserved matters shall include a detailed scheme of ecological mitigation for the operational period of the development. The scheme shall be based on the recommendations at paragraphs 7.16 – 7.25, paragraph 7.48 and paragraphs 7.116, 7.117 and 7.122 of the adopted Habitat Regulations Assessment and shall include details of the phasing of the proposed mitigation. The detailed scheme of mitigation shall be approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority before development commences and the approved mitigation shall be provided in accordance with the approved phasing plan. The mitigation measures shall thereafter be retained.

Reason: To mitigate the impact of the development on the adjacent Nene Valley Gravel Pits Special Protection Area and Ramsar Site and to accord with Policies BN2 and BN4 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy, Policies 29A, 29B and 30 of the emerging Local Plan Part 2 and guidance in the National Planning Policy Framework.

Landscape and Ecological Management Plan

26. A landscape and ecological management plan (LEMP) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority before the development is first brought into use. The content of the LEMP shall include the following:
- a) Description and evaluation of features to be managed.
 - b) Ecological trends and constraints on site that might influence management.
 - c) Aims and objectives of management.
 - d) Appropriate management options for achieving aims and objectives.
 - e) Prescriptions for management actions.
 - f) Preparation of a work schedule (including an annual work plan capable of being rolled forward over a five-year period).
 - g) Details of the body or organization responsible for implementation of the plan.
 - h) Ongoing monitoring and remedial measures.

The LEMP shall also include details of the legal and funding mechanism(s) by which the long-term implementation of the plan will be secured by the developer with the management body(ies) responsible for its delivery. The plan shall also set out (where the results from monitoring show that conservation aims and objectives of the LEMP are not being met) how contingencies and/or remedial action will be identified, agreed and implemented so that the development still delivers the fully functioning biodiversity objectives of the originally approved scheme. The approved plan will be implemented in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In the interests of biodiversity and to accord with Policies BN2 and BN4 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy, Policies 29A, 29B and 30 of the emerging Local Plan Part 2 and guidance in the National Planning Policy Framework.

Energy and sustainability

27. Any submission of reserved matters shall include a detailed schedule of the energy and sustainability measures to be incorporated into the final development which is based on the principles set out in the submitted Environmental Statement and shall be approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved measures shall be provided before the unit to which the measures relate is first brought into use and shall thereafter be retained.

Reason: To mitigate the impact of the development on climate change and to accord with Policy S10 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy, Policy 5 of the emerging Local Plan Part 2 and guidance in the National Planning Policy Framework.