

400 Longwater Avenue
Green Park, Reading
Planning Statement

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1 Introduction

Introduction

- 1.1 This Planning Statement accompanies an application for full planning permission for the proposed office development at 400 Longwater Avenue (formerly known as Plot 3.2) within Green Park Business Park. This application is submitted to Reading Borough Council ('RBC') on behalf of Green Park Reading No.1 LLP, the owner and applicant (the Applicant). Oxford Properties is the asset manager for the LLP which was purchased from M&G Investments in 2011.
- 1.2 Green Park is one of the premier business parks in the Thames Valley serving the office needs of Reading, Wokingham, and West Berkshire. It currently provides over 2 million square feet of office space to over 50 companies, including leading IT, technology and pharmaceutical companies in an exceptionally high quality landscaped environment.
- 1.3 The land the subject of this detailed planning application is located to the east of Longwater Avenue, in the south west of Green Park.

Figure 1.1: Site Location



Scope of the Application

1.4 The development proposes to create two high quality 5 storey buildings, which will accommodate flexible office (B1) space with a total floorspace of 27,207 sq m (GEA). Two separate car parking structures will measure 15,480 sq m (GEA) over three storeys, containing a total of 722 car parking spaces, 20 disabled spaces, 136 cycle spaces and 13 motorcycle spaces.

1.5 The application for planning permission as described in the application form is as follows:

“Development of commercial office buildings (B1 Use Class), access, decked and surface car parking, cycle parking, landscaping, servicing, associated engineering and ancillary works”.

Application Documentation

1.6 This Planning Statement should be read in conjunction with the following supporting documents submitted as part of this application:

- Planning application form, agricultural holdings certificate and ownership certificate A.
- Application red-line boundary plan and blue line plan (property ownership boundary) prepared by Robin Partington & Partners.
- Existing site plan prepared by Robin Partington & Partners.
- Elevations, plans and sections prepared by Robin Partington & Partners.
- Design and Access Statement prepared by prepared by Robin Partington & Partners.
- Transport Statement prepared by PBA.
- Framework Travel Plan prepared by PBA.
- Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy prepared by PBA.
- Preliminary Ecological Assessment prepared by PBA.
- Updated Interpretative Report on Geotechnical and Geo-environmental Investigation prepared by PBA.
- Sustainability Statement, incorporating a BREEAM Pre-Assessment prepared by Hoare Lea.
- Utility Infrastructure Report prepared by PBA.
- Archaeological Statement prepared by Oxford Archaeology.
- Landscape Strategy, including Tree Survey prepared by Place.

1.7 The approach to the application documentation has been agreed with RBC and informed by the Council's planning application requirements schedule.

2 Site Location and Context

- 2.1 This section provides a summary of the site's location within Green Park and the wider South Reading context.

Site Context

- 2.2 Green Park is an established business Park, located on the A33 relief road south of Reading. Green Park covers 79 Ha and is characterised by a wide variety of modern buildings, many of which are arranged around a central body of water. The park is sensitively planted and landscaped, and there is a strong commitment to sustainability and biodiversity.
- 2.3 The Park offers a wide choice of business accommodation which range from corporate headquarters to small start-up space. The park currently provides over 2 million square feet of office space to over 50 companies, including Thales, PepsiCo, Huawei, Symantec and Thames Water.
- 2.4 Green Park also offers a range of supporting facilities to meet the day-to-day needs of occupiers, including Byte café, Zest restaurant, WH Smiths, an Asda 'Click and Collect' service, Nuffield Health and Fitness Club, a crèche and a tennis court. It is anticipated that the Park will eventually have a working population of more than 10,000 when fully occupied. 6,000 people are currently employed on the Park.
- 2.5 The application site and Green Park as a whole is already well served by public transport with 7 minute frequency bus services providing access between the town centre and the Madejski Stadium/Green Park at a frequency of about one bus every 6 or 7 minutes. Green Park railway station is expected to open between 2022 and 2024, once electrification of the route is complete.
- 2.6 Sustrans (National cycle network) route 23 also passes along Brook Drive and Smallmead Road which connects Green Park to Basingstoke to the south. In addition, Route 23 connects with Route 4 to provide a cycle route into central Reading.
- 2.7 The importance of the Park is recognised at Paragraph 3.20 of the Core Strategy (adopted January 2008) which acknowledges that Green Park "continues to be a significant location for high technology and knowledge based businesses."
- 2.8 In addition, the Sites and Detailed Policies document (adopted October 2012) allocates Green Park as a 'Core Employment Area' under Policy SA12a. The site was allocated (amongst others) as it will "make the greatest contribution to a sustainable economy and society over the coming years".

Site Description

- 2.9 400 Longwater Avenue is 2.98 ha and is bound by an existing office building at 350 Longwater Avenue to the north, Longwater Lake to the east, a partially cleared development platform and landscaping for Plot 8 to the south and Longwater Avenue to the west. The site itself has been previously cleared and currently forms a development platform ready for development. The site infrastructure is complete and includes the perimeter access road and site services, with an entrance to the site already formed from Longwater Avenue.

Economic Context

- 2.10 The Thames Valley Office market Report 2015 by Lambert Smith Hampton expects office migration from London to Reading to increase due to Crossrail and the potential expansion of Heathrow. New occupiers will continue to require flexible, grade A office space. Availability in Reading was 25.0% at the end of Q1 2015 and current availability represents 6.5 years' supply of stock in total and 5.1 years' stock of grade A space.
- 2.11 The range of occupiers at Green Park reflects its attraction beyond typical geographical boundaries and into emerging markets, particularly the US west coast and the Far East / Asia.

Environmental Designations

- 2.12 There are no Listed or Locally Listed Buildings within the boundary of the site and the site is not within a Conservation Area.
- 2.13 The site forms part of a wider designation as an 'area of archaeological importance' as defined on the approved Proposals Map. The proposal area has however, been subject to a raft of archaeological investigations culminating in excavations and publications in the past. Further details are provided in the Archaeological Statement submitted in support of the application.
- 2.14 In addition, Longwater Lake to the rear of the site is designated as 'green infrastructure' on the Council's adopted Proposals Map. Longwater Lake is integral to the attractive, managed landscape that is provided across Green Park. The proposals have been designed to fully consider the lakeside setting and will enhance the lakes features wherever possible.

Planning History

- 2.15 Reserved matters planning permission (08/00261/REM) was approved on the site on 23 May 2008 pursuant to outline planning permission reference 85/TP/690. The reserved matters approval comprised 14,080 sqm of B1 office development, including access, 486 car parking spaces, servicing, landscaping and external works.
- 2.16 As the outline planning permission for Green Park has been implemented, the permission remains alive. In addition, the reserved matters consent remains capable of implementation. S106 payments were also made as part of the Green Park outline planning permission. The Applicant maintains that this position should provide the starting point for discussion on the current scheme and any planning obligations.
- 2.17 Whilst implementable, the 2008 approved scheme does not satisfactorily meet the requirements of modern occupiers. A new scheme drawn up in 2013 and consulted on by RBC sought approval for a 5 storey building to accommodate flexible office (B1) space with a total floorspace of up to 27,000 sqm, and associated access, car parking, servicing, landscaping and related works. This was for a prospective tenant, whose interest subsequently fell away, but with the existing office stock nearly fully occupied, there is a need to develop out buildings speculatively to provide a pipeline of opportunities.

3 Development Proposals

- 3.1 The use and quantum of the proposed office development is summarised in table 3.1 below:

Table 3.1 - Quantum of Development

Use	GEA Floorspace (sq m)
Ground Floor	5,367
First Floor	5,360
Second Floor	5,500
Third Floor	5,500
Fourth Floor	5,360
Fifth Floor	120
Gross Area	27,207 sq m (GEA)

Car Parking

- 3.2 A total of 722 car parking spaces will be provided. Parking for 134 cars in at grade parking will sit at either side of the central spine road with 20 disabled bays located adjacent to the building's entrance. There are an additional 80 at grade bays either side of the south car parking structure to the south east of the site.
- 3.3 There will be 136 cycle parking spaces and 13 motor cycle spaces. 164 at grade parking will sit at either side of the central spine road and disabled bays are located adjacent to the building's entrance.
- 3.4 Consent was originally granted for a car parking ratio of 1 space per 29sqm, based on a total floorspace of 14,080 sqm for a total of 486 parking spaces. The above figures have been calculated based on this originally permitted ratio for the first 14,080 sqm of development, with the RBC Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD 2011 ratio of 1 space per 50 sqm applying to the remaining uplift.

Layout

- 3.5 The layout of the site has been designed with reference to the 1997 masterplan, whilst also responding to site constraints and existing development at Green Park. The layout of the site has been designed with a prominent western access onto Longwater Avenue and spectacular views across the lake to the east. On approach the site opens up to a clear unobstructed view, creating a strong presence on Longwater Avenue.
- 3.6 The office block is on the central axis of the site, set back from Longwater Avenue. The main arterial approach to the building provides a direct view of the water beyond through the central atrium and leads

visitors to the main entrance. A link bridge is proposed connecting the two buildings and a drop off point in front of the building will help create a sense of arrival.

- 3.7 Parking is split into two structures, at either side of the site to provide minimal impact to the office buildings. Two structures provide less visual impact when compared to one large parking structure.

Scale

- 3.8 The office structure will be five storeys tall with a maximum AOD of 60.56m. The parking structures sit at three storeys each, minimising the amount of grade parking and maximising the open green space, whilst remaining low enough to allow views out of the office buildings.

Landscaping and Public Realm

- 3.9 Footpaths will connect to the existing pedestrian footpath network on the business park. Planting and landscaping will be used to connect the office block to Longwater Avenue. The main entrance will be accessed via Longwater Avenue and provide a shared surface drop off point at the entrance of each wing. The office building is set back from Longwater Avenue to provide a large open space and green landscaping.
- 3.10 Further information on the proposed design is included within the supporting Design and Access Statement.

Consultation

- 3.11 Consultation on the development of this site first began in 2012 / 13, in respect of the draft planning application. This included detailed consultation with RBC planning, design and highways, Environment Agency, as well as occupiers of the Park.
- 3.12 This detailed planning application is very similar to the above draft application and builds on previous feedback. The Applicant has undertaken continued engagement with RBC planning and highways in the preparation of this planning application. This has also included engagement with Members, which has included a site visit to Green Park, as well as the Thames Valley Police.
- 3.13 Notice of the proposed development was given to occupiers of the Park, which included details of the proposals, providing the opportunity for comment. No comments were received.

4 Accordance with Planning Policy

- 4.1 This section lists relevant adopted planning policy which has been considered as part of the preparation of the planning application. The review covers national and local planning policies as well as other relevant guidance, where appropriate.
- 4.2 Section 38(6) of the Town & Country Planning Act states that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise
- 4.3 In this case, the Reading Borough Development Plan comprises:
- Core Strategy DPD 2008
 - Sites and Detailed Policies DPD 2012
 - Policies Map 2012
- 4.4 In addition, at the national level, the National Planning Policy Framework, March 2012 (“NPPF”) represents a material consideration.

National Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012)

- 4.5 The NPPF introduced a ‘presumption’ in favour of sustainable development and supports proposals that are in accordance with the policies of an up to date Development Plan. Sustainable development is about positive growth – making economic, environmental and social progress for this and future generations. To achieve sustainable development, economic, social and environmental gains should be sought jointly and simultaneously through the planning system. Pursuing sustainable development involves seeking positive improvements in the quality of the built, natural and historic environment, as well as in people’s quality of life, including (but not limited to):
- making it easier for jobs to be created in cities, towns and villages;
 - moving from a net loss of bio-diversity to achieving net gains for nature;
 - replacing poor design with better design;
 - improving the conditions in which people live, work, travel and take leisure; and
 - widening the choice of high quality homes.
- 4.6 The Government is committed to ensuring that the planning system does everything it can to support sustainable economic growth. Planning should operate to encourage and not act as an impediment to sustainable growth. Therefore significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth through the planning system.
- 4.7 The NPPF also places emphasis on the importance of pre-application engagement with the Local Planning Authority and local community, which will help to resolve any issues and deliver more positive outcomes.

- 4.8 The scheme has been the subject of pre-application discussions with officers at RBC as well as occupiers of the Park.

Core Planning Principles

- 4.9 The NPPF establishes a set of core planning principles, which underpin both plan-making and decision-taking. These set out that planning should:
- be genuinely plan-led;
 - proactively drive and support sustainable economic development to deliver the homes, business and industrial units, infrastructure and thriving local places that the country needs;
 - always seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity;
 - take account of the different roles and character of different areas;
 - support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate and encourage the reuse of existing resources;
 - encourage the effective use of land by reusing land that has been previously developed; and
 - promote mixed use developments, and encourage multiple benefits from the use of land.
- 4.10 Paragraphs 19 and 20 state that the Government is seeking to ensure that the planning system does everything possible to support sustainable economic growth, and Local Planning Authorities should plan proactively.
- 4.11 All Green Park buildings are designed to have strong sustainability credentials. A 120 metre wind turbine on the Park designed by Foster + Partners generates 2.3 megawatts of power annually, sufficient to meet the energy needs of 1,200 homes.
- 4.12 The development will sit on an existing development platform in a sustainable office location with easy access to the town centre, with sustainable access improving further once Green Park railway station opens.
- 4.13 Section 1 (Paragraphs 18 to 22) is entitled 'building a strong, competitive economy'. It emphasises the Government's commitment to securing economic growth, and that significant weight should be placed on the need to support it through the planning system. In particular, it identifies the need for Local Planning Authorities to support existing business sectors, taking account of whether they are expanding or contracting and, where possible, identify and plan for new or emerging sectors likely to locate in their area.
- 4.14 An operator/s has not been identified at this stage, and the application is speculative in nature to meet future demand. Regardless, and in common with the remainder of Green Park, this planning application provides high quality employment space and office stock, suitable for a range of occupiers.

Requiring Good Design

- 4.15 The Government attaches great importance to design, as a key aspect of sustainable development (Paragraph 56). As such, the NPPF encourages support for proposals for new development that are designed to:
- function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;
 - establish a strong sense of place, using streetscapes and buildings to create attractive and comfortable places to live, work and visit;
 - optimise the potential of the site to accommodate development, create and sustain an appropriate mix of uses (including incorporation of green and other public space as part of developments) and support local facilities and transport networks;

- respond to local character and history, and reflect the identity of local surroundings and materials, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation;
- create safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine quality of life or community cohesion; and
- be visually attractive as a result of good architecture and appropriate landscaping.

4.16 The Design and Access Statement prepared by Robin Partington Architects, which has been prepared in support of this application, outlines the key design drivers and philosophy for the building. In short, the proposed development will continue the precedent set for high quality buildings and public realm within Green Park whilst meeting the operational needs of the tenant.

4.17 Landscaping will be provided that relates to the immediate surroundings. The landscaping will use a similar palette of materials and flora that is already established and working successfully across Green Park. The sites alignment will frame the building's axial entrance, which will be further emphasised with boundary treatments. Tree planting will be used to screen the at-grade car parking and frame the car park entrances. New planting will serve as SUDS drainage and swales will retain surface water in line with EA requirements. 150 new trees will be planted on site, in addition to other improved landscaping.

Local Planning Policy

Reading Core Strategy (January 2008)

4.18 The site is situated within the administrative boundary of RBC and is subject to the provisions of the Reading Core Strategy, which was adopted by the Council on 29 January 2008.

4.19 The Core Strategy sets the overall strategic direction for planning for Reading over the plan period to 2026, and is in line with national policies. The policies of the Core Strategy establish where major development and other forms of investment should be located in order to be sustainable, meet local needs and take full advantage of opportunities.

4.20 The Core Strategy policies that have been considered are as follows:

Core Strategy Policy	Contribution and Benefit
Core Objective 1 (paragraph 3.3) - One of the Core Objectives is to strengthen the role of Reading, including the Central Reading Area, as the regional hub for the Thames Valley, providing an accessible focus for the development of employment, housing, services and facilities, meeting the needs of residents, workers, visitors, those who study in Reading Borough, and the wider area.	The proposals will bring new jobs to the Borough in a location which is served by 7 minute frequency bus services to Reading Town Centre and beyond.
Spatial Strategy (paragraph 3.10) - South West Reading including the development of Green Park 3 is acknowledged as one of the four sustainable locations for future development.	Green Park is in a location that is identified as a Core Employment Area and is a key economic driver within the Borough. The office development will further cement Green Park and South West Reading as a whole as a sustainable location for future development.
South West Reading (paragraph 3.17) - The paragraph notes that the A33 corridor will be an appropriate location for additional housing and employment development in	Green Park is located within the A33 corridor and as such is considered an appropriate location for additional employment development.

particular.

Spatial Strategy, Green Park (paragraph 3.20) - The paragraph states that Green Park Business Park continues to be a significant location for high technology and knowledge based businesses. There is an opportunity to extend the development of Green Park westwards, beyond the current settlement boundary.

The development provides the opportunity for further office stock to support the technological and knowledge based businesses already on the park.

Cross Cutting Policy 16 (social and economic objectives) - Provide employment opportunities for all and support a successful, balanced local economy that meets the needs of the area.

Page 47 of the Design and Access Statement demonstrates that significant jobs could be created once the proposed development is fully occupied.

This is in accordance with the Employment Densities Guide 2010 which sets a ratio of 12sqm per employee.

CS1 - Sustainable Construction and Design - On developments of more than 1,000 m2 of floorspace, ensure that 50% of the provision meets the most up to date BREEAM 'Excellent' standards.

Incorporate sustainable urban drainage (SuDS) facilities and techniques.

The Sustainability Statement submitted in support of the application sets out in detail how the proposals will reduce predicted carbon dioxide emissions and what energy efficient design measures have been incorporated into the scheme.

The development will achieve a BREEAM rating of 'Excellent', and incorporate SUDS.

CS2 – Waste Minimisation - Demonstrate measures to minimise the generation of waste in the construction, use and life of buildings and promote more sustainable approaches to waste management.

The site will have dedicated recycle space and regular collection for all categories of waste will be provided; however, this will be reviewed once the development is in operation to reflect operational requirements. In addition, the development will operate a waste management strategy following the Waste Hierarchy of Reduce, Re-use and Recycle.

CS4 – Accessibility and Intensity of Development - The scale and density of development within the Borough will be related to its level of accessibility by walking, cycling and public transport to a range of services and facilities.

The site already lies on a key public transport corridor in Reading (A33).

Green Wave buses currently provide access between the town centre and the Madejski Stadium/Green Park at a frequency of about one bus every 6 or 7 minutes.

Sustrans (National cycle network) route 23 also passes along Smallmead Road connecting Green Park with Kybes Lane. Route 23 connects with NCN4 into central Reading or south to Basingstoke.

CS5 – Inclusive Access - All buildings should be located, sited and designed to provide suitable access to, into and within, its facilities, for all potential users, including disabled people, so that they can use them safely and easily.

The building is designed to be fully inclusive in terms of access, with step-free access. All floors above ground level will be accessed via lift as well as stairs.

The design has been developed to provide a simple and clear layout which is easy to use for all regardless of disability.

CS7 – Design and the Public Realm - All development must be of high design quality that maintain and enhances the character and appearance of the area of Reading in which it is located.	Green Park as a whole is set within an attractive, landscaped environment which is actively managed. The landscaping and public realm will use a similar palette of high quality materials and flora that is already established and working successfully across Green Park.
CS10 – Location of Employment Development - Major office development will take place in the centre of Reading and along the A33 corridor	The proposals are located within the A33 corridor which is one area where RBC is looking to direct future office development.
CS13 – Impact of Employment Development - Employment development should provide mitigation measures in line with its impacts on the demand for housing (including affordable housing), labour and skills, and on the transport network.	Section 106 obligations will be agreed between the Applicant and RBC to address the impact of employment development.
CS22 – Transport Assessments - Planning permission will not be granted unless development proposals make appropriate provision for works and contributions to ensure an adequate level of accessibility and safety by all modes of transport from all parts of a development, particularly by public transport, walking and cycling, in accordance with an agreed transport assessment submitted as part of the application.	The application is supported by a Transport Statement, which concludes that development will not adversely affect the operation of the highway. The proposals are not expected to create significant vehicle movements either through staff or servicing requirements. Sufficient car parking and bicycles spaces will also be provided within the development. Green Wave buses currently provide access between the town centre and the Madejski Stadium/Green Park at a frequency of about one bus every 6 or 7 minutes. In the longer term, this is expected to give way to a dedicated Mass Rapid Transit system which would serve the site. Sustrans (National cycle network) route 23 also passes along Smallmead Road connecting Green Park with Kybes Lane. Route 23 connects with NCN4 into central Reading or south to Basingstoke.
CS23 – Sustainable Travel and Travel Plans - Planning permission will not be granted for major development proposals unless there is a commitment to implement measures to promote and improve sustainable transport facilities.	A site specific Travel Plan Framework will be submitted alongside the application to promote and improve sustainable transport facilities where possible.
CS24 - Car / Cycle Parking - Maximum car parking standards and cycle parking requirements will be applied.	Once the development is completed, 722 car parking spaces and 136 bicycle spaces will be provided within the development. The levels of parking proposed have been discussed and agreed with RBC's Highway officers.
CS33 - Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment - Historic features and areas of historic importance (such as sites and features of archaeological importance), will be protected and where appropriate	The site forms part of the site identified in the Sites and Detailed Policies Document as having archaeological potential.

enhanced.	The Archaeological Statement submitted in support of the application acknowledges part of the site is thought to contain remains of a Late Bronze Age settlement. However, the Report concludes that the proposal area has been subject to a raft of archaeological investigations culminating in excavations and publications which form the mitigation of the impact to these archaeological remains.
CS34 – Pollution and Water Resources - Development will only be permitted where it would not be damaging to the environment through air, land, noise or light pollution.	The application is supported by reports in relation to Ground Conditions, Flood Risk and Drainage. These reports assess the impact of the proposals upon the local environment, recommend mitigation measures where necessary and conclude that the proposals will not have an adverse impact.
CS35 – Flooding - Planning permission will not be permitted for development in an area identified as being at high risk of flooding, where development would reduce the capacity of the flood plain to store floodwater, impede the flow of floodwater or in any way increase the risks to life and property arising from flooding.	The site has previously been raised out of the floodplain under planning permission 85/TP/690 as part of the agreed and well established Green Park Floodplain Management Scheme. The Floodplain Management Scheme comprises: • Creation of a flood relief channel. • Ground-raising for development, whilst providing or leaving 16 hectares of flood storage at a level of 37.8m AOD (or lower). • On-going maintenance in accordance with a schedule agreed with the Planning Authority and the Environment Agency. The proposed development will accord with the approved Floodplain Management Scheme. Further details are provided within the Flood Risk Assessment submitted alongside this application.

CS36 – Biodiversity and Geology - Development should retain, protect and incorporate features of biodiversity or geological interest (including protected species and their habitats) found within the application site into their schemes.	The application is accompanied by an Ecological Assessment which makes clear recommendations with regard to the protection of any important features or ecological value. The Report confirms that the site is of limited ecological value. The site has the potential to support some protected and notable species, but appropriate controls will be adopted as part of construction in order to avoid impacts on protected species and nearby valued habitats
CS38 – Trees, Hedges and Woodland - Individual trees, groups of trees, hedges and woodlands will be protected from damage or removal, and the Borough's vegetation cover will be extended.	Any trees within the vicinity of the site form part of the wider landscape plan for Green Park which has been carefully designed and managed since the Park's inception. Therefore it is in the interest of the applicant to protect and maintain any trees in close proximity. A Tree Survey is submitted in support of the Landscape Strategy.

Sites and Detailed Policies Document (2012)

- 4.21 The Sites and Detailed Policies Document (SDPD) and accompanying Proposals Map (both adopted October 2012) set out the Council's detailed development management policy and identify specific development sites and land use designations to enable delivery of the Core Strategy.
- 4.22 The site specific allocations and the detailed policies that have been considered are as follows:

SDPD Policy	Contribution and Benefits
Site Specific Policy	
SA12 – Core Employment Areas	Green Park is allocated as a Core Employment Area under SA12a.
DM17 – Green Infrastructure - New development shall demonstrate how the location and type of open space, landscaping and water features provided within a scheme have been arranged such that they maintain or link into the existing Green Network and contribute to its consolidation.	The site is located adjacent to Longwater Lake which is allocated as green infrastructure under this policy. The orientation and siting of the buildings have been designed to ensure pedestrian links to the lake are maintained and enhanced where possible.
Area of Archaeological Potential - The Proposals Map identifies the site as an area of potential under Core Strategy policy CS33 (refer to table 1).	The Archaeological Statement submitted in support of the application acknowledges part of the site is thought to contain remains of a Late Bronze Age settlement. However, the Report concludes that the proposal area has been subject to a raft of archaeological investigations culminating in excavations and publications which form the mitigation of the impact to these archaeological remains.

Borough Wide Development Policies

DM1 – Adaption to Climate Change - All developments will demonstrate how they have been designed to incorporate measures to adapt to climate change	The Sustainability Statement submitted in support of the application sets out in detail how the proposals will be adaptable to climate change in terms of its sustainable design and construction.
DM2 – Decentralised Energy - Any non-residential development of over 1,000 sq m shall consider the inclusion of a CHP plant, or biomass-fuelled heating scheme, or other form of decentralised energy provision, within the site, unless it can be demonstrated that the scheme is not suitable or feasible for this form of energy provision.	The Sustainability Statement submitted in support of the application contains an Energy Statement which confirms the development will achieve BREEAM Excellent.
DM3 – Infrastructure Planning - Proposals for development will make appropriate provision for the infrastructure, services, resources and amenities. Such provision will be secured through planning obligations and/or the Community Infrastructure Levy as relevant. High priority will be given to transport infrastructure and employment, skills and training development initiatives amongst others.	The proposed development is not subject to CIL. A S106 Agreement will be agreed between RBC and the Applicant.
DM12 – Access, Traffic and Highway Related Matters - Proposals involving the generation of additional trips on the transport network, should consider the effect on safety, congestion and the environment.	The application is supported by a Transport Statement, which concludes that development will not adversely affect the operation of the highway. The proposals are not expected to create significant vehicle movements either through staff or servicing requirements.
DM17 – Green Infrastructure - New development shall demonstrate how the location and type of open space, landscaping and water features provided within a scheme have been arranged such that they maintain or link into the existing Green Network and contribute to its consolidation.	The site is located adjacent to Longwater Lake which is allocated as green infrastructure under this policy. The orientation and siting of the buildings have been designed to ensure pedestrian links to the lake are maintained and enhanced where possible. The site's location on Green Park means it is well placed to access public transport services provided in Green Park alongside the comprehensive network of cycle routes and footpaths providing access to central Reading.
DM18 – Tree Planting - New development shall make provision for tree planting within the application site, or off-site in appropriate situations, to improve the level of tree coverage within the Borough, to maintain and enhance the character and appearance of the area in which a site is located, to provide for biodiversity and to contribute to measures to reduce carbon and adapt to	The site forms part of the wider landscape plan for Green Park which has been carefully designed and actively managed since the Park's inception. Therefore the proposed landscaping is in accordance with the landscape principles adopted and implemented across the site. The site will also look to improve and enhance the

climate change.

biodiversity in accordance with the Green Park Biodiversity Action Plan where possible.

In addition, the Sustainability Statement submitted in support of the application sets out in detail how the proposals will be adaptable to climate change in terms of its sustainable design and construction.

DM20 –Hazardous Installations - Development in the vicinity of hazardous sites or pipelines (such as AWE Burghfield), will not be permitted unless it has been satisfactorily demonstrated that the amount, type and location of hazardous substances would not pose adverse health and safety risks to the surrounding population and environment.

Planning Permission ref: 08/00261 for B1 office use was approved in May 2008. As part of the formal consultation process the Health and Safety Executive were notified in respect of their facility at AWE Burghfield. The consultation response received on 19 March 2008 confirmed that the proposed development does not fall within the consultation distance therefore no comments were made.

- 4.23 RBC is currently preparing a new Local Plan. The Council has issued an Issues and Options consultation which the Applicant will respond to.

Other Relevant Guidance

Revised Parking Standards and Design (October 2011)

- 4.24 RBC has adopted a zonal approach to car parking standards due to the different land uses and densities in the Borough.
- 4.25 The document places the site in Zone 3 – Secondary Core Area. The parking requirements within this Zone for B1(a) office are 1 space per 50 sq. m of floorspace GEA. Parking standards and the scale of parking has been agreed with RBC Highways.

Sustainable Design and Construction SPD (July 2011)

- 4.26 The SPD clarifies and further interprets Core Strategy Policies CS1 and CS2. Policy CS1 sets out an overarching strategy in relation to climate change, energy efficiency, energy conservation measures, inclusion of renewable energy resources, reduction in carbon emissions and inclusion of appropriate flood mitigation measures in new development.
- 4.27 Policy CS2 seeks to minimise waste generation in construction, use and life of buildings as well promoting sustainable approaches to waste management.
- 4.28 Some of the key themes raised in the SPD that will be considered as part of the design development are summarised below:
- The importance of SuDS and reducing the impact of increased rainfall.
 - How the effects of climate change are considered over the lifetime of the development to ensure that the long term sustainability of the development is not compromised.
 - The contribution trees and landscaping make to adapting to and minimising climate change.
 - Reducing waste during construction
 - Minimising the production of waste during the use and life of buildings.
 - It is expected that 50% of the provision meets BREEAM 'Excellent' standards.
- 4.29 The SPD in particular acknowledges that a major planning application for office development should be accompanied by a BREEAM pre-assessment, a Sustainability Strategy (using the Sustainability Checklists provided at appendix 5 of the document) and an Energy Statement. This information is submitted in support of the application and clearly demonstrates how the proposals meet the requirements of Policy CS1, CS2 and the BREEAM standards.

Planning Obligations under S106 SPD (April 2015)

- 4.30 The SPD sets out the Council's approach towards seeking planning obligations, alongside the introduction of the Council's Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule. Contributions for open space, green infrastructure, highways, education, renewable energy, flood mitigation and social facilities can be required. The Council will assess each application individually, to determine whether an obligation is needed, and what matters it should address, and will justify the reasons for seeking an obligations. Any requirement for a Section 106 will be raised with a developer as early in the process as possible.
- 4.31 Section 106 planning obligations are also set out in the Council's adopted Employment and Skills Supplementary Planning Document SPD.

Employment, Skills and Training SPD (April 2013)

- 4.32 This SPD sets out the obligations which will be sought from developers at the construction and end user phases of development to contribute towards a range of employment, skills and training measures.
- 4.33 During the construction phase, S106 funding will be used to support construction specific training for local people. Major commercial developments will be required to produce an Employment and Skills Plan (ESP) based on construction benchmarks from the National Skills Academy for Construction projects. These set out the expected levels of employment, apprenticeships and training for the size of development, based on the total construction cost. If a developer chooses not to provide an ESP themselves then a financial contribution will be sought.

5 S106 Obligations

- 5.1 This section provides a summary of the legislation, policy and guidance relating to planning obligations and describes the discussions that have been held with RBC on these matters. This chapter considers Draft Heads of Terms for proposed Planning Obligations for the proposals. A separate Affordable Housing Statement has not been submitted with the planning application in light of the viability issues below and that any provision will be in the form of a contribution rather than on or off-site direct provision of housing.

National Legislation and Policy

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Regulations 2010 (as amended)

- 5.2 In April 2010, the Government introduced the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), which allowed local authorities to fund infrastructure such as transport, environmental and education uses to support growth in the area.
- 5.3 Regulation 122 states that a planning obligation may only constitute a reason for granting planning permission for the development if the obligation is:
- i) Necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms;
 - ii) Directly related to the development; and
 - iii) Fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.
- 5.4 RBC adopted their CIL on 1 April 2015 scaling back s106 obligations although it still covers affordable housing and any site-specific requirements specifically excluded from CIL.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

- 5.5 Paragraph 178 of the NPPF states that to ensure viability, the costs of any requirement likely to be applied to development, such as requirements for affordable housing, standards, infrastructure contributions or other requirements should, when taking account of the normal cost of development and mitigation, provide competitive returns to a willing land owner and willing developer to enable the development to be deliverable.
- 5.6 The NPPF states at paragraph 203 that local planning authorities should consider whether otherwise unacceptable development could be made acceptable through the use of conditions or planning obligations. Planning obligations should only be used where it is not possible to address unacceptable impacts through a planning condition.

Local Policy and Guidance

- 5.7 Policy CS9 of the Core Strategy states that the local planning authority will require planning obligations entered into by agreement or other means to secure the replacement and enhancement of additional physical and social infrastructure, services, resources, amenities or other assets.
- 5.8 Policy CS13 of the Core Strategy refers to mitigating the demand for housing arising from employment development.

- 5.9 The Planning Obligations SPD (2015) and Training & Skills SPD (2013) provide the framework for planning obligations not covered by CIL.

Draft Heads of Terms for the s106 Agreement

- 5.10 Reflecting the significant contributions Green Park has made in the past to improving South Reading in terms of access, transport, employment and training and the environment, there is no CIL levy on new office floorspace.
- 5.11 Discussions have been held with RBC on potential s106 obligations. The starting point for these discussions is the implementable planning permission for the plot. Furthermore, as part of the outline permission, s106 contributions were made relating to 12,080 sqm of office space permitted for the plot. To avoid double counting, the Applicant maintains that planning obligations should only be based on the uplift in floorspace above the consented scheme.
- 5.12 In the context of local planning policy guidance, the Applicant has considered the potential s106 obligations, as follows:

Employment & skills training contribution

- 5.13 The contribution is based on a calculation using the formula in Section 6 of the SPD. This totals £467,125. The contribution by the Applicant will help RBC deliver a package of training and skills outcomes for local people in an Employment and Skills Plan (ESP). This Plan will reflect the scale of the development including skills coordination, targeted support programmes, job brokerage schemes and Skills for Business Initiatives.

Affordable housing contribution

- 5.14 Green Park already contributes to mitigating its impact on housing in the following ways:
- There is a direct link between income and ability to afford a home. A long history of providing training to upskill workers in Reading which in turn should allow them to command a higher wage. This is reflected in the commitment (above) to payment of the full training and skills planning obligation contribution to mitigate the development.
 - Provision of a reasonably priced nursery on Green Park. This provides access to childcare for parents wanting to work who have children, and which is also close to their place of business.
 - A number of businesses on Green Park have also relocated from other sites in the locality e.g. Bayer, or growing from incubator facilities on site e.g. PRA. This means their staff are generally established in an area and unlikely to need to relocate to the Borough and require housing.
- 5.15 A residual valuation, prepared by Deloitte in relation to the affordable housing obligation, has been submitted to RBC on a confidential basis, as part of the pre-application discussions. It includes all of the standard valuation inputs to a viability assessment to enable RBC to review the appraisal. The assessment demonstrates this speculative scheme cannot afford an affordable housing contribution. Any final decision, however, will be dependent on RBC's findings on the viability assessment and discussions are ongoing.
- 5.16 We maintain that this approach accords with policy, adhering with the following viability test (paragraph 173 of the NPPF):

"To ensure viability, the costs of any requirements likely to be applied to development, such as requirements for affordable housing, standards, infrastructure contributions or other requirements should, when taking account of the

normal cost of development and mitigation, provide competitive returns to a willing land owner and willing developer to enable the development to be deliverable.”

- 5.17 The Applicant is committed to ensuring the deliverability of this development, whilst also seeking to mitigate the impact of employment development. The approach seeks to balance RBC’s policy requirements for the site, namely as a core employment site and mitigation through provision of affordable housing, with the site specific viability of this development.

6 Conclusion

- 6.1 This Planning Statement accompanies a planning application for full planning permission for the development of a high quality 5 storey building, which will accommodate flexible office (B1) space with a total floorspace of 27,207 sq m (GEA) and 722 car parking spaces in a separate car parking structure measuring 15,480 sq m (GEA).
- 6.2 Green Park is one of the premier business parks in the Thames Valley serving the office needs of Reading, Wokingham, and West Berkshire. It currently provides over 2 million square feet of office space to over 50 companies, including leading IT, technology and pharmaceutical companies in an exceptionally high quality landscaped environment. The proposed development will maintain and further enhance the status of Green Park, providing much needed business accommodation.
- 6.3 The development proposals have been carefully designed to meet modern occupier requirements and in consultation with RBC. The proposals accord with national and local planning policy and the development will sit on an existing development platform in a sustainable office location with easy access to the town centre, with sustainable access improving further once Green Park railway station opens.
- 6.4 The plot benefits from an extant planning permission which could be built today. This scheme does not meet modern occupier requirements but should form the basis for negotiations on additional floorspace and car parking. S106 contributions were paid as part of the outline consent, in particular towards the completion of the A33 relief road.
- 6.5 A Section 106 Agreement will be agreed between RBC and the Applicant, to mitigate the impact of employment development.
- 6.6 In summary, granting planning permission for the development of 400 Longwater Avenue will ensure the continued growth of Green Park Business Park, provide high quality office accommodation and generate highly skilled employment opportunities.

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