

**Begbroke Science Park
Begbroke Hill
Begbroke
Kidlington
OX5 1PF**

18/00803/OUT

Applicant: Chancellor, Masters And Scholars Of The University Of Oxford

Proposal: Outline planning permission, with all matters except for access reserved for subsequent approval, for up to 12,500m² of B1a / b / c and ancillary D1 floor space, retention of and improvements to the existing vehicular, public transport, pedestrian and cycle access including internal circulation routes; associated car parking including re-disposition of existing car parking; associated hard and soft landscape works; any necessary demolition (unknown at this stage); and associated drainage, infrastructure and ground re-modelling works.

Ward: Kidlington West

Councillors: Cllr Alan Mackenzie-Wintle
Cllr Sandra Rhodes
Cllr Alaric Rose

Reason for Referral: Major Development

Expiry Date: 7 August 2018 **Committee Date:** 23 August 2018

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The application is reported to the Planning Committee, as it is a major application.

Proposal

Outline Planning Permission, with all matters except for access reserved for subsequent approval, is sought for up to 12500 square metres of B1 floorspace (a,b and c) and ancillary D1 floor space at Begbroke Science Park, Begbroke Hill, Begbroke, which is in close proximity to Kidlington.

Consultations

Objections/Ongoing discussion have been received/are occurring with; OCC Majors (ongoing discussions) CDC Conservation (ongoing discussions), CDC Policy (ongoing discussions) OCC Highways (objections/ongoing discussions)

Planning Policy

The application site is situated within the Oxford Green Belt. The site is situated within the existing bounds of the Begbroke Science Park. The site generally, although within the Green Belt, has been identified under Policy Kidlington 1 of the Cherwell Local Plan, as a site to accommodate High Value Employment needs.

The application is ultimately a renewal of a previously accepted scheme albeit with a further 2500 square metres of floor space being created.

Conclusions

The key issues arising from the amended application details are:

- Principle of Development;
- Landscape and Visual Impact;
- Design and layout;
- Highways
- Biodiversity and Ecology
- Impact on the aims of the Green Belt
- Whether very special circumstances have been demonstrated
- Infrastructure and Planning Obligations
- Design, and impact on the character of the area and impact on designated heritage assets
- Highway safety
- Ecology

The report examines the key points in relation to the proposed development and the relevant Development Plan Policies and other relevant publications

RECOMMENDATION - GRANT PERMISSION SUBJECT TO CONDITIONS

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

MAIN REPORT

1. APPLICATION SITE AND LOCALITY

- 1.1 The application site is situated approximately 3 miles north of Oxford, is situated to the west of Kidlington and is within the Oxford Green Belt, east of the A44 and approximately ½ of a mile south of the settlement of Begbroke. The settlement of Yarnton is situated approximately ¼ of a mile south of the development site.
- 1.2 The site is surrounded on all sides by agricultural land. Parker Farm lies to the east, Yarnton garden centre to the south with Woodstock Road to the west.
- 1.3 The application sites comprises of approximately 5.54ha of the existing Begbroke Science Park including the existing vehicular access. The site contains a mixture of buildings of a varying age which are predominantly used for research purposes.
- 1.4 Within the site is a Grade II Listed building referred to as Begbroke Hill Farmhouse. This is located south of the proposed development site. The building lies within its own grounds and is used for office and conference purposes relating to the main use of the Science Park. The site generally is enclosed by a mature and established hedgerow and sporadic tree planting which enclose the overall site on all sides.
- 1.5 The application is allocated for employment development through Policy Kidlington 1 of the Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 Part 1.

2. DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 2.1 The application seeks permission in outline, with all matters reserved except for access. Ultimately, the permission is a renewal of a previously approved outline application (15/00309/OUT) with an addition of 2500 square feet of development.

Application 15/00309/OUT was in itself a renewal of application 01/00662/OUT which set out the long term strategic aims of for the site.

- 2.2 The proposals will retain the overall scale of floor area (14,200m²) and will provide 12,500 square metres of mixed use floor space. The uses proposed for the site would fall under D1 and B1 (a, b & c) uses.
- 2.3 The proposals comprise the creation of the floor area as detailed above, within the existing Science Park site; amendment and relocation of the existing parking arrangements within the site; retention of main access point with proposed improvements to existing access, circulation routes and for vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians; associated drainage, infrastructure and ground remodelling and landscaping (both hard and soft).
- 2.4 There is currently no demolition envisaged, however it has been included within the proposal description to cover the potential for demolition/redevelopment of the existing buildings within the red line. If it is necessary it will be the subject of a subsequent reserved matters submission.
- 2.5 The development will be directed towards 3 areas identified as under utilised within the existing site. The areas are located in the north west corner, the south east corner and the north east corner of the site.
- 2.6 The proposals will result in an additional 2500sq metres (further to the floor area approved under 15/00309/OUT) of commercial development floor space. This is said to be required, by the applicant, to meet the increased and current strong demands for floor space since the time of the most recent renewal approval.
- 2.7 As the application is outline, limited information has been submitted in terms of the physical make-up of the proposals. However, this can be addressed through the imposition of conditions and the submission of the reserved matters application.

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

- 3.1 The following planning history is considered relevant to the current proposal:

<u>Application Ref.</u>	<u>Proposal</u>	<u>Decision</u>
01/00662/OUT	Proposed new research buildings (long term phase of site development).	Application Permitted
01/00664/OUT	Proposed new research buildings (Interim phase of site development)	Application Permitted
01/01872/OUT	Proposed new access road	Application Permitted
08/00899/F	Widening and southern extension of access road, including public highway junctions alterations and associated work	Application Refused
11/00069/F	Access road and all traffic movements junction, landscaping and associated works	Application Permitted

15/00013/SO	Screening Opinion - Proposed Bio-Accelerator building.	Screening Opinion not requesting EIA
15/00309/OUT	Variation of Condition 4 of 01/00662/OUT - Refer to drawing 2198/022C	Application Permitted
15/00017/SO	Screening Opinion - Variation of Condition 4 of 01/00662/OUT - Refer to drawing 2198/022C	Pending Consideration
15/01105/REM	Reserved Matters to 15/00309/OUT - Proposed new research buildings.	Application Permitted
18/00803/OUT	Outline planning permission, with all matters except for access reserved for subsequent approval, for up to 12,500m ² of B1a / b / c and ancillary D1 floor space, retention of and improvements to the existing vehicular, public transport, pedestrian and cycle access including internal circulation routes; associated car parking including re-disposition of existing car parking; associated hard and soft landscape works; any necessary demolition (unknown at this stage); and associated drainage, infrastructure and ground re-modelling works.	Pending Decision

3.2 Begbroke Science Park has a long history with a significant number of Planning applications of varying types over a significant period of time. The majority of the proposals have been to increase the number and scale of buildings on the site and to complement and expand the existing research and development as well as other uses within the site.

3.3 Application 01/00662/OUT set the original parameters and framework for the site which was approved in April 2014. This application is the primary application in relation to the site and set the strategy. It was subsequently varied under application 15/00309/OUT. This was due to the alteration of the scheme in the period when the land was being acquired. This application also sought to clarify the site area. This approval required that the reserved matters be submitted prior to the 1st of May 2017, which was not forthcoming, and therefore that permission has lapsed.

3.4 Application 11/00069/FUL was a separate application which sought the construction of a dedicated access from the A44 to the Science Park, including a signalised junction.

4. PRE-APPLICATION DISCUSSIONS

4.1 The following pre-application discussions have taken place with regard to this proposal:

Application Ref. Proposal

15/00054/PREAPP Pre-App enquiry - Proposed new research building and associated facilities

- 4.2 The main issues raised at the pre app stage related to the design (siting, shape and form) and materials; the impact on the setting of the Listed Building and other Heritage assets (the advice was that the building is far enough removed from the development area to ensure its setting was not damaged and that the other agricultural buildings settings have already been compromised and that development will not create further damage) and the traffic impact(the updating of the travel plan was recommended).

5. RESPONSE TO PUBLICITY

- 5.1 This application has been publicised by way of a site notice displayed near the site, by advertisement in the local newspaper, and by letters sent to all properties immediately adjoining the application site that the Council has been able to identify from its records. The final date for comments was 12.06.2018, although comments received after this date and before finalising this report have also been taken into account.
- 5.2 No comments have been raised by third parties regarding this application.

6. RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION

- 6.1 Below is a summary of the consultation responses received at the time of writing this report. Responses are available to view in full on the Council's website, via the online Planning Register.

PARISH/TOWN COUNCIL AND NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUMS

- 6.2 **Kidlington Parish Council:** No objections raised regarding this application
- 6.3 **Yarnton Parish Council:** No objections or comments received
- 6.4 **Begbroke Parish Council:** No objection or comments received

OTHER CONSULTEES

- 6.4 **Environment Agency: No objection**
- 6.6 **Natural England: No objection**
- 6.7 **Thames Water: No objections** or comments relating to waste. **No objections** regarding water connections subject to the imposition of condition
- 6.8 **OCC Highways: No objection** subject to the imposition of Conditions, an obligation to enter into a S278 agreement and Section 106 in relation to the creation of bus stops and pedestrian/Cycle link. Discussions are ongoing with the agent regarding the Section 106 agreement and further clarity has been sought from the relevant departments with regards to this. Currently the applicant has raised issues with the level of works/contributions required in relation to the development proposed; and the overlap between these works and the works being considered in relation to the proposed Cherwell Local Plan Partial Review allocations (PR8). Discussions are ongoing and the report will be updated prior to the committee date to reflect discussions and outcomes.

6.9 OCC Archaeology: No objections or comments received regarding this application

6.10 OCC Majors: Discussions are **ongoing** regarding the consultation response. The original response requested further information regarding drainage, which has now been submitted and is being assessed. Although no formal response has been received to date, the discussion has been positive and it is likely the drainage issues have been addressed. A revised consultation response is likely, however the main points raised in the initial response are as follows.

- The existing access to the site is to be utilised for the proposed long-term development. The capacity assessment of this access junction shows that this is suitable.
- The level of car parking proposed is higher than the level previously permitted. This may make achieving mode share targets set out in the Transport Assessment and Travel Plan more challenging.
- In order to maximise the opportunity for sustainable travel to the site and take advantage of planned improvements to public transport services along the A44, a new pair of bus stops in the vicinity of the site access is required.(See OCC Highways comments)
- A suitably surfaced pedestrian and cycle link between the Begbroke Science Park and the restricted byway at Roundham Bridge is required and must be secured through a Section 106 Agreement. This is in line with requirements set out in the Kidlington Masterplan SPD for improved pedestrian and cycle accessibility between the site and Kidlington and the requirements of Policy SLE 4 of the Local Plan. (See OCC Highways Comments)
- The monitoring period for the recently approved Framework Travel Plan for the site will require extending to take account of the new development.

6.11 CDC Conservation: No comments received at the time of writing. A response will be received prior to the application being heard at Planning Committee.

6.12 CDC Ecology: No objections raised subject to the imposition of the following conditions;

- **Carry Out in Accordance with Survey:** The development hereby approved shall be carried out in accordance with the recommendations set out in table 6 of the Ecology Report Prepared by BSG, issued on 4th May 2018.
- **Landscape and Ecological Management Plan:** Prior to the commencement of the development hereby approved, a Landscape and Ecology Management Plan (LEMP) to include all biodiversity enhancements proposed within the built environment and green spaces, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter, the LEMP shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details, to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority.
- **Lighting Strategy:** Prior to the commencement of the development hereby approved, a lighting strategy which demonstrates how impacts on ecology will be avoided, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter, the LEMP shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

6.13 CDC Economic Development: No objection. The consultation response supports the principle of development and states that the potential driving force of Begbroke for the whole district is greater than ever and that the Government recognises the Parks importance in 2014 by awarding Oxford City Deal funding for the extension of the Innovation Centre. The Governments subsequent promotion of a National Industrial Strategy relies upon such enhanced facilities to support innovation, as now being considered in this proposal to create the facilities in which collaboration can thrive. Full support is given to the principles of flexible and adaptable R&D space which will allow enterprises to develop on site.

6.14 CDC Environmental Protection: No objections and comments with regards to noise, air quality, odour or light.

6.15 CDC Landscape Services: No objections based on the submission of the following information;

1. All plants are to be supplied in accordance with Horticultural Trade Association's National Plant Specification and from a HTA certified nursery.
2. All plants are to be planted in accordance with BS3936. Trees are to be supplied, planted and maintained in accordance with BS8545 (tree pit details are essential!).
3. Delivery and backfilling of all plant material to be in accordance with BS4428/JCLI/CPSE Code of Practice for 'Handling and Establishing Landscape Plants, Parts I, II and III.
4. All excavated areas to be backfilled with either topsoil from site or imported to be BS3882 – General purpose grade. All topsoiled areas to be clear of rocks and rubble larger than 50mm diameter and any other debris that may interfere with the establishment of plants.

6.16 CDC Planning Policy: No consultation response received at the time of writing. A response will be received prior to the application being heard at Planning Committee.

6.17 CDC Arboriculture: No objection to the proposals subject to a suitable level of mitigation is afforded to the site. Submission of a landscape plan as evidence of this is required. With this, a comprehensive detail of trees to be planted should be presented in order to mitigate the removed vegetation, and visual amenity lost from these trees.

It would be advisable that proposed trees to be planted are of a larger size, species relevant to the current site and in keeping with the original character of the site, so to balance the retained trees on the southern border adjacent to the original/existing buildings.

7. RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY AND GUIDANCE

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

7.2 The Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 - Part 1 was formally adopted by Cherwell District Council on 20th July 2015 and provides the strategic planning policy framework for the District to 2031. The Local Plan 2011-2031 – Part 1 replaced a number of the 'saved' policies of the adopted Cherwell Local Plan 1996 though many of its policies are retained and remain part of the development plan. The relevant planning policies of Cherwell District's statutory Development Plan are set out below:

CHERWELL LOCAL PLAN 2011 - 2031 PART 1 (CLP 2031 Part 1)

- PSD1-Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
- SLE1 – Economic Development
- SLE4 – Improving Transport Connections
- ESD10 – Protection and Enhancement of Biodiversity and the Natural Environment
- Policy ESD13 – Local Landscape Protection and Enhancement
- ESD14 – Oxford Green Belt
- ESD15 - The Character of the Built and Historic Environment
- Policy Kidlington 1 – Accommodating High Value Employment Needs

CHERWELL LOCAL PLAN 1996 SAVED POLICIES (CLP 1996)

- C28 – Layout, design and external appearance of new development

7.3 Other Material Planning Considerations

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
- Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)
- Department for Transport Circular 02/2013 (The Strategic Road Network and the Delivery of Sustainable Development)
- Kidlington Masterplan SPD

8. APPRAISAL

8.1 The key issues for consideration in this case are:

- Principle of development
- Design, and impact on the character of the area and surrounding Listed Buildings
- Access, Traffic and Transport;
- Design and Layout;
- Landscape and visual impact;
- Ecology;
- Drainage;
- Energy Efficiency/Sustainability;
- Infrastructure/Planning Obligations

8.2 Legislation in the form of Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 require planning applications to be determined against the provisions of the development plan for the area unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Current national planning policy within the NPPF (which is a material planning consideration of significant weight) reaffirms this position and confirms that the starting point for proposals that are contrary to an up-to-date Local Plan (i.e. those local planning policies within a development plan document that are consistent with the NPPF) is refusal unless material considerations justify a departure from it. Recent court judgements have concluded that there is no presumption in favour of sustainable development within the NPPF where a proposal conflicts with an up-to-date development plan given that the plan itself will have been prepared against national planning policy and guidance and so must in itself be a sustainable strategy for the area. As a result, significant and specific overall benefits would

need to be demonstrated to justify departing from a development plan that is up-to-date with respect to national policy rather than a generic balancing exercise as part of a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

- 8.3 The adopted Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 Part 1 (CLPP1) is the principal development plan document for the District that sets out a strategy and overarching policies to provide for sustainable growth within the District to meet identified need through to 2031. Having been examined and found sound by an independent inspector against national policy (i.e. NPPF) and relevant statutory tests it is considered to be up-to-date. It primarily focuses new growth in the District to Banbury and Bicester whilst limiting it elsewhere in order to provide for the most sustainable form of growth over the plan period. Amongst other things it identifies a number of strategic sites for housing and employment development in and around Banbury so that they are provided in carefully considered proportions in order to deliver a sufficient number and type of jobs to reduce the need for out-commuting from Banbury arising from the new housing which would be unsustainable.
- 8.4 Local Plan Policy PSD1: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development states that the council will take a proactive approach to reflect the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the NPPF. The council and the Planning Authority seek to work proactively with applicants to jointly find solutions which mean that proposals can be approved wherever possible, and to secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area. Planning applications that accord with the policies in this Local Plan (or other parts of the statutory Development Plan) will be approved without delay unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 8.5 Planning Policy SLE 1 of the Cherwell Local Plan relates to Employment Development . The policy identifies the main strategy for the authority in relation to employment development based on existing sites and the proposed allocations identified. Employment development will be focused on existing employment sites and employment development on existing sites and will be supported and permitted on the basis that they comply with all relevant policies which are relevant to the proposed development and the site/area. The policy also sets out the criteria for new employment proposals within the rural area, on non allocated sites.
- 8.6 The proposals are considered to comply with both Local Plan Policy PSD1 and SLE1. The proposals are within the bounds of the existing Begbroke Science Park, which is an existing employment site as identified within Policy Kidlington 1. The proposals are in a similar yet larger form to those that have previously and recently received support. SLE1 also states that employment proposals for Kidlington will be supported if they are outside of the Green Belt, unless very special circumstances can be demonstrated. This will be detailed within the report (Section 8.30. onwards). The following assessment in relation to the relevant Local Development Plan Policies and assessment of the proposals compliance with those policies, is detailed below.
- 8.7 Local Development Plan Policy SLE4 relates to the improved transport and connections. This outlines the approach required to improve transport connections and outlines overarching principle for new development to be complied with. This includes ensuring that the development facilitates the use of sustainable modes of transport and walking and cycling. It also outlines that development which is not suitable for the roads that serve the development and which have a severe traffic impact will not be supported.

- 8.8 A transport assessment was submitted as part of the application. One of the main considerations in the assessment of the proposals in relation to the policy is whether the proposals have a detrimental impact on the existing access link and junction, as a result in the increase of traffic movements due to the creation of additional floor space. The existing site is accessed from the A44 which is connected by a signal controlled junction. The transport assessment confirms that the proposed access junction for the science park from the A44 was consented to accommodate the level of development approved under the two long-term development permissions, which was approved under application 11/00069/FUL. The TA demonstrates that the trips associated with the proposed development will result in a slightly higher trip rate but will not have a detrimental impact on the operation of the highway network. The TA also demonstrates that the capacity assessment of the junction indicates that there is sufficient capacity to accommodate the increased traffic demand and the access arrangement is therefore considered appropriate. OCC highways do not raise any issue with regards the access or the increased traffic movements.
- 8.9 As proposed in the TA, a construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) will be required to minimise the impact of construction related traffic upon the local highway network. This will be secured through the imposition of a condition.
- 8.10 Previously Begbroke Science Park have made efforts in promoting sustainable transport to the site and it is considered that further improvements to improve the mode share of sustainable travel and mitigate the proposed development are required. The Kidlington Masterplan SPD also requires improved pedestrian and cycle connections between Kidlington and Begbroke Science Park. The development site is located on the edge of Kidlington and currently forms part of the site associated with emerging Policy PR8-Land east of the A44 having been put forward as part of the Cherwell Local Plan Part 1-Partial Review.
- 8.11 OCC Highways department have detailed the requirement for pedestrian and cycle improvements to be covered by a Section 106 Agreement. However, the agent for the applicant has responded questioning the level of contributions required and the timing of said improvements given the ongoing partial review which envelopes the site. Discussions are ongoing. Discussions are also ongoing with regards to the need to cover this through a Section 106 or through the imposition of a condition as Oxford University is the land owner.
- 8.12 The submitted TA demonstrates that the appropriate level of car parking proposed for the long term development of BSP is a total of 414 space, including 14 accessible/disabled space. The accumulation in parking has been devised by considering the increased floor area and allowing for a further 6% allowing for circulation and fluctuations in parking demand. This is a significantly higher parking standard for the site than what was approved previously. A higher parking standard in this instance would not usually be supported as it is expected to encourage more vehicle trips. However the council accepts that the level of parking is still lower than the maximum recommended standard set out in the Non-Statutory Cherwell Local Plan 2011 and that traffic impact analysis does not indicate that the development would be expected to lead to significant highways of traffic impacts. Due to this, although not necessarily supporting higher parking standards there are no objections to the level of parking being proposed.
- 8.13 Within the Transport Assessment, information on the mode of share for staff, students and employees of business based at BSP is provided. In short, 43% travelled to work by a sustainable mode whilst 57% use the car. The Travel Plan aims to reduce the car mode share to 54% by 2019 and to 51/ by 2021. As stated earlier, the increase in parking may make this target harder to achieve. Given the success of the University Minibus shuttle service form the Oxford City

Science Area and the City Centre to the site there has been a recommendation that two new bus stops laybys and hard standings, and a financial contribution for the provision for a bus shelter and two bus stop flag and poles is deemed required. This is considered to ensure that the BSP is located within a more convenient walk distance to the nearest bus stops and encourage an increased level of bus travel to/from the site. However, as detailed in section 8.11, discussions are ongoing with regards to the Section 106.

- 8.14 The cycle parking provision is deemed adequate in line with the aim of trying to increase the cycling mode share from 7% to 15% by 2021. Details regarding this and the proposed shower/changing facilities can be covered through the imposition of conditions. Further conditions regarding the turning area/car parking, cycle parking provision, surface drainage, travel plan and the construction traffic management Plan will also be imposed.
- 8.15 Policy ESD 10 of the Local Plan relates to the Protection and Enhancement of Biodiversity and the Natural Environment. This policies main aim is to ensure that any proposed development protects biodiversity features but that development also achieves a net gain for biodiversity.
- 8.16 An Ecology Report and a further report on Great Crested Newt and reptiles were submitted in support of the application. These reports were assessed against the relevant sections of the policy and the proposals. CDC Ecology did not have any major concerns with regard the proposals. However this is on the basis that the mitigation included within the Ecological Assessment is carried out in full. This can be conditioned.
- 8.17 The main way to achieve a net gain in biodiversity is through protection, managing, extending and enhancing existing resources and by creating new resources. However, the proposals as they stand will result in a net loss on site but the proposed restoration of the additional area of grassland does result in a small overall gain in terms of biodiversity. In the opinion of the Local Planning Authority the proposals, subject to the imposition of conditions requesting specific further information, will result in the proposals being in accordance with the relevant section of Policy ESD10. This along with the enhancements proposed on new buildings, and within the built areas, is satisfactory although a further condition relating to how the grassland will be managed in the future should be included in any Landscape and ecological management Plan.
- 8.18 The proposals will include the installation of an invertebrate habitat within the Science Park site; installation of bat and bird boxes on new buildings; retention of hedgerows and trees and a pre-construction badger survey is also proposed.
- 8.19 Policy ESD 13 relates to local landscape protection and enhancement. A Landscape and Visual Appraisal has been submitted and has assessed the proposed development on the surrounding landscape along with the impacts on visual aspects of the Science part and its immediate and further environs. The crux of the aims of Policy ESD13 is that any development will secure the enhancement of the character and appearance of the landscape, through the restoration, management or enhancement of existing landscapes, features or habitats and where appropriate the creation of new ones, including the planting of woodlands, trees and hedgerows. Moreover development shall not create visual intrusion into the open countryside, not cause undue harm to important natural features, be in keeping with the local character, detrimentally impact upon the historic view of the landscape or harm the setting of settlements, buildings, structures or any other landscape features. Further details of the landscape impact will be required at reserved matters stage.

- 8.20 Visual impact is difficult to assess at outline stage given the lack of detail of the proposals. When assessing the impact of the proposals, an understanding of the landscape sensitivity needs to be established. The value of the landscape is made up of a number of individual receptors such as the condition/quality of the landscape generally, scenic quality, conservation interest, recreation value, associations, rarity, perceptual aspects etc.
- 8.21 The site is well developed and well enclosed by mature planting which varies in consistency on the 4 boundaries. The southern edge of the site is especially well planted and relates well to the grounds of the original Begbroke Hill Farm and the existing Begbroke Hill Farm building which is a 2 ½ storey, Grade II Listed building. There are a limited number of further positive landscape features in the site although there are a number of trees towards the south and west of the site with established trees along the eastern boundary. The broad leaved woodland planting around the site ensures that the existing development of BSP is largely obscured. The wider locale is predominantly agricultural land split by natural rather than built boundaries. Given the flat nature of the area, any visual impact is likely to be at short distances.
- 8.22 The visual effects table in the analysis have largely returned negligible/no impact on the residents of Sandy Lane and both residents and road users of Fernhill Road, Begbroke which are between 200-250 metres away. It is acknowledged that the PRoW users will potentially be impacted upon. It is also detailed that the PRoWs to the north of Rowell Brook, Oxford Canal Walk and west of the A44 , near Hall Farm at distance between 175metres – 600 metres will have no or negligible impact upon them as a result of the proposals. The same is true of users of the Oxford-Banbury railway and A44. Evidence relating to the visual effects/impact will be required to be submitted at the reserved matters stage.
- 8.23 The existing site is well developed currently and the proposed development sites visually relate to the existing built form within the site. The site is moderately well contained given the established woodland planting on all boundaries. This, as well as the site being well established and the majority of the development sites having a backdrop of associated building in close proximity, results in your officers considering that the proposals have the potential to only have a negligible impact. However, this is dependent on the size and scale of the proposals.
- 8.24 The Design and Access Statement at Figure 9 on page 19 shows the existing CIE building with a maximum height of 12.4 metres. The viewpoints demonstrated within the Landscape and Visual Appraisal document demonstrates that there would likely be a very limited landscape impact as a result of the development. It is considered a further visual impact assessment should be investigated at the Reserved Matters stage when the precise dimensions of the buildings will be known.
- 8.25 The changes in the landscape are likely to be very localised. The site at present is made up of a number of existing buildings of comparable scale, mass and height and any new development will have the ability to be viewed within the context of the existing built environment whilst being protected by a mature natural boundary. Further explanation is given within the assessment of the development within the Green Belt.
- 8.26 The site contains a Grade II Listed Building, Begbroke Hill Farmhouse. Given the level of development and proximity to the building of that development is doubtful whether there will be any detrimental impact on the setting of the

building. A Heritage Assessment was submitted as part of the application which concluded that neither the setting or the significance of the building will be harmed as a result of the proposal.

- 8.27 Policy ESD 15 relates to the character of the Built and Historic Environment. In this instance the most relevant parts of the policy are in relation to complementing and enhancing the character of its context through sensitive siting, layout and high quality design. Ensuring and delivering high quality design that complements the asset is essential. This can be achieved by contributing positively to an areas character and identity by creating or reinforcing local distinctness and respecting local topography and landscape features, including skylines, valley floors, significant trees, historic boundaries, landmarks, features or views etc.
- 8.28 Although the response has not yet been received from the CDC Conservation Team, it is envisaged that it will echo comments previously made through Pre application submission. Within this response the general view was that the Listed Building and the former agricultural buildings settings had already been compromised by other contemporary buildings and that the proposals were unlikely to cause further harm.
- 8.29 The Heritage Assessment submitted concluded that the previous developments undertaken since the 1970's have a positive contribution to the significance of the Grade II Listed Farmhouse and that the Farmhouse was already well integrated within the BSP campus setting. The assessment surmised that the proposed development will not have any greater impact than the existing buildings that are located closer and which are adjacent to the Listed Buildings. The parking area proposed to the south of the site is also not considered to impact the significance of the heritage asset.
- 8.30 One of the principal policies in relation to this application is Local Development Plan Policy ESD 14: Oxford Green Belt. The Green Belt washes over the site, therefore any expansion or proposals for development in this location needs to address the Green Belt Policy in the Local Development Plan and the NPPF. Cherwell Local Plan details that the Oxford Green Belt was designed to restrain development pressures which could damage the character of Oxford City and its heritage through increased activity, traffic and the outward sprawl of the urban area. Development proposals within the Green Belt need to be assessed in accordance with government guidance contained within the NPPF. Development in the Green Belt is only permissible if the openness is retained, the other aims are not conflicted or harm the visual amenity of the locale is very minimal.
- 8.31 When assessing development in the Green Belt there is a requirement to assess the development proposals against the relevant sections of the NPPF. One of the main relevant sections of the NPPF which needs to be addressed is impact on the openness of the Green Belt as detailed in paragraph 133. Although the site relates to previously developed land in parts, it is likely that it would have a detrimental impact on the openness of the Green Belt, given the built nature of the proposals and would constitute inappropriate development as defined in paragraph 143 of the NPPF. Due to this development can only be permissible if there are demonstrated very special circumstances.
- 8.32 It is important to ascertain the extent of harm and given that the site is enclosed and within distinguishable boundaries the proposals will not lead to sprawl as defined in the NPPF, especially as it is not considered unrestricted sprawl e.g. would not lead to coalescence of settlements etc. This approach has previously

been accepted by the Local Planning Authority through the approval of similar applications within the same site.

- 8.33 As outlined in section 8.31 there is a requirement for the applicant to demonstrate very special circumstances in this instance. This is not necessarily a single “special” reason but can be a culmination of a number of reasons which are considered together to outweigh the potential damage or failure to comply with another section of Green Belt Policy.
- 8.34 The Science Park, is unique as it enables industry and academic research to work hand in hand as well as allowing commercial, research and third parties to work together. The success of the park is such that all current buildings are now occupied. There are currently waiting lists and one of the more recent buildings, the Accelerator Building was fully committed within 9 months of completion. Due to its overall success, importance and reputation, the Government allocated it £4.2 million in funding under the Oxford City Deal.
- 8.35 As such, the Local Development Plan Part 1 recognises BSP as a facility of national importance, hence Policy Kidlington 1: Accommodating High Value Employment Needs. This policy endeavours to undertake small scale local review of the Green Belt to accommodate identified high value employment needs. In doing so there is acknowledgement, as detailed with the accompanying Planning Statement that BSP is of great importance to the Oxfordshire economy, is one of the universities Key economic assets and can provide the employment and economic benefit sought through Policy Kidlington 1.
- 8.36 Policy Kidlington1 acknowledges that Kidlington, and Begbroke specifically, has an important role to play in the Districts wider employment context and that BSP has the potential to develop further to support the provisions of land for hi-tech university associated business and that can operate as a high value economic base. C.230 of the Cherwell LP acknowledges BSG as a worldwide leader in research and recognizes that the amount of scientific research continues to expand and given the location of the site has carried out the Green Belt review.
- 8.37 It is considered that the applicant has been able to demonstrate a number of special circumstances relating to the site and the proposals which, as well as considering the previous approvals for similar development under the same Local Plan Policies within the same site, allow the Local Planning Authority to look favourably upon the proposals. It is acknowledged that BSP is a key research facility for the university and that the demand for space is significant within the BSP. The Collaboration between academia and industry has clearly generated enormous success for the site itself but in doing so has positive impacts on the more general locale economically and in terms of high value employment.
- 8.38 In November 2017 the Government released a white paper entitled Industrial Strategy: Building a Britain fit for the future, which focussed mainly on building a long term strategy for economic growth. Within this paper it is recognised the importance of the Oxford-Milton Keynes-Cambridge Corridor and the importance of innovation and collaboration in research and identifies the original BSP as a key example of the innovative and technologically advanced economy that the strategy outlines, is seeking to establish. In assessing the application individually there needs to be consideration of the site in the context of the wider locale and as a key player in the Oxford “Knowledge Spine” which also includes Oxford Science Park.

- 8.39 It is acknowledged that there is both a need and a demand for expansion which has been detailed with the “Strategic Case for Renewed Outline Planning Approval at Begbroke Science Park-May 2018”. The document, from the University of Oxford, states *“The launch of a new Government Industrial Strategy, which plays to regional strengths, a step change in the exploitation of academic research, supported by Oxford Science Innovation, and maturing links with key overseas partners, offers major new opportunities for the region and the wider UK that justifies the expansion of Begbroke Science Park and demonstrates “very special circumstances” as required by the Governments National Planning Policy Framework for development in the Green Belt”*
- 8.40 As well as the existing Local Development Plan Policies and the NPPF there are other material planning considerations which should be taken into account. Currently the Cherwell Local Plan Part 1, Partial Review, has been submitted for examination. Although not adopted, the review details the release of 190 hectares of Green Belt Land, including 14.7 hectares at Begbroke Science Park. Under this proposal the existing BSP site, as well as the proposed application sites would be entirely removed from the Green Belt. The Green Belt Study report undertaken concluded that the disposal of this area of land at BSP from the Green Belt would result in low level harm to the Green Belt and its aims as detailed within the NPPF.
- 8.41 Further development, as detailed throughout the report, has long been established and supported by the Local Planning Authority. As detailed in section 2.1, the application can be viewed largely as a renewal of an earlier permission with a further 2500 square metres of floor space to accommodate research and development. Previous approvals were made on the basis of demonstrated “Very Special Circumstances”, namely accommodating and meeting high value employment needs. It is considered that there have been no material changes in site characteristics or policy which would justify departure from this recent stance. Moreover, further associated documents have been released from the Government and the Local Planning Authority, albeit not adopted in cases, which further strengthen the appellants position.
- 8.42 Paragraph 143-145 of the NPPF states that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. Substantial weight has been given to the potential harm of the Green Belt as a result of this proposal. It is acknowledged that built form will have an impact on the perceived and actual openness of the site and area generally. However, it is considered that the proposed benefits of the proposals outweigh the potential detrimental impacts. The potential for economic, employment and innovative benefits as a bi-product of the development are considerable. There are not any further adverse or harmful impacts envisaged as a result of the proposals, subject to the imposition of conditions and further details being submitted at the Reserved Matters stage. It is considered that the proposals, having being previously supported and still supported by the relevant Local Development Plan policies, recent NPPF alterations and further submitted information which can be considered as material planning considerations, ensure that the support of the application is warranted.

9 PLANNING BALANCE AND CONCLUSION

- 9.1. The proposals have been assessed against the relevant Local Development Plan, Supplementary Planning Guidance and the NPPF. The proposals are considered to demonstrate very special circumstances in terms of providing and responding to high value employment needs and it is considered that the proposals would have a beneficial economic impact on the surrounding locale. The special circumstances

were required to be shown as the development, within the Green belt, would be considered to have a detrimental impact on the openness, both perceived and actual, of the area.

- 9.2. The principle of development is considered acceptable as the proposed enlargement of the proposed footprint, further to the recently expired permissions within the same site, are not considered to cause undue harm to the character and appearance of the surrounding area or the safety of the Local Highway network.

10 **RECOMMENDATION**

That permission is granted, subject (i) a legal agreement concerning off-site transport infrastructure and (ii) conditions relating to the points detailed below. The exact conditions and the wording of those conditions are requested to be delegated to the Assistant Director for Planning Policy and Development. The conditions will cover the following;

1. Time Limit for the submission of reserved matters
2. Time limit for the commencement of development
3. Submission of full details of design, layout and external appearance of all buildings
4. Submission of a Landscape Impact Assessment
5. Submission of all details relating to hard and soft landscaping and boundary treatment.
6. Restriction on Height of buildings
7. Restriction on the uses of the buildings
8. Restriction on floor area (external measurement)
9. Submission on the retention of existing trees
10. Submission of details relating to surface water and foul sewage
11. Submission of updated Framework Travel Plan
12. Submission of a Construction Traffic Management Plan
13. Submission of details relating to required bus stops
14. Submission of details relating to cycle links.
15. Submission of parking layout and turning Area
16. Submission of details relating to Cycle Parking Provision
17. Submission in relation to the required Public Art
18. Submission relating to lighting strategy
19. Carry out in accordance with the submitted Ecological Report
20. Submission of landscape and ecological Management Plan

Conditions are likely to change/ be added to prior to the final report. Discussion are ongoing with a number of consultees and the applicant.