

MIRA Technology Park South Site

Planning Statement

Prepared on behalf of ERI MTP Limited

August 2022

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CONTENTS

1.0 INTRODUCTION 4

2.0 SITE AND SURROUNDINGS..... 7

3.0 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT 10

4.0 DEVELOPMENT PLAN 14

5.0 PLANNING ASSESSMENT 18

6.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS 35

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: EIA SCREENING OPINION

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared by Barton Willmore now Stantec, on behalf of ERI MTP Limited ("the Applicant") to assess planning matters arising from an outline planning application seeking permission for the development of new employment floorspace which is intended to complement the existing employment uses present on the MIRA Technology Park. The proposed scheme is known as the MIRA Technology Park South Site.
- 1.2 The development will take place on the area of land adjacent to the existing MIRA Technology Park, on the south side of Watling Street (A5). The extent of the Application Site boundary is outlined in Figure 1 below. The boundary includes proposed and existing road infrastructure within North Warwickshire Borough, Hinckley and Bosworth Borough and Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough.



Figure 1: Application Site Boundary

Proposed Development

- 1.3 The Application seeks Outline Planning Permission with all matters reserved. A Parameter Plan accompanies the planning application, which sets out proposed design principles for development, such as areas where buildings will be located, landscaping areas, scale and height of the buildings, proposed vehicular access points onto the A5 Watling Street and A444 Weddington Lane and the design of the proposed link road connecting these.

- 1.4 The description of development is set out below:

"Extension of MIRA Technology Park to comprise employment use (Class B2); associated office and service uses (Class Eg); storage (Class B8); new spine road; car parking, landscaping and enabling works".

- 1.5 Further details of the proposed development are set out at Section 3 of this Planning Statement, and within the Design and Access Statement.

Summary of Planning Benefits

- 1.6 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's objectives. Chief among these objectives is the need to deliver sustainable forms of development. Sustainable development aims to deliver social progress, economic wellbeing and environmental protection. Against this background, the overall benefits of this proposal are summarised below:

- ***Economic Opportunities***

The provision of a range of skilled and un-skilled jobs on-site, in local business indirectly through supply chains and through construction. The investment in the area to deliver the proposals and the business rates and expenditure of workers/visitors associated with the scheme.

- ***Social***

Opportunities for training/apprenticeships, provision of new facilities such as recreation area and improved local infrastructure and roads.

- ***Environmental***

Overall biodiversity net gain through enhanced landscaping and wildlife creation areas, and improved sustainable drainage features

- 1.7 Further assessment on each of these points is set out within the remainder of this Planning Statement, which should be read in conjunction with all other documents and drawings submitted as part of this application.

Structure of Planning Statement

- 1.8 This Planning Statement is structured as follows:

- Section 2 describes the Site and the main features of the surrounding area;
- Section 3 sets out the key components of the proposed development;
- Section 4 outlines the Development Plan context of the proposed development;

- Section 5 sets out an assessment of the proposals against the Development Plan; and
- Section 6 sets out our conclusions regarding overall appropriateness of the scheme.

Supporting Documents

1.9 This Planning Statement should be read in conjunction with all other documents and drawings submitted in support of the application, which includes:

- Completed Application Forms;
- Site Location Plan;
- Parameter Plan;
- Illustrative Masterplan;
- Landscape Strategy;
- Design and Access Statement;
- Statement of Community Engagement;
- Economic Benefits Assessment;
- Transport Statement;
- Travel Plan;
- Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy;
- Tree Survey;
- Agricultural Land Assessment
- Archaeological Impact Assessment;
- Heritage Impact Assessment;
- Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment;
- Noise Impact Assessment;
- Air Quality Impact Assessment;
- Ground Conditions Assessment;
- Ecological Assessments and Biodiversity Net Gain Calculation; and
- Energy Strategy.

1.10 Whilst it is noted that the development falls within Category 10(a) Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (noting that a detailed Environmental Impact Assessment may be required), consultation with the Local Planning Authority has concluded that the development is not likely to give rise to significant environmental effects and that the development would not constitute EIA development for the purposes of the 2017 regulations. This is confirmed by the Screening Opinion included at **Appendix 1**. On this basis, no Environmental Statement has been submitted in support of the Application.

2.0 SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

- 2.1 This section describes the Site (excluding the existing and proposed road infrastructure that forms part of the red line Application Site Boundary) and the key characteristics of the surrounding area, together with any other planning applications or developments which should be taken into consideration.

Site Context

- 2.2 The Site is approximately 59 hectares and is located to the north of Nuneaton, approximately 3.5km from the town centre and is bounded on two sides by roads, the A5 to the north and the A444 to the south.



Figure 2: Site Location

- 2.3 The Site is easily accessible via the local road network, with existing points of entry from the A5 and A444 on the northern and southern boundaries respectively. The closest bus stop is located approximately 275m to the north, and is served by the No. 65 bus route. Additional stops are located to the south-east of the Site, which are served by the Nos. 1 and 2 bus routes. The closest rail terminal is Nuneaton station, located approximately 2km to the south of the Site, which serves the Avanti West Coast, Cross Country and West Midlands Train Routes.

- 2.4 The Site lies within a rural area, punctuated with residential and commercial developments, including the MIRA Technology Park, which lies to the north of the Site, beyond Watling Street (A5) at the Site's northern boundary.
- 2.5 The Site comprises four agricultural fields. The plots are bounded by a number of mature hedgerows, trees and drainage ditches. There are a small number of residential properties located along the A444. These are excluded from the Site boundary.
- 2.6 The topography slopes gently downwards at a gradient of around 1 to 40 from the north (the A5) to the south (the A444). Ground levels vary from 78m AOD at the southern side to 92m AOD to the north, a difference of up to 14m.

MIRA Technology Park

- 2.7 The Development Proposals are based on the link between the Site and the existing MIRA Technology Park, which is located on the opposite side of the A5.
- 2.8 MIRA Technology Park is an existing employment site located outside of, but immediately adjacent to the North Warwickshire Borough Boundary. The area is allocated as part of the Hinkley and Bosworth Borough Council Site Allocations and Development Management Policies DPD as an Existing Employment Site (HIG17).
- 2.9 The MIRA Technology Park is one of the UK's leading Enterprise Zones and the headquarters for Horiba MIRA the global automotive engineering company and it's testing and development operations. With over 40 major international automotive engineering companies such as Bosch, Toyota, Haldex and Polestar, it comprises Europe's largest and fastest growing automotive Research and Development (R&D) cluster.
- 2.10 The Technology Park contains major test facilities and over 110 kilometres of test tracks, making it a world class facility and a global attraction for companies to the UK. It also supports the growing technologies in alternative fuels, electrification and autonomous technologies through recent major investment in key related assets.
- 2.11 MIRA Technology Park benefits from an existing outline planning permission, which has seen the recent campus expansion and on completion will comprise approximately 185,000 sq m of floorspace. However, the existing Technology Park development is restricted in its capacity to accommodate large scale facilities in excess of c. 15,000 sq m. The land south of the A5, provides a unique proposition to deliver large scale facilities linking directly into the existing MIRA Technology Park site.
- 2.12 It therefore provides a highly complementary opportunity for automotive and low carbon-related advanced manufacturing facilities, and benefits from the recent delivery of major power and road infrastructure investment to facilitate development. These synergistic development proposals are at the heart of the masterplan, expanding the world class technology cluster with

additional employment space, creating further economic growth and high value employment in the region.

3.0 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 3.1 This Section outlines the structure of the application, and the extent of detail that permission is being sought for.

Description of Proposed Development

- 3.2 The proposed development comprises the submission of an application seeking Outline Planning Permission for the extension of the MIRA Technology Park. The development is expected to comprise general industrial/advanced manufacturing uses (Use Class B2), with associated office (Use Class E(g)), services and storage uses (Use Class B8). The development will provide up to 213,500 sq m of new development.

- 3.3 The formal description of development reads as follows:

"Extension of MIRA Technology Park to comprise employment use (Class B2); associated office and service uses (Class Eg); storage (Class B8); new spine road; car parking, landscaping and enabling works".

- 3.4 The proposals will require the demolition of the existing buildings at Elms Farm to enable the development to proceed.

- 3.5 The proposed development includes the construction of a new spine road through the Site that will serve the new buildings and seeks to bring traffic currently using the A444 to/from Redgate Junction (on the A5) through the Site, to allow the northern section of Weddington Lane to become a local road only.

- 3.6 The following section explores each aspect of the proposed development in further detail.

The Role of the Parameters Plan

- 3.7 This Parameter Plan sets out the maximum envelope for development and identifies the following key parameters:

- Development Zones
- Structural Landscape
- Movement Infrastructure
- Maximum Heights and Floor Areas
- Removal and Retention of existing hedgerows
- Pedestrian and cycle linkages

- 3.8 The Parameter Plan is shown below at Figure 3.

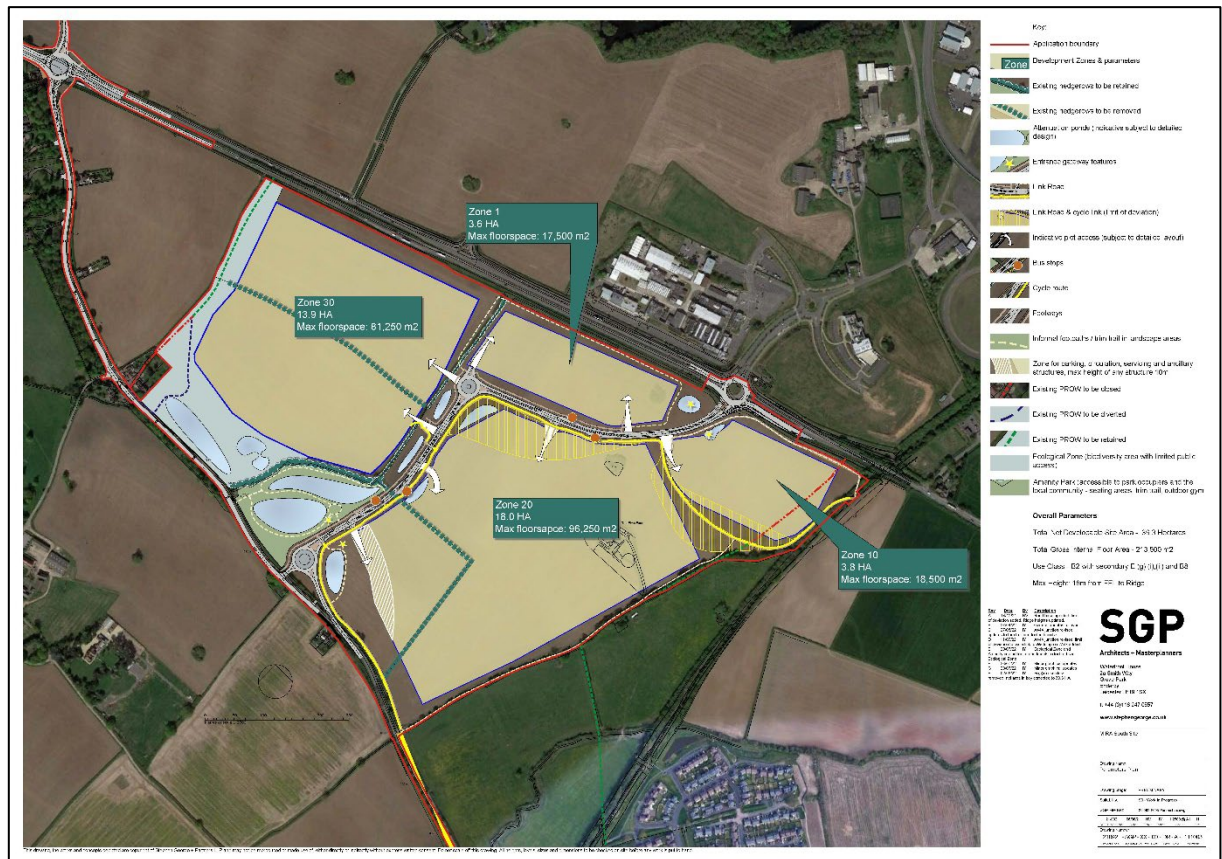


Figure 3: The Parameter Plan

3.9 Should Outline Planning Permission be granted, the Parameter Plan will form an 'approved document' which provides the overarching framework for the future development of the Site. Following the grant of Outline Planning Permission, further details of the development (e.g. precise building locations, scale, massing and detailed design) will be submitted for approval via the separate Reserved Matters process. Such details will be assessed against the approved Parameter Plan and should be in broad conformity with it.

3.10 The key development parameters are:

- A maximum of 213,500sqm (GIA) of new employment floorspace (E(g)/B2/B8) may be provided within four zones. The scale and height of potential development is limited by the plan, with a maximum height of 18m to the ridge of any roof.
- A new spine road (the redirected A444) may pass through the Site via the proposed access points. The detailed siting and design of the road should be treated as a Reserved Matter. The Parameter Plan shows the most likely route of the road and a limited area of potential deviation. This is included should Development Zone 1 need to be enlarged, and if so, Development Zone 20 would be reduced in scale accordingly.

- A new and continuous cycle route connecting the A444 with the existing cycle route which passes underneath the A5. Again, the precise route should be treated as a Reserved Matter. The most likely route is shown on the plan and a limited area of potential deviation is included within the Plan. This would enable Zone 10 to be enlarged if required.
- An area of strategic landscaping which would likely include attenuation ponds.

The Role of the Illustrative Masterplan

3.11 Throughout this application reference is also made to an Illustrative Masterplan. The Plan is shown below at Figure 4. This drawing is not a formal proposal and should not be regarded as an 'approved document'. Instead, this document provides a broad indication of what form of development could be delivered on the Site and is used to inform the assessment of potential impacts.



Figure 4: The Illustrative Masterplan

Summary

3.12 The Site represents an important opportunity to deliver a significant amount of new employment floorspace within the Borough, building upon the strengths of the existing MIRA Technology Park to the north. The following Sections will demonstrate that this Site is of

strategic importance as a site which is capable of the majority of identified need for new employment floorspace within the Borough, and that such development can be accommodated in an appropriate and acceptable manner.

4.0 DEVELOPMENT PLAN

- 4.1 This section identifies the relevant planning policies and guidance at a national and development plan level. The proposals are then assessed against these policies in Section 5 which follows.

Statutory Development Plan

- 4.2 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states that, where an adopted development plan contains relevant policies, an application for planning permission shall be determined in accordance with the plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 4.3 The Development Plan applicable to the Site comprises the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, July 2021), and the North Warwickshire Local Plan (NWLP, September 2021). The policies of particular relevance are summarised below.

National Planning Policy Framework

- 4.4 The revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published on 20 July 2021 and sets out the Government's planning policies for England, and how these are expected to be applied.
- 4.5 Paragraph 10 states that, at the heart of the NPPF, is the presumption in favour of sustainable development. In applying the presumption in favour of sustainable development, Paragraph 11 states that decision-taking should approve development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay.
- 4.6 Chapter 6 aims to build a strong and competitive economy. Paragraph 81 states that planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity. Paragraph 82 states that planning policies should set out a clear economic vision and strategy which positively and proactively encourages sustainable economic growth, having regard to Local Industrial Strategies and other local policies for economic development and regeneration. Paragraph 82 also states that planning policies should be flexible enough to accommodate needs not anticipated in the plan.

North Warwickshire Local Plan

- 4.7 The North Warwickshire Local Plan (September 2021) is the current adopted Local Plan and sets out the vision and spatial planning strategy for North Warwickshire and allocates sites for new homes and employment land to meet local community and business needs up to 2033.
- 4.8 Policy LP1 (Sustainable Development) aims to implement the NPPF's goal of sustainable development. It requires new development to be of a high quality, which is *inter alia* supported by the required infrastructure, is integrated with the natural and historic environment, is

capable of positively improving settlement character and both the appearance and quality of the surrounding environment. New development should also provide, conserve and enhance biodiversity, creating linkages between green spaces, wildlife sites and corridors.

- 4.9 Policy LP2 (Settlement Hierarchy) aims to distribute new development through a hierarchy of settlements to ensure that it is commensurate with the level, type and quality of day to day service provision, and to ensure that those services are able to absorb the level of development proposed in combination with any planned allocations or committed forms of development. The Policy categorises the Site (and others outside of the designated centres) as 'other' locations where development will not generally be acceptable. The policy states that there may be exceptions to this, and that development proposals will be considered on their own merits, having regard to other policies within the plan
- 4.10 Policy LP5 (Amount of Development) explains that, between 2011 and 2033, the Council will make provision for a minimum of 100 hectares of employment land, subject to Policy LP6.
- 4.11 Policy LP39 lists out the formal allocations for employment land, making reference to Policy E4, which allocates land to the South of MIRA Technology Park for use in connection with the neighbouring technology park. Whilst the land shown within Policy E4 is currently a greenfield site, the allocation for future development overrides any presumption against development set by Policy LP2.
- 4.12 Policy E4 is therefore the key policy which supports the principle of development in this location. It is therefore quoted, in full, below:

Policy E4 Land to the South of Horiba MIRA Technology Park and Enterprise Zone

Approximately 42 hectares will be allocated for E(g)(ii) (research and development) and B2 uses classes, with B8 (Warehousing and Distribution) uses permissible only where ancillary or clearly secondary to the primary use, to the south of the A5 at Horiba MIRA Technology Park and Enterprise Zone.

Small incubator units will be sought as part of the application.

B8 (warehousing and distribution) will not be permitted unless it is ancillary to the main use. Development will be carried out in accordance with a Master Plan to be agreed by the Borough Council. The Master Plan will include:

- A) An assessment will be required of the significance of heritage assets and non-heritage assets within and close to the site including the contribution of setting to that significance, with particular reference to Caldecote and Watling Street, to inform appropriate design of development on site. Development should, as far as practicable, ensure that those assets are preserved or enhanced in line with policy LP15.
- B) The Master Plan, to be agreed by the Borough Council, will include:
 - 1. The provision of sustainable transport measures including a cycle and footpath link along the A5 to Atherstone and Mancetter; and

2. Access to the cycle/pedestrian route to the south east of the site;
3. A significant landscape buffer to the southern and south eastern boundaries of the site;
4. Means to maximise on site solar energy generation;
5. Means of controlling lighting and in particular to minimise impact on Caldecote; and
6. The location and type of any small incubator units.

- 4.13 This allocation helps to meet the aims of Policy LP11 (Economic Regeneration), which states that the delivery of employment generating uses should reflect the need to broaden the employment base, improve employment choice and opportunities for local people.
- 4.14 Policy LP6 (Additional Employment Land) states that significant weight will be given in decision taking to supporting new economic growth and productivity, particularly where evidence demonstrates an immediate need for employment land, or a certain type of employment land, which cannot be met by forecast supply or allocations. The purpose of the policy is to recognise that locational requirements of certain employment uses (and the economic benefits that can be associated with them) may outweigh any harm brought about by the development of the land.
- 4.15 Policy LP14 (Landscape) aims to accommodate new development where it conserves, enhances and, where appropriate, restores landscape character. It states that new development should, as far as possible, retain existing trees, hedgerows and nature conservation features, and should be designed so that new and existing conservation features are allowed to grow to maturity without causing undue problems, or to be unacceptably compromised by the development.
- 4.16 Similarly, Policy LP16 (Natural Environment) aims to recognise the importance of the natural environment, and to protect and enhance it. The policy seeks to minimise impacts on, and provide net gains for, biodiversity where possible.
- 4.17 Policy LP33 (Water and Flood Risk Management) requires new development proposals to avoid detrimental impacts on the ecological status of waterbodies and, where appropriate, incorporate measures to improve ecological value. It requires all proposals to consider the potential implications of new development on flood risk, both on and off the Site.
- 4.18 LP17 (Green Infrastructure) requires development proposals to, where appropriate, demonstrate how they contribute towards the strategically planned Green Infrastructure network. It states that, where an existing asset is lost or adversely affected, and where

mitigation of compensatory infrastructure cannot be provided on site, contributions will be sought towards wider Green Infrastructure projects and improvements.

- 4.19 Policy LP15 (Historic Environment) aims to conserve or enhance the quality, character, diversity and local distinctiveness of the historic environment. It states that great weight will be given to the conservation of the Borough's designated heritage assets and that any harm to the significance of a heritage asset should require clear and convincing justification with regard to the public benefits of the proposal.
- 4.20 LP23 (Transport Assessments) requires developments to assess the potential traffic and parking implications of new development, including an assessment of potential cumulative impacts as a result of other committed development in the vicinity of a development proposal. Travel Plans are also required to link new development with existing road, cycle and footpath networks. Policy LP26 (Strategic Road Improvements A5) also aims to assess the need for financial contributions towards the dualling of the A5 carriageway. This is supported by Policy LP34 (Parking), which requires development proposals to be adequately served by parking provision which is commensurate to the scale of development proposed.
- 4.21 Policy LP27 (Walking and Cycling) requires new development to consider what improvements can be made to encourage safe and fully accessible walking and cycling. It states that developments will be encouraged to establish and promote responsible access to the natural environment.
- 4.22 In assessing design parameters and details, Policy LP29 (Development Considerations) requires new development to comply with the principles of sustainable development. The policy includes a variety of assessment criteria, which includes *inter alia* the optimisation of land use, the promotion of healthier and active lifestyles, the promotion of sustainable transport, the protection of residential amenity, and resilience to and minimisation of potential impacts from climate change. Policy LP35 (Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency) requires new development to be energy efficient and to include, where viable, the production of 10% of operational energy from on-site renewables.
- 4.23 Policy LP30 (Built Form) sets out assessment criteria regarding the layout, form and density of new development, as well as its detailed design. This includes the consideration of views into and out of the site, the use of appropriate materials, the connection of new and existing development, and the creation of safe, secure and low crime environments.
- 4.24 Having noted the planning policy context to the application proposals, the next Section 5 assesses how the development accords with it.

5.0 PLANNING ASSESSMENT

5.1 This section assesses the proposed development against the relevant aspects of national planning policies and the Development Plan identified in Section 4. It draws upon the extensive analysis that has been undertaken during the planning application preparation and the evolution of the design as set out in the accompanying Design and Access Statement.

Key Issues

5.2 It is considered that the key planning issues associated with the proposed development are as follows:

- The principle of the development, land uses and scale (particularly given the encroachment into land outside of Policy E4);
- Design and Layout considerations;
- Transport Accessibility and Sustainability;
- Visual Impact and Amenity Considerations;
- Pollution and Contamination;
- Flood Risk and Drainage;
- Ecological Impact and Biodiversity Net Gain;
- Energy and Sustainability;
- Heritage and Archaeological Impact; and
- The amount of public benefits arising from the proposed development.

Principle of Development

5.3 This section considers whether it is appropriate, in planning terms, to develop the Site for employment purposes, and justifies the broad siting and scale of the development proposed.

Existing Site Allocation

5.4 Chapter 14 of the Local Plan formally allocates several parcels of land for future development. These sites have been identified as suitable for a specific type of development and are intended to meet a wider strategic need within the Borough. Table 8 of the Local Plan identifies a need for 57.35 hectares of employment land across the Borough.

5.5 A total of four sites were allocated through Policy LP39 of the Local Plan. These include three smaller sites (E1, E2 and E3) which each provide between 3 and 7 hectares of employment land. The Site represents the fourth and largest allocated site, E4, which aims to provide 42 hectares of new employment floorspace. Site E4 has been allocated due to the link it shares with the existing MIRA Technology Park to the north and therefore the potential for development to generate a range of highly skilled as well as medium and lower-skilled jobs.

- 5.6 The principle of development within this allocated area is therefore acceptable, subject to assessment against the criteria of Policy E4 and all other relevant aspects of the Development Plan. These points will be discussed below.

Additional Land Required

- 5.7 Given the strategic importance of the Site, the development proposals have been prepared to deliver the [approximately] 42 hectares of employment land required by Policy E4 and deliver the maximum economic and other benefits sought. This includes *inter alia* the need to provide sustainable transport measures (Policy E4(B)(1)), and a significant landscape buffer to the southern and eastern boundaries of the Application Site (Policy E4(B)(2)).
- 5.8 The Site E4 boundary does not anticipate the need to provide a new spine road through the Site of a size capable to redirecting the A444 through the allocation onto the A5. To achieve this and provide the public benefits of downgrading the northern section of Weddington Lane into a local road, the design process has concluded that additional land will be required to deliver the scale of development required by Policy E4 and the requirements set out in that policy.
- 5.9 The boundary of the Site therefore extends south beyond the boundary of Site Allocation E4. The inclusion of this additional land increases the site area to 59 hectares. However, the additional land is required predominantly to accommodate the spine road and landscaping infrastructure reasonably required to implement the amount of employment floorspace envisaged by the Local Plan, and the development proposals remain within these parameters.

Loss of Agricultural Land

- 5.10 In considering whether the principle of development should be supported across the larger Site, it is important to consider the value of the agricultural land being lost.
- 5.11 The Site has been used for agricultural use for as long as historic maps and records have existed. The current land use is arable farming split between two landowners; the Williams family and the ENSOR Trust.
- 5.12 Although the Local Plan aims to protect the countryside from a broad perspective, there are no specific policies regarding the potential loss of agricultural land. Paragraph 174 of the NPPF aims to protect sites of geographical value and soils in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality within the development plan. The overall aim within the NPPF is to protect the best and most versatile agricultural land (Grades 1, 2 and 3a).
- 5.13 An Agricultural Land Assessment has been produced by Terra Firma and is submitted in support of this application. This assessment finds that the area is predominantly heavy clay Grade 3 under Agricultural Land Classification (and felt to be at the lower 3B end of the quality spectrum by those who farm it).

- 5.14 Accordingly, there would only be a minor adverse effect on the area's quantity and quality of agricultural land as a result of the loss of agricultural land in the Site. On this basis, the proposed loss of agricultural land is deemed to be acceptable in planning terms.

Summary

- 5.15 The Proposed Development delivers the intended [approximately] 42 hectares of employment land on the Site sought from the Local Plan to help meet the overall needs of the Borough. As the largest and most significant employment allocation, it is essential that the development optimises the use of the land and achieves the full potential of the Site Allocation. This approach helps not only to deliver employment opportunities and economic benefits within this area, but also eases the pressure to provide additional windfall (unplanned) employment land elsewhere within the Borough.
- 5.16 The following sections of this Planning Statement demonstrate that the Application Site includes only the minimum of amount of additional land needed to achieve these policy objectives, and that the development can be integrated into the site and surrounding area with minimal harm with no significant adverse impacts upon the surrounding environment. With this in mind, the development is compliant with Policy LP39 and delivers the requirements of Policy E4 and the principle of development should therefore be supported.

Design and Layout

- 5.17 The planning application is accompanied by a Design and Access Statement that sets out the design strategy of the proposals and the evolution of the design as it has responded to constraints and consultation responses.
- 5.18 The design strategy follows a clear objective to provide the opportunity for manufacturing activity. The MIRA Technology Park and its associated testing facilities is a centre for research and development of automotive and low carbon technologies but, presently, there is no ability for companies to grow and progress and manufacture products at the MIRA Technology Park given the lack of available space for larger buildings.
- 5.19 This context means that the design proposals seek to allow larger buildings of c40,000 sq m to 100,000 sq m to be delivered.
- 5.20 To achieve this larger scale of building the spine road has been designed to run through the centre of the Site. This also allows the retention of the existing drainage channel and field hedgerow boundaries that run north to south in this central area.
- 5.21 The realignment of the spine road along the eastern boundary would not allow the same scale of buildings to be provided, with a large proportion of the eastern area of the Site unable to accommodate development beyond the road itself.

- 5.22 The design strategy is shown within the Illustrative Masterplan. However, to provide flexibility to design buildings for prospective occupiers based on their requirements, the planning application proposals seek permission for design parameters at this stage. These parameters include development zones (with maximum floorspace of buildings that can be provided totalling 113,500 sq m); the alignment of the spine road; a maximum height of buildings of 18m; required infrastructure improvements such as cycle/pedestrian connections and road/junction enhancements; and landscaping and drainage areas.
- 5.23 The landscape areas include mounding that assist with screening of the buildings from key views from surrounding properties and all surrounding residential properties are at least 100 m away from proposed buildings. The recreational component of the landscaped area to the south west has also been contained around the spine road junction, with the area closest to the residential properties around the Caldecote Village Hall proposed for wildlife planting that will help in ensuring biodiversity net gain is provided across the Site. The existing public footpath running alongside the village hall is also proposed to be rerouted within the Site to provide more security to these properties and address the fear of crime from increased public use.
- 5.24 The need to provide for large buildings on Site has to a large extent informed the design parameters of the scheme. However, the consideration of views into and out of the Site has guided the resulting provision of large landscaping areas to screen views and soften the development; together with new cycle/pedestrian connections demonstrates compliance with the requirements of Policy LP27, LP29 and LP30. Furthermore, the proposals seek to reroute A444 through the Site allowing the northern section of Weddington Lane to be downgraded to a local road for the residents of Caldecote. This is considered as major design benefit that will be delivered by the proposals.

Transport Accessibility and Sustainability

- 5.25 Policy LP23 requires new development to assess the potential traffic and parking implications of new development. This policy is complemented by Policy LP27 which aims to promote sustainable modes of transport.
- 5.26 This Section outlines the constraints and opportunities presented by the Site and the scope of any highway works needed to accommodate the Proposed Development, before considering whether there are any residual impacts which may require further mitigation. This Section should be read in conjunction with Transport Assessment and Travel Plan submitted in support of this Application.
- 5.27 As noted previously, the planning application seeks Outline Planning Permission with all matters reserved. The Parameter Plans submitted as part of this application shows some additional details of access (namely the spine road passing through the Site and the points of access onto

the A5 and A444). The precise placement of the Spine Road through the Site is a 'reserved matter' which will need to be approved via a separate Reserved Matters application.

Site Access

- 5.28 The scale and form of the MIRA Technology Park South Site development is such that it has the potential to generate both light vehicle movement (i.e., cars / vans) as well as heavy goods vehicle movement throughout the day, primarily during weekdays. The vehicular access strategy therefore seeks to deliver the most efficient movement of vehicles between the Site and the surrounding road network.
- 5.29 The primary access to the development is based around the construction of a fourth arm with a flared two-lane approach to the southern side of the existing MIRA Roundabout on the A5 Watling Street. The Site will be provided with a left slip from the A5 (east) to the A5-A444 link road. Additionally, and as part of the Site access proposals, increased entry widths will be provided on both the A5 (east) and A5 (west) arms of the roundabout.
- 5.30 The geometric design of the existing MIRA roundabout is such that it can be easily adapted to accommodate the DMRB requirements for a full access road in place of the existing field access track that can accommodate the anticipated volumes of light vehicles and HGVs without requiring any departures from the required standard.

Alterations to the A444

- 5.31 A new 3-arm roundabout will be constructed on the A444 Weddington Lane to the south-east of Caldecote, providing a second primary access to the Site. As part of the construction of the second primary access, the A444 Weddington Lane will be diverted from its existing alignment just south-east of Nos. 17/18 Weddington Lane, providing an opportunity to contain these properties south of the A444 and served via a new separated access road.
- 5.32 The realignment of the A444 and positioning of the roundabout form part of the proposal to direct all through traffic along the A444 corridor to use the A5-A444 spine road, facilitating the downgrading of Weddington Lane to a local access road.
- 5.33 The downgrading of the existing section of Weddington Lane between the Site access roundabout and the Redgate junction to a local access road will be supported by a package of traffic calming / management measures to redirect through traffic away from Caldecote village.

Traffic Generation

- 5.34 The Transport Assessment considers the impact of the proposals on the road network. It concludes that some road improvements are required to accommodate the proposals. This includes the proposed improvement to the Redgate junction that forms part of the application proposals and involves the replacement of the existing elongated roundabout with a larger

traditional roundabout with increased entry widths. These proposals will represent a significant benefit to the road network and remove an existing pinch point on the network which gives rise to a degree of 'rat running' around the network, including through villages such as Fenny Drayton.

- 5.35 Other road improvements, such as improvements to the A5 Drayton lane and Woodford Lane junctions, are noted in the Transport Assessment and will be delivered in phases as the proposed development is delivered.

Promoting Sustainable Modes of Transport

- 5.36 Access to public transport will be improved through collaboration with the bus operator, Arriva Midlands, and the WCC Passenger Transport Operation team to instigate the diversion of Service 65 via the new spine road within the development as part of its route between Tamworth and Nuneaton via Atherstone and MIRA Technology Park.
- 5.37 The intention is to restore a 30-min frequency on Service 65 on weekdays on the core element of the route between Atherstone and Nuneaton. The phased introduction of the revised Service 65 bus service will be linked with the phased build programme within the MIRA Technology Park South Site development
- 5.38 Within the MIRA Technology Park South Site development additional bus stop infrastructure will be provided with the phased construction of the new spine road linking the A5 to the A444. The bus stop infrastructure will incorporate wide footways at bus stops, passenger waiting facilities, flag, timetable and mapping, provision of infrastructure to enable real-time information (RTPI), low-floor kerbs and bus cage markings. The RTPI will also be incorporated into accessible locations within each of the building units.
- 5.39 In addition, the proposals include new cycle and pedestrian link enhancements, including a new footway along Weddington Lane and cycle links into the Weddington Walk and back to Nuneaton.
- 5.40 The Framework Travel Plan accompanying the planning application sets targets that seeks to reduce the amount of single use vehicle trips to less than 67% in 3 years and double the amount of cycle and public transport trips.

Summary

- 5.41 Based on the findings contained within the Transport Assessment, the proposed development is capable of accommodating the proposed development and avoiding any residual impacts upon the surrounding highway network both as a result of the proposed development individually, and when considered cumulatively with other anticipated development in the area. It can therefore be concluded that the Proposed Development is compliant with Policy LP23 and LP27.

Visual Impact

- 5.42 Based upon the development parameters outlined above, this Section identifies the key areas of landscape sensitivity and assesses the potential impacts of the proposed development. This Section should be read in conjunction with the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) submitted in support of this Application.

Policy Context

- 5.43 Policy LP14 requires development proposals within landscape character areas as defined in the Landscape Character Assessment (2010); Arden Landscape Guidelines (1993) and the Historic Landscape Characterisation Project (June 2010) to conserve, enhance and where appropriate, restore landscape character.

Existing Visibility

- 5.44 The LVIA notes that the Site is most visible from the north with the higher ground south of the Site forming a backdrop (i.e. some form of development could be accommodated on the Site without necessarily protruding above the horizon line, when viewed from this area).
- 5.45 Further analysis of the Site and surrounding area establishes a Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) which is used to identify potential views of the Site and proposed development. A total of 13 view points were identified.
- 5.46 Based on this analysis, the key sensitivities, constraints, and opportunities identified in the LVIA baseline study are:
- Inter-visibility from Caldecote should be carefully considered to ensure potential effects on the heritage assets are mitigated.
 - Long distance views from sensitive receptors in Hartshill Country Park should be considered and mitigation should be included where possible.
 - Existing drainage ditches and hedges should be retained and protected where possible.
 - Any development should consider the impact on the users of the A5 and the effects of the traffic noise on the potential users of the site.
 - Weddington Country Walk is a well-used and therefore highly sensitive landscape and visual receptor. Careful steps should be taken to avoid any potential negative effects on the users.
 - Any development should consider a large landscape buffer to the south of the Site which could include ponds for ecological benefit, utilising the lowest part of the site.

- Where possible, any development on the Site should work with the existing landform and any spoil from excavation is utilised on the site in the form of bunds.

Assessment of Impact

- 5.47 The LVIA concludes that the Site is broadly representative of the wider landscaping character, which is largely agricultural in nature with urbanising influences stemming from the A5 travel corridor. Through the iterative design process the development proposals have sought to integrate with this existing landscape character as far as is reasonably possible, maintaining the north/south field boundaries and drainage link through the centre of the Site.
- 5.48 A crucial factor in the LVIA assessment is that the landscape buffers and screening which form part of the proposed development will take some time to become established. With this in mind, the assessment considers potential adverse impacts in the short term after the development of the Site (years 0-10) and in the long term (after 10 years).
- 5.49 The assessment demonstrates that, whilst the proposed development will be visible (and somewhat prominent) in the short term, the development will be screened over time and, in the long term, the most significant impacts are limited to views from the A5 footpath and from a small number of private houses, mainly those along the southern boundary of the Site.
- 5.50 The development implements appropriate conservation and enhancement measures whilst also delivering the economic benefits sought by the Site Allocation set out at Policy E4. On this basis the proposals are considered compliant with Policy LP14.

Amenity Considerations

- 5.51 The proposed siting, scale and potential massing of the Proposed Development has been subject to an iterative design process which aims to achieve the optimum use of the Site whilst avoiding and/or minimising any potential impacts upon the amenity of any sensitive land uses in the surrounding area. This Section provides an overview and assessment of the potential impacts of the proposed development.
- 5.52 Policy LP29 requires new development to avoid unacceptable impacts upon neighbouring amenities through overlooking, overshadowing, noise, light, air quality or other pollution. This criteria is used as a framework for this assessment below.

Overlooking and Overshadowing

- 5.53 At its closet point, the development plots will be located no less than 100m from the nearest residential property. Taking this distance, and the relevant maximum height parameter of 18m (taken from the Parameter Plan), it is deemed unlikely that the development of the Site would lead to any overshadowing upon neighbouring residential properties. The detailed design

process (through the Reserved Matters process) can also be used to minimise any potential overlooking from the development into neighbouring properties. The level of risk, based on the parameter plans and the illustrative masterplan, is deemed to be negligible. The development is therefore compliant with Policy LP29 in this respect.

Noise

- 5.54 This section has been informed by the Baseline Environmental Noise Level Survey Report and the separate Noise Impact Assessment Report, both produced by AIRO. Although the precise amount and location of any noise generating activity is to be determined at the Reserved Matters Stage, this assessment considers the potential impacts arising from the Illustrative Masterplan, which is deemed to be an appropriate reflection of a potential 'worst case' scenario in noise terms.
- 5.55 The baseline assessments found that ambient noise is generated predominantly by vehicular road traffic moving along Watling Street (A5) and Weddington Lane (A444). This background noise is present both on the Site and when measured from existing residential neighbourhoods and properties in the surrounding area. Using this data, the Noise Impact Assessment considers the potential impacts arising from (1) the temporary construction phase of development, and (2) the permanent and ongoing operational phase of the completed development.
- 5.56 The report concludes that the construction phase of development could potentially have an adverse impact upon the amenity of the surrounding area, but mitigation measures such as controlled working hours and acoustic barriers would assist in ensuring impact is reduced.
- 5.57 Once completed, the operational phase of the development could generate some adverse impacts in the short term (as a result of the development, and the reduced effectiveness of any newly planted landscape buffers), but such impacts are expected to reduce to a negligible impact over the longer term (after the proposed landscaping buffer matures).
- 5.58 Given that the impacts associated with the proposed development can be controlled and mitigated to acceptable levels in the long term (and appropriate mitigation and control measures can be implemented in the interim), the proposals are not considered to give rise to any unacceptable noise impacts and are therefore considered to be compliant with Policy LP29.

Light

- 5.59 The potential impacts of lighting and light spillage will be dependent upon the final and detailed design of the development. Such details are not provided as part of this application for Outline Planning Permission and will instead be put forward for approval at the Reserved Matters stage.

Air Quality

- 5.60 This section has been informed by the Air Quality Assessment produced by Air Quality Consultants. The assessment considers the impacts of the proposed development on local air quality in terms of dust and particulate matter, drawing a distinction between construction and operational phases of development.
- 5.61 The report notes that the potential impacts generated during the construction phase of development can be managed, controlled and mitigated against in such a way that they pose no significant risk to the wider area. With regard to the operational phase of development, the report concludes that pollutant concentrations will remain below the relevant objective thresholds, and that the proposed development will have only a negligible impact upon air quality.
- 5.62 Overall, the report concludes that the proposed development will not have a significant detrimental effect on air quality, and that the development can therefore be deemed compliant with Policy LP29.

Pollution and Contamination

- 5.63 Other notable forms of pollution may be based within the ground, which may pose a risk to future users of the Site, or to neighbouring land uses. To assess the potential implications, this section has been informed by the Preliminary Risk Assessment produced by Waterman Infrastructure and Environment Ltd. This report is a desk-based study which can be supported by further on-site investigations, if any significant risk is identified.
- 5.64 The report concludes that there is only some [small] potential for contamination to be present on the existing site:
- Potential for vapour risk to future Site users and structures from current and historical contamination sources, such as the existing oil tank at The Elms Farm, historical railway line and electrical substation;
 - Potential for future site users to come into contact with potential unrecorded ground contamination in areas where soft landscaping is proposed;
 - Potential for construction workers to come into contact with potential ground contamination in shallow soils during redevelopment of the Site, or potential asbestos during demolition of The Elms Farm; and
 - Potential for the chemical properties within natural soils beneath the Site to cause a chemical attack to future buried structures and services.

- 5.65 Based upon these limited risks, the report identifies a strategy for further investigations and mitigation which can be carried out should Outline Planning Permission be granted. These investigations would be secured by way of a Planning Condition. On this basis, it can be concluded that the overall risk is low and manageable, and that the scheme is therefore compliant with Policy LP29.

Flood Risk and Drainage Strategy

- 5.66 Policy LP33 requires development to effectively manage site drainage and flood risk. To inform this assessment, a Flood Risk Assessment and Outline Drainage Strategy has been prepared by Waterman Infrastructure and Environment Limited.
- 5.67 The report concludes that the Site is at a low risk of flooding from tidal, pluvial, fluvial, groundwater and artificial sources. Whilst the report notes that the Site is bisected by a watercourse, it concludes that the Environment Agency's surface water mapping does not accurately represent the watercourse and as such, overestimates the risk of flooding in this location. Calculations show that the watercourse has sufficient capacity to manage a rare 1 in 100 year event, and that it remains resilient even when an allowance for climate change is included. The report concludes that the Site is at a low risk of flooding and that this risk will not be increased as a result of the proposed drainage strategy.
- 5.68 On this basis, compliance with Policy LP33 can be assured, and any further details of the proposed drainage strategy can be provided through the Reserved Matters process.

Ecology and Biodiversity Net Gain Calculation

- 5.69 Policy LP1 requires development to provide, conserve and enhance biodiversity. This is supported by Policy LP14 which requires development to retain existing trees, hedgerows and nature conservation features as much as is reasonably possible. This Section assesses the impacts of the Proposed Development against these ecological assets, and against any existing and potential wildlife utilising the Site.
- 5.70 The planning application is accompanied by a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and various species-specific Survey Reports all of which have been produced by Middlemarch Environmental. A Biodiversity Net Gain assessment has also been prepared to support the development proposals.

Ecology

- 5.71 A summary of the ecological reports is provided below.

Great Crested Newt

Evidence of Great Crested Newts was observed on the Site. Various recommendations have been made, including the need to obtain the appropriate licenses prior to commencing any

site clearance or construction work, and to provide mitigation through the provision of a number of additional ponds and semi-natural habitat on the Site, which has been incorporated into the design proposals.

Badger

No evidence of Badgers was observed on the Site. As such, no further survey work or mitigation measures are required.

Bats

Two types of survey have been carried out – Bat Roosting and Bat Activity Surveys. The reports found evidence of both bat roosting and activity on the Site. Various recommendations are made, including the need to gain the appropriate licences prior to any demolition work, retain the existing trees and hedgerows where possible, enhance roosting potential through the provision of new bat boxes, and to minimise the impact of any lighting proposed.

Breeding Birds

The PEA and survey work has observed a large number of birds and potentially breeding birds using the Site. Various recommendations have been made to reduce any risk or impact, including the installation of new nest boxes, improvements to the landscaping of the area (including the planting of native species) and the implementation of a maintenance schedule which should take place outside of the bird nesting seasons.

Reptiles

No evidence of Reptiles was observed on Site. As such, no further survey work or mitigation measures are required.

- 5.72 Overall, the Proposed Development can be implemented in a way which minimises any potential impact to biodiversity (e.g. through the phasing of works) and can enhance the amount and quality of potential habitats on the Site (e.g. through landscaping improvements). Such improvements are expected to increase the overall amount of Biodiversity present on the Site (see below), in light of the emerging requirements to demonstrate a clear and numerical gain in biodiversity.

Biodiversity Net Gain

- 5.73 The recent Environment Act 2021 introduced a requirement for new developments to demonstrate a 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) albeit the introduction of secondary legislation is required in order for the BNG requirement to come into full force.
- 5.74 This notwithstanding, the proposals have been prepared in the context of this new requirement and a BNG calculation has also been submitted in support of this planning application.
- 5.75 In assessing BNG, it is important to note that the proposals are in outline form, with subsequent details of the design and layout of the development to be determined at a later date, through the Reserved Matters process. This means that not all details of the replacement landscaping are known at this point in time, and as such the assessment may not represent the full gain which can be achieved on the Site. Nonetheless, the calculation shows that 10% BNG can be achieved as part of the development proposals.

Summary

- 5.76 The assessments submitted as part of this Outline Planning Permission confirm that the development is capable of avoiding any unacceptable impacts through Natural England Licence mitigation measures or reprovision of habitats. Biodiversity Net Gain can be delivered as part of the development as well. The proposed development is therefore considered to be compliant with Policies LP1 and LP14.

Energy and Sustainability Strategy

- 5.77 Policy LP29 requires new development to comply with the principles of sustainable development, including measures to minimise the potential impacts of climate change. This aim is supported by Policy LP35, which requires the production of 10% of site operational energy to come from renewable sources, where possible. Accordingly, an Energy Strategy has been prepared by Hoare Lea in support of the application.
- 5.78 The Energy Strategy explains that a 'fabric first' approach will be taken, aiming to achieve the highest levels of energy efficiency within the building fabric of the buildings.
- 5.79 A baseline energy demand has been calculated to identify the total amount of renewable energy which might be required to meet the requirements of Policy LP35. These calculations suggest that a total of 9,822.79 KWh of energy will be needed to support the proposed use of the Site each year. The report concludes that, based on the indicative plans put forward at this time, the development can generate the 10% of this requirement on Site using renewable sources of energy such as photovoltaics. The development can therefore be compliant with Policy LP29, subject to the detailed design of development which will be assessed through the Reserved Matters process.

Heritage and Archaeological Considerations

Archaeology

- 5.80 An archaeological desk-based assessment has been carried out by University of Leicester Archaeological Services, together with a geophysical survey.
- 5.81 The Historic Environment Record for Warwickshire and the Historic Environment Record for Leicestershire and Rutland indicate that there are several known archaeological sites in the vicinity.
- 5.82 The Site lies outside the medieval village cores of Caldecote and Weddington in the agricultural hinterland of the village of Caldecote. There is evidence of ridge and furrow earthworks nearby, although none are obvious within the Site itself, probably due to long term ploughing.
- 5.83 Therefore, there is moderate to high potential for prehistoric and Roman remains and low to moderate potential for medieval and post- medieval remains within the assessment area.
- 5.84 Further intrusive works will be undertaken on the Site and a Working Scheme of Investigation (WSI) is proposed to capture and record any interesting archaeological findings during the construction period.

Built Heritage

- 5.85 The proposals will involve the demolition of the small farm complex on the Site (Elms Farm). This group of buildings does not appear in the Historic Environment Records or any established Local List. However, it does appear on the historic OS maps from the 19th century. Whilst built form appears on the map, the current footprint differs, suggesting the buildings on Site have been heavily altered and their demolition is not considered to result in heritage harm.
- 5.86 There are a number of built heritage assets in Caldecote, including the Church of St Theobald and St Chad and Caldecote Hall and Garden. The Site does not contribute to how the assets are experienced as part of a Victorian Country Estate and church. The Site simply forms part of the wider agricultural landscape.
- 5.87 Furthermore, there are limited intervening views between the assets and the Site as a result of the enclosed character, intervening landscape and built form. The landscaping set out in the development proposals also creates a meaningful buffer, such that the proposed development will be additionally screened.
- 5.88 Accordingly, subject to detailed design, materiality and landscape details that will be considered at Reserved Matters stage, it is concluded in the accompanying Heritage Statement that the proposed development would result in no harm to the setting and thereby significance of the group of heritage assets around Caldecote Hall. For the reasons set out in this report, the proposals are therefore considered meet the statutory tests of the 1990 Act and fulfil the

local and national policy requirements of Policies LP15 Historic Environment and LP39 and Chapter 16 of the NPPF.

Public Benefits of the Proposed Development

- 5.89 Public benefits form a key part of the planning system. Section 2 of the NPPF explains that the very purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of 'sustainable development' and that there should be a strong presumption in favour of such development. The NPPF identifies three overarching objectives which contribute towards the achievement of Sustainable Development which aim to deliver economic, social and environmental benefits.
- 5.90 This Section identifies the key public benefits which should be regarded as material planning considerations and should weigh in favour of the proposal. These benefits are grouped and summarised in accordance with these objectives:

Economic Benefits

- The scheme will generate a significant number of new job opportunities on-site, including up to 774 temporary opportunities bought about by the construction phase of development, and up to 2,500 opportunities offered via the completed development.
- Further job opportunities will also be generated off-site, including up to 751 opportunities during the construction phase of the development, and up to 3,250 opportunities once complete.
- The construction phase of development will have a significant and positive effect upon the local economy, contributing up to £468.40m in Gross Value Added (GVA) over the 5-7 year construction period.
- Furthermore, once completed scheme will add £353.80m GVA to the local economy each year.
- The completed scheme will also help to support local public services by contributing up to £5.10m in Business Rates each year.

Social Benefits

- The scheme will deliver opportunities for training/apprenticeships associated with the initiatives across the MIRA Technology Park and the MIRA Training Institute.
- The completed scheme will include the provision of new facilities such as the new recreation area and improved local infrastructure and roads.

Environmental Benefits

- The scheme will deliver extensive green infrastructure through the Site, retaining many existing landscape features and helping to create new and sustainable habitats.
- A large area of publicly accessible open space will be provided, which helps to provide links to the green network of the wider area.
- Sustainable building techniques will be utilised.
- Sustainable modes of transport will be encouraged, with links between the existing and proposed parts of the MIRA Technology Park linked by new footpaths, cycle links and shuttle services, and links to the wider settlement hierarchy provided through improved public transport links.

Overall compliance with Policy E4

5.91 Notwithstanding the departure from the defined area within the Local Plan, the development proposals can be seen to comply with Policy E4 in that:

- Approximately 42 hectares for new employment floorspace is provided;
- The employment uses proposed are primarily B2 use (General Industrial) with a flexible mixture of secondary land uses including Research and Development and Offices (Class Eg) and Warehousing and Distribution (Class B8), which complements the Research and Development focus and function of the adjacent MIRA Technology Park, providing the opportunity for companies to develop and deliver their products to the mass market.
- Small incubator units are being provided concurrently within the MIRA Technology Park (in the original MIRA buildings fronting the A5) opposite the Site.
- Class B8 use (warehouse and distribution) is sought only as a secondary use and any planning permission can be conditioned accordingly.
- The Parameter Plan to be approved as part of this Outline Planning Application shall, in effect, act as the overarching Master Plan required by Policy E4. This Master Plan (together with its supporting documents and illustrative masterplan) demonstrates that the potential impact of the development upon designated and non-designated heritage assets is not significant and can be managed to the extent that there will be no long-term or residual harm upon such assets (subject to detailed design considerations).

- A range of sustainable transport measures can be delivered as part of the development, to promote the use of walking, cycling and public transport, and to improve the overall suitability of the existing highway network through the rerouting and improvement of the A444.
- Access to the existing cycle and pedestrian route to the southeast of the Site is improved, delivering benefits to employees of the existing and proposed employment floorspace, and to the wider public.
- A significant landscape buffer is provided to the southern and eastern boundaries of the site, providing adequate separation from nearby residential areas, providing visual screening, ecological and environmental benefits.
- An energy strategy is proposed that includes providing at least 10% of energy used in the buildings via photovoltaics (thereby maximising solar energy generation).
- The siting of the Proposed Development, in relation to the landscaping buffers, provides natural mitigation against any light spillage from the site to the nearby settlement of Caldecote. Further assessment and mitigation measures can be secured through the Reserved Matters process.
- The employment floorspace to be provided as part of this development is consistent with the wider function of the neighbouring MIRA Technology Park, and is capable of providing a range of unit sizes. Incubator units (as noted above) for small and emerging businesses are being provided alongside this planning application in the old MIRA buildings fronting the A5 opposite the Site.

5.92 It is on this basis that we consider that outline planning application accords with the objectives of Policy E4 and Planning Permission should be granted.

6.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared by Barton Willmore, now Stantec, on behalf of ERI MTP Limited to assess the planning matters arising from an application seeking Outline Planning Permission for the development of new employment floorspace at the land south of Watling Street (A5) ("the Site").
- 6.2 The proposed development will give rise to a number of substantial economic, social and environmental benefits, which are supported by the NPPF, and constitute a sustainable form of development under the terms of Paragraph 11 of the NPPF.
- 6.3 Whilst it is recognised that the proposed development encroaches beyond the Policy E4 Site Allocation boundary, it is considered that the proposals are justified by the overall need for additional employment uses in this area, the absence of any significant adverse impacts brought about by the development (See Section 5), and the substantial public benefits highlighted within this Planning Statement.
- 6.4 Accordingly, it is concluded that the outline planning application accords with the objectives of planning policy and should be granted planning permission.

APPENDIX 1 EIA SCREENING OPINION



North Warwickshire
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This matter is being dealt with by :
Direct Dial : (01827)
Your ref : 27220/A5/EIAScreening
Our ref :

Date : 29th November 2021

Dear Sirs

Environmental Assessment Regulations 2017 – Screening Opinion
Southern Manufacturing Park, MIRA Technology Park

I refer to your letter of 19th November being a request for a Screening Opinion under Regulation 6 of the above Regulations in respect of proposed development on the land south of the Horiba MIRS Technology Park in North Warwickshire. I acknowledge that sufficient information has been submitted in order for the Opinion to be made.

I agree that the proposed development does not fall within Schedule One of the Regulations. It does however fall within Category 10(a) of Schedule 2 by virtue of its size. As a consequence, the Council has to consider whether it is likely to have significant environmental effects, thus requiring the submission of an Environmental Statement with any forthcoming planning application. I am advised in this regard by the content of Schedule 3 to the Regulations as well as to National Planning Guidance.

In respect of the characteristics of the site then the proposed development is large – 58 hectares – with built development taking up a large proportion of this site. As a consequence, there would be a significant amount of construction, but this is unlikely to cause material change to the topography of the site and its surroundings, nor would it involve the import/export of materials or any unusual or protracted construction methods involving the use of natural resources. Similarly, it is unlikely that there would be any unusual operations involving the disposal of waste materials. The construction of the development and then its subsequent operation and use are not likely to lead to pollution or nuisance which cannot be mitigated either by design or through the use of regulatory restrictions. The proposed development is not one that is associated with hazardous substances or potential toxic emissions. The proposed uses are not amongst those likely to result in significant noise pollution or land contamination. The site is not within an Air Quality Management Area and neither is it within a Groundwater Source Protection Zone. The risk of pollution, nuisance and major accidents and/or disasters occurring as a direct consequence of the proposed development is thus considered to be very low, including any caused by climate change or through there being a risk to human health. In conclusion therefore the characteristics of the development are unlikely to cause significant environmental effects even given the scale of the proposed development.

In respect of the location of the proposed development, then the site is within Flood Zone One which is recognised as being at low risk of fluvial flooding. It is anticipated that surface water

run-off and foul water disposal will be managed through on-site sustainable urban drainage systems and/or use of the existing drainage networks. The site is not within any nationally, regionally or locally recognised nature conservation, landscape or heritage designation. The potential for direct impacts is thus low. However, there are non-statutory and statutory nature conservation designations within the vicinity of the site. Given the characteristics of the proposed development outlined above and the separation distances together with the likelihood of agreed mitigation measures, there are unlikely to be significant impacts. However, whilst the site is not within or close to an AONB or an area of High Landscape Value, the size of the site and the nature and appearance of the proposed built form, together with the open nature of the setting are very likely to give rise to significant visual and landscape effects. The site is not located within and nor does it adjoin a Conservation Area. It neither is in close proximity to a Listed Building nor a Scheduled Ancient Monument. It is therefore unlikely that there would be a direct impact on any heritage asset, or the setting of such an asset. This is because of the separation distances involved. However, the Council is assessing the possibility of designating the village of Caldecote and its parkland setting as a new Conservation Area and Caldecote Hall and its associated former Estate buildings would be considered to be non-designated heritage assets. The size of the proposed development, its proximity to the village both spatially and visually together with the appearance and design of the proposed built form are all likely to impact on the setting of the Caldecote Estate. The scale of that impact could be significant. This aligns with the capacity of the landscape to absorb the proposed development. For the same reasons as above, the proposed development would not readily be absorbed into the landscape here either locally or further afield – the approach to the site is particularly open along the A5, the A444 and from the more distant views from the top of the Hartshill ridgeline to the south. The landscape and visual effects are likely to be significant. The proposed development has direct access to the Strategic Road Network (the A5) and the A444 runs to the south. This is of benefit to the proposed development, but any off-site capacity in the national and local highway networks will need to be addressed. It is agreed that there will be opportunities to enhance the use of alternative modes of transport in accessing the site.

In respect of the potential impacts then it is agreed that there are no transboundary matters and that any impacts are not likely to be intense, complex or frequent. However, any residual adverse heritage, landscape and visual impacts following the introduction of mitigation measures will be permanent and irreversible.

It is not considered that there are likely to be any cumulative impacts arising as a consequence of this proposal and known committed or approved developments in the vicinity. This is because of separation distances and the different nature of the developments. It is also a material consideration of significant weight that around three quarters of the site is land allocated in the recently adopted North Warwickshire Local Plan 2021 for employment purposes – Site E4 of Policy LP39. This Policy explicitly draws attention to the heritage, landscape and visual matters raised above as well as to the need to promote sustainable transport alternatives. The request for an Opinion is in respect of a site that is larger than that allocated by E4. The additional land is closer to the village of Caldecote and more exposed to the A444. As such the significant effects identified above carry added weight.

Drawing all of these matters together it is considered that the proposed development is not likely to give rise to significant environmental effects. However, there are particular effects that need to be explored in more detail. These should be the subject of bespoke Assessments to be submitted alongside any forthcoming planning application. Mitigation measures should be identified and residual environmental effects then evaluated.

I therefore conclude that the proposed development is not EIA development for the purposes of the 2017 Regulations and this letter may therefore be taken as the Council's Screening Opinion under Regulation 6 (6).

Yours faithfully

Jeff Brown
Head of Development Control