

# Agenda Item 15.

<b>Development Management Ref No</b>	<b>No weeks on day of committee</b>	<b>Parish</b>	<b>Ward</b>	<b>Listed by:</b>
161066	8/13	Earley	Bulmershe and Whitegate	Major application

<b>Applicant Location</b>	Standard Life Assurance Ltd. Units 27, 28, 68 And 69, Suttons Business Park, Earley	<b>Postcode</b>	RG6 1AZ
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**Proposal** Full application for the demolition of existing Class B1 office buildings (Units 68 and 69) and the erection of three Class B2/B8 industrial units with ancillary office space and car parking/ landscaping, refurbishment of existing Class B8 storage and distribution building (Unit 27-28) and reconfiguration of car parking area; the erection of a new Class B2/B8 industrial unit with ancillary office space together with new car parking and landscaping; erection of a new security hut.

<b>Type</b>	Major
<b>PS Category</b>	3
<b>Officer</b>	Graham Vaughan

<b>FOR CONSIDERATION BY</b>	Planning Committee on 22 <sup>nd</sup> June 2016
<b>REPORT PREPARED BY</b>	Head of Development Management and Regulatory Services

## SUMMARY

The application site is within a major development location in the settlement of Earley and on Suttons Business Park. The park is well established and is designated a Core Employment Area in the development plan. The site comprises of units 68 and 69 which are offices, units 27 and 28 which are used as storage and distribution and unit 21 which is used for offices. Parking provision and landscaping surround each of the buildings and the site is bordered by the access road through the site and the railway.

The application is for full permission for the redevelopment of the site to demolish units 68, 69 and 21 and construct new buildings that would be used as a general industrial (B2)/storage and distribution (B8) use. Units 27 and 28 would be refurbished and remain in the same use. Parking provision and landscaping would be provided around the buildings with no changes to the locations of the access points. The buildings would be of a typical business park design but be clad to have a more modern appearance. In addition, unit 21 is proposed to be demolished and replaced with a retail element on the site. However, this is not part of this current application and requires a separate submission.

The proposal would result in a net loss of B use floor space on the site however taking into account B use floor space consented across the Borough, there is considered to be sufficient B uses. In addition, the units have been marketed for some time with little interest generated as a result. On this basis, the proposal is considered acceptable in principle. Although the proposal would result in a decrease in parking spaces, the overall parking provision is considered appropriate for the use. Furthermore, there would be no harmful impact on residential amenity and there would be betterment in terms of trees and additional landscaping. As such, it is considered all other aspects would be satisfactorily mitigated through the use of conditions and therefore, the scheme is compliant with the development plan and is recommended for conditional approval.

## PLANNING STATUS

- Major development location
- Contaminated land consultation zone
- Core Employment Area
- Sand and gravel extraction
- Green Route

## RECOMMENDATION

**That the committee authorise the GRANT OF PLANNING PERMISSION subject to the following:**

### **A. Conditions and informatives:**

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.  
*Reason: In pursuance of s.91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by s.51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).*
2. This permission is in respect of the submitted application plans and drawings numbered 'A100', 'A101', 'A102', 'A103', 'A104', 'A105', 'A106', 'A107', 'A108', 'A109', 'A110', '30746-PL-100A', '30746-PL-101A', '30746-PL-103', '30746-PL-104', '30746-PL-105', '30746-PL-106', '30746-PL-107A', '30746-PL-108', '30746-PL-109', '30746-PL-110' and 'Tree Survey – 00 Rev 1' received by the local planning authority on 26<sup>th</sup> April 2016 and the revised plans on 27<sup>th</sup> May 2016. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details unless otherwise agreed in writing by the local planning authority.  
*Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and to ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with the application form and associated details hereby approved.*
3. The buildings hereby permitted shall be erected in accordance with the 'Schedule of External Facing Materials' as set out on plan number '30746-PL-104' unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.  
*Reason: To ensure that the external appearance of the building is satisfactory.*  
*Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP1 and CP3*
4. No development shall commence until a programme of archaeological work (which may comprise more than one phase of work) in accordance with the submitted Project Specification (TVAS 16e45ev 18th April 2016) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The development shall only take place in accordance with the detailed scheme approved pursuant to this condition.  
*Reason: The site is identified as being of archaeological potential. Investigation is required to allow preservation and recording of any archaeological features or artefacts before disturbance by the development. Relevant policy: National Planning Policy Framework Section 12 (Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment) and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy TB25*
5. No development shall take place until full details of BRE365 soakage test results to demonstrate that infiltration is not achievable (including groundwater levels for the development area) have been submitted to and approved by the Local

Planning Authority.

*Reason: To prevent increased flood risk from surface water run-off. Relevant policy: NPPF Section 10 (Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change, Flooding and Coastal Change), Core Strategy policy CP1 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policies CC09 and CC10*

6. No development shall commence until an Employment and Skills Plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The Employment and Skills Plan shall show how the development hereby permitted provides opportunities for training, apprenticeship or other vocational initiatives to develop local employability skills and shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details.

*Reason: To ensure training opportunities are available for local workers.*

*Relevant policy: Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy TB12*

7. a) No development or other operation shall commence on site until a scheme which provides for the retention and protection of trees, shrubs and hedges growing on or adjacent the site in accordance with BS5837: 2012 has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority (the Approved Scheme); the tree protection measures approved shall be implemented in complete accordance with the Approved Scheme for the duration of the development (including, unless otherwise provided by the Approved Scheme) demolition, all site preparation work, tree felling, tree pruning, demolition works, soil moving, temporary access construction and or widening or any other operation involving use of motorised vehicles or construction machinery.

b) No development (including any tree felling, tree pruning, demolition works, soil moving, temporary access construction and or widening or any other operation involving use of motorised vehicles or construction machinery) shall commence until the local planning authority has been provided (by way of a written notice) with a period of no less than 7 working days to inspect the implementation of the measures identified in the Approved Scheme on-site.

c) No excavations for services, storage of materials or machinery, parking of vehicles, deposit or excavation of soil or rubble, lighting of fires or disposal of liquids shall take place within an area designated as being fenced off or otherwise protected in the Approved Scheme.

d) The fencing or other works which are part of the Approved Scheme shall not be moved or removed, temporarily or otherwise, until all works including external works have been completed and all equipment, machinery and surplus materials removed from the site, unless the prior approval of the local planning authority has first been sought and obtained.

*Reason: To secure the protection throughout the time that the development is being carried out of trees shrubs or hedges growing within or adjacent to the site which are of amenity value to the area, and to allow for verification by the local planning authority that the necessary measures are in place before development and other works commence Relevant policy: Core Strategy policy CP3 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policies CC03 and TB21*

8. Prior to commencement of the development a detailed scheme to provide wildlife

enhancements for bats and birds shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The measures contained within the plan shall be implemented in accordance with the approved plan unless otherwise approved in writing by the local planning authority.

*Reason: To ensure the development does not have a detrimental impact on protected species. Relevant policy: Core Strategy CP7*

9. Prior to the commencement of the development hereby permitted details of secure and covered bicycle storage/ parking facilities for the occupants of [and visitors to] the development shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The cycle storage/ parking shall be implemented in accordance with such details as may be approved before occupation of the development hereby permitted, and shall be permanently retained in the approved form for the parking of bicycles and used for no other purpose.
- Reason: In order to ensure that secure weather-proof bicycle parking facilities are provided so as to encourage the use of sustainable modes of travel. Relevant policy: NPPF Section 4 (Sustainable Transport) and Core Strategy policies CP1, CP3 & CP6 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy CC07.*

10. No development shall take place, including any works of demolition, until a Construction Method Statement has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the local planning authority. The approved Statement shall be adhered to throughout the construction period. The Statement shall provide for:

- i) the parking of vehicles of site operatives and visitors,
- ii) loading and unloading of plant and materials,
- iii) storage of plant and materials used in constructing the development,
- iv) the erection and maintenance of security hoarding including decorative displays and facilities for public viewing, where appropriate,
- v) wheel washing facilities,
- vi) measures to control the emission of dust and dirt during construction,
- vii) a scheme for recycling/disposing of waste resulting from demolition and construction works.

*Reason: In the interests of highway safety & convenience and neighbour amenities. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP3 & CP6.*

11. No building shall be occupied until a Travel Plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The travel plan shall include a programme of implementation and proposals to promote alternative forms of transport to and from the site, other than by the private car and provide for periodic review. The travel plan shall be fully implemented, maintained and reviewed as so-approved.

*Reason: To encourage the use of all travel modes. Relevant policy: NPPF Section 4 (Sustainable Transport) and Core Strategy policy CP6.*

12. If unexpected contamination is found at any time during development this shall be reported in writing as soon as possible to the Local Planning Authority. An investigation and risk assessment shall be carried out, and where remediation work is necessary a remediation scheme must be prepared and submitted for written approval to the Local Planning Authority. Following the completion of measures set out in the approved remediation scheme a verification report shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority.

*Reason: To ensure that future users of the site are protected from the harmful*

*effects of any contamination. Relevant Policy: Core Strategy Policy CP3*

13. The development hereby approved shall be carried out in accordance with the landscaping details as agreed in the 'Planting and Management Plan, Davies Landscape Architects April 2016' and plans 'DLA-1701-L 01 Rev 2', 'DLA-1701-L 02 Rev 2', 'DLA-1701-L 03 Rev 2', 'DLA-1701-L 04 Rev 2', 'DLA-1701-L 05 Rev 2', 'DLA-1701-L 06 Rev 2', 'DLA-1701-L 07 Rev 2', 'DLA-1701-L 08 Rev 2', 'DLA-1701-L 09 Rev 2', 'DLA-1701-L 10 Rev 5', 'DLA-1701-L 11 Rev 5', 'DLA-1712-L12 Rev 4', 'DLA-1701-L 13 Rev 1' and 'DLA-1701-L 14 Rev 1' received by the Local Planning Authority on 26<sup>th</sup> April 2016 and the revised plans on 13<sup>th</sup> June 2016. All hard and soft landscape works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details prior to the occupation of any part of the development or in accordance with a timetable approved in writing by the local planning authority. Any trees or plants which, within a period of five years after planting, are removed, die or become seriously damaged or defective, shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of species, size and number as originally approved and permanently retained.

*Reason: In the interests of visual amenity. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policy CP3 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policies CC03 and TB21*

14. No part of any building(s) hereby permitted (including unit 4) shall be occupied or used until the vehicle parking and turning space has been provided in accordance with the approved plans. The vehicle parking and turning space shall be retained and maintained in accordance with the approved details and the parking space shall remain available for the parking of vehicles at all times and the turning space shall not be used for any other purpose other than vehicle turning.

*Reason: To provide adequate off-street vehicle parking and turning space and to allow vehicles to enter and leave the site in a forward gear in the interests of road safety and convenience and providing a functional, accessible and safe development and in the interests of amenity. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP3 & CP6 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy CC07.*

15. The development hereby approved shall be carried out in accordance with the details as agreed in 'Energy Statement – Dunwoody April 2016' received by the Local Planning Authority on 26<sup>th</sup> April 2016.

*Reason: To ensure developments contribute to sustainable development. Relevant policy: NPPF Section 10 (Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change, Flooding and Coastal Change), Core Strategy policy CP1, Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy CC05 & the Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Document.*

16. The development hereby approved shall be carried out in accordance with the details as agreed in 'External Lighting Design Report', 'External Lighting Layout E1000 P3' and 'External Lighting Layout E1001 P2' received by the Local Planning Authority on 27<sup>th</sup> May 2016.

*Reason: In the interests of highway safety & convenience and neighbour amenities. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP3 & CP6.*

17. The new buildings shall achieve BREEAM level 'Very Good' in accordance with the requirements of BREEAM [or such national measure of sustainability for non-

residential design that replaces that scheme].

*Reason: To ensure developments contribute to sustainable development.*

*Relevant policy: NPPF Section 10 (Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change, Flooding and Coastal Change), Core Strategy policy CP1 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy CC04*

18. Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning, (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (or any Order revoking and re-enacting that Order with or without modification), no additional windows or similar openings shall be constructed in the north east elevation of **unit 4** hereby permitted except for any which may be shown on the approved drawing(s).

*Reason: To safeguard the residential amenities of neighbouring properties.*

*Relevant policy: Core Strategy policy CP3*

19. No construction work relating to the development hereby approved, including works of demolition or preparation prior to building operations, shall take place other than between the hours of 08:00 and 18:00 Monday to Friday and 08:00 to 13:00 Saturdays and at no time on Sundays or Bank or National Holidays.

*Reason: To protect the occupiers of neighbouring properties from noise and disturbance outside the permitted hours during the construction period. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP1 and CP3 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy CC06.*

20. No trees, shrubs or hedges within the site which are shown as being retained on the approved plans shall be felled, uprooted wilfully damaged or destroyed, cut back in any way or removed without previous written consent of the local planning authority; any trees, shrubs or hedges removed without consent or dying or being severely damaged or becoming seriously diseased within 5 years from the completion of the development hereby permitted shall be replaced with trees, shrubs or hedge plants of similar size and species unless the local planning authority gives written consent to any variation.

*Reason: To secure the protection throughout the time that development is being carried out, of trees, shrubs and hedges growing within the site which are of amenity value to the area. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policy CP3 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policies CC03 and TB21*

#### *Informatives*

1. The applicant is reminded that this approval is granted subject to conditions which must be complied with prior to the development starting on site. Commencement of the development without complying with the pre-commencement requirements may be outside the terms of this permission and liable to enforcement action. The information required should be formally submitted to the Council for consideration with the relevant fee. Once the details have been approved in writing the development should be carried out only in accordance with those details. If this is not clear please contact the case officer to discuss.
2. Thames Water recommends that petrol/oil interceptors are fitted in all car parking/washing/repair facilities.
3. Thames Water will aim to provide customers with a minimum pressure of 10m head (approx. 1 bar) and a flow rate of 9 litres/minute at the point where it leaves

Thames Waters pipes. The developer should take account of this minimum pressure in the design of the proposed development.

4. There is a Thames Water main crossing the development site which may/will need to be diverted at the Developer's cost, or necessitates amendments to the proposed development design so that the aforementioned main can be retained. Unrestricted access must be available at all times for maintenance and repair. Please contact Thames Water Developer Services, Contact Centre on Telephone No: 0800 009 3921 for further information.
5. Should any bats or evidence of bats be found prior to or during the development, all works must stop immediately and an ecological consultant or the Council's ecologist contacted for further advice before works can proceed. All contractors working on site should be made aware of the advice and provided with the contact details of a relevant ecological consultant.
6. The requisite Travel plan would need to comply with the latest national and local guidance:
  - 1) NPPF Section 4 (Sustainable Transport)
  - 2) The Essential Guide to Travel Planning (DfT, March 2008)
  - 3) Delivering Travel Plans Through the Planning Process (DfT, April 2009)
  - 4) A Guide on Travel Plans for Developers (DfT)
  - 5) Making Residential Travel Plans Work (DfT, June 2007) All accessible at: <http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/sustainable/travelplans/>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/improving-local-transport>

Also: WBC Transport Plan 3 and Active Travel Plan 2011 – 2026, WBC Workplace Travel Plan Guidance and Residential Travel Plan Guidance. Documents, covering workplace travel plans and residential travel plans provide local guidance and are available on the Borough's website.

**B. Prior completion of a bat emergence survey to the satisfaction of the Council's ecologist and the submission of an outline bat mitigation strategy should bats be discovered.**

<b>PLANNING HISTORY</b>	
10837 (Unit 68)	Building for manufacture of industrial and commercial electronic instruments <b>conditionally approved</b> on 25 <sup>th</sup> October 1979
21408 (Unit 68)	erection of high tech office and warehouse <b>conditionally approved</b> on 26 <sup>th</sup> July 1984
23310 (Units 27 & 28)	Erection of industrial/warehouse unit with ancillary office <b>conditionally approved</b> on 22 <sup>nd</sup> May 1985
28191(Units 27 & 28)	Permission to erect and display static internally illuminated information sign board <b>conditionally approved</b> on 5 <sup>th</sup> August 1987
28435 (Unit 69)	Erection of new building to be used for business purposes as defined under class b1 of the use classes act <b>conditionally approved</b> on 2 <sup>nd</sup> September 1987
37082 (Unit 68)	Four internally illuminated box signs <b>conditionally approved</b> on 12 <sup>th</sup> February 1991
36965 (Unit 68)	Erection of standby generator and enclosure <b>conditionally approved</b>

	<b>approved</b> on 15 <sup>th</sup> September 1991
F/1999/69087 (Unit 68)	Erection Of Satellite Dish on Roof <b>conditionally approved</b> on 21 <sup>st</sup> April 1999
RM/2001/4277	Reserved Matters on Outline consent 99/70276/O for the proposed erection of building for (B1) office use with parking facilities and covered cycle compound <b>conditionally approved</b> on 20 <sup>th</sup> February 2002
A/2012/0429 (Suttons Business Park)	Advertisement consent for the erection of various illuminated and non-illuminated signs to include 1no freestanding site directory sign and 11free standing directional signs <b>conditionally approved</b> on 15 <sup>th</sup> May 2012
F/2014/1814 (Units 27 & 28)	Proposed alterations to rear elevation and revised car park layout <b>withdrawn</b> on 8 <sup>th</sup> October 2014
F/2015/0234 (Units 27 & 28)	Proposed resurfacing and revision of existing front car park to increase car parking provision to 100 spaces, plus demolition of 456m of rear warehouse and office space and the installation of 4no goods doors and 2no pedestrian fire escape doors <b>withdrawn</b> on 7 <sup>th</sup> April 2015

### SUMMARY INFORMATION

Site Area	3.26 hectares
Existing units	4
Proposed units	5
Existing parking spaces	297
Proposed parking spaces	188
Floor space	Please see paragraph 6 of the report

### CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Berkshire Archaeology	No objection subject to condition (4)
Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue	Request further information (see paragraph 35)
Thames Water	No objection subject to informatives (2 – 4)
Reading Borough Council	No objection
Highways	No objection subject to conditions (9 – 11, 14)
Biodiversity	Further information required (see paragraph 29)
Tree and Landscape	No objection subject to conditions (7, 13, 20)
Environmental Health	No objection subject to condition (12)
Drainage	No objection subject to condition (5)
Policy	No objection
Waste Services	No comments received
Employment Skills	No objection subject to condition (6)
Earley Town Council	Note that the red line intersects an existing building and request condition requiring access to remain in place
Local Members	No comments received

### REPRESENTATIONS

5 letters of objection received with regards to the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Proposed Aldi store would result in a loss of light, noise, light pollution from cars, extra litter attracting rats and additional traffic. There doesn't seem a need for a new store (Officer note: the Aldi store is not proposed in this application and therefore it's potential impacts cannot be considered).</li> </ul>
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- Unit 4 would cause loss of light and noise during construction and operation (Officer note: see paragraphs 16 and 17).
- Parking is already a problem on Shepherds House Lane (Officer note: planning applications cannot be used to solve issues they are not exacerbating. See paragraphs 19 – 24).
- The transport statement misses opportunities to improve sustainability. In particular, the development does not connect to the cycle network; shift patterns mean they will be at times when buses do not run; out of hours use should be planned for; damage to the kerbs has arisen since increase of lorry movement; parking restrictions could be provided by the Council on surrounding streets. (Officer note: Applications cannot be used to solve issues they are not exacerbating and the Local Planning Authority must determine the application before them, not alternative ideas. See paragraphs 19 – 24).
- Additional traffic from the development (See paragraphs 19 – 24).
- Loss of trees and landscaping (see paragraphs 26 and 27).

### APPLICANTS POINTS

- Despite marketing, existing B1 use has not been taken up and therefore opportunity to redevelop to a different B use has arisen
- Existing accesses and landscaping buffers can be protected
- Redevelopment would create jobs
- Responds successfully to the character of the area
- Part of a wider redevelopment of Suttons Business Park to remain relevant and current in today's 'Office Park' culture

### PLANNING POLICY

National Policy	<b>NPPF</b>	National Planning Policy Framework
Adopted Core Strategy DPD 2010	<b>CP1</b>	Sustainable Development
	<b>CP3</b>	General Principles for Development
	<b>CP6</b>	Managing Travel Demand
	<b>CP7</b>	Biodiversity
	<b>CP9</b>	Scale and Location of Development Proposals
	<b>CP15</b>	Employment Development
Adopted Managing Development Delivery Local Plan 2014	<b>CC01</b>	Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
	<b>CC02</b>	Development Limits
	<b>CC03</b>	Green Infrastructure, Trees and Landscaping
	<b>CC04</b>	Sustainable Design and Construction
	<b>CC05</b>	Renewable energy and decentralised energy networks
	<b>CC06</b>	Noise
	<b>CC07</b>	Parking
	<b>CC09</b>	Development and Flood Risk
	<b>CC10</b>	Sustainable Drainage

	<b>TB11</b>	Core Employment Areas
	<b>TB12</b>	Employment Skills Plan
	<b>TB20</b>	Service Arrangements and Deliveries for Employment and Retail Use
	<b>TB21</b>	Landscape Character
Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD)	<b>BDG</b>	Borough Design Guide – Section 7

## **PLANNING ISSUES**

### Description of Development:

1. The scheme is for the redevelopment of part of Suttons Business Park involving units 27 – 28, units 68 – 69 and the creation of a new unit; number 4. A replacement security hut is also proposed.
2. Units 68 – 69 which have a designated B1 use would be demolished and replaced with two larger buildings as a designated B2/B8 use (although this would be split into three units (numbers 1, 2 and 3). Each of these would contain ancillary offices as well as associated parking and service areas. Unit 1 would be in total 52.4 metres in length and 44.8 metres in width and would have a hipped roof with a ridge height of 11.8 metres and a ridge height of 9.0 metres. Unit 2 would be joined to unit 1 and would be 43.8 metres in length 30.8 metres in width and have a hipped roof with a ridge height of 11.8 metres and an eaves height of 9.0 metres. Unit 3 would be 62.1 metres in length and 61.0 metres in width with a ridge height of 13.0 metres and an eaves height of 11 metres. The building would be clad in a metallic silver finish with detailing on the windows through aluminium frames and roller shutters and glazed doors.
3. Units 27 – 28 would be refurbished but would remain as a B8 use. The only change to the size of the building is to remove the existing warehouse element to the rear resulting in the building being 71.8 metres in length and 46.3 metres in width with a hipped roof with a ridge height of 8.1 metres and an eaves height of 5.9 metres. The majority of the refurbishment works would be internal however this would result in some minor external changes. The building would be re-clad in similar design to the new buildings as part of the works to modernise the building.
4. Unit 4 is proposed as a new B2/B8 use building and would be constructed parallel to the edge of the site on existing parking provision. The building would be 42.4 metres in length and 28.2 metres in width and have a hipped roof with a ridge height of 10.8 metres and an eaves height of 9.0 metres. An 8.4 metre by 6.0 metre stairwell section would be contained to the side and clad in a similar fashion to the other buildings.
5. The security hut would be relocated from opposite units 68 – 69 to opposite units 27 – 28. The hut would be 4.0 metres in length and 3.5 metres in width with a mono-pitched roof with a ridge height of 3.2 metres and an eaves height of 2.5 metres. The hut would be clad to match the other buildings proposed.
6. The floor space for each building is shown below:

Existing Units	Existing floor space (m <sup>2</sup> )	Proposed units	Proposed floor space (m <sup>2</sup> )
Units 68 & 69 (B1)	6224	Units 1, 2, 3 (B2/B8)	7788
Unit 21 (B1)	3794	Unit 21	0
Units 27 & 28 (B8)	3902	Units 27 & 28 (B8)	3902
Unit 4	0	Unit 4 (B2/B8)	1286
<b>Total</b>	<b>13920</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>12976</b>

7. For information, the LPA is aware of a further development involving the demolition of unit 21 and the creation of a retail element. This is subject to a separate application which has not been received by the LPA at this time. Determination of any submitted application would take into account the planning history for the site.

Principle of Development:

8. The National Planning Policy Framework has an underlying presumption in favour of sustainable development which is carried through to the local Development Plan. The Managing Development Delivery Local Plan Policy CC01 states that planning applications that accord with the policies in the Development Plan for Wokingham Borough will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
9. The site is located within a major development location and as such the development is acceptable in principle providing that it complies with the policies within the Core Strategy. In regards to Policies CP1 and CP3, it is noted that the proposal would provide a similar type of use to the surrounding area on a brownfield site with suitable transport links and in that respect would be acceptable. However, the proposal site is within a Core Employment Area as stated in Policy CP15 and TB11.
10. Policy CP15 aims to promote development for business, industry or warehousing and states that any changes of use from B1, B2 or B8 uses should not lead to a net loss of B use floor space across the Borough. Units 68 and 69 are currently a B1 use whilst units 27 and 28 are a B8 use. Whilst units 68 and 69 would be replaced with a B2 use and units 27 and 28 would remain in B8 use, the overall provision of B use floor space would decrease by 1484 m<sup>2</sup>. However, the Policy Officer has stated that the Employment Land Monitoring Report for April 2013 – March 2014 demonstrates that there has been a net gain of 3,649m<sup>2</sup> of B use floor space in the Borough since 1st April 2006. Furthermore there are extant permissions for 88,099m<sup>2</sup> across the Borough and therefore the proposal would not compromise the need for B use floor space across the Borough to be contrary to policy CP15 in a quantitative aspect.
11. It is noted that the buildings are currently office space and as a result of the proposal would be general industrial. Policy CP15 does state “provision will be made for a range of sizes, types, quality and locations of premises” in order to encourage different types of business. However, the applicant has stated the buildings have been marketed for some time with very little interest received as a result. Marketing has occurred for the past 12 months on a number of websites

and through signage hoarding. Consideration should also be given to the status of the offices with units 68 and 69 being Grade B/C and unit 21 a bespoke building not suitable for other users. The occupiers of both units 68 and 69 have, in the past 2 years, moved to Winnersh Triangle. As a result, it has become more attractive to redevelop the site and it is likely this would create over 150 jobs. On this basis therefore, the proposal is not considered to conflict with CP15 in terms of the qualitative aspect and therefore is acceptable in principle.

#### Character of the Area:

12. The existing buildings are low rise, flat or hipped roof buildings constructed mainly of glass and brick. They have a typical, business park appearance however are at the entrance of Suttons Business Park and therefore are visible from a number of areas. Parking is provided around the buildings but the impact of the hard standing is mitigated by landscaping particularly to the boundaries. The A4, to the south of the site is a designated Green Route and therefore has a strong tree line. Further hedgerows and a low scale fence also help delineate the boundaries around the buildings. Whilst the roundabout off the entrance of the park dominates the area to the east, a small residential street exists to the north/north east. Again, a strong tree line separates the two areas as well as the railway line to the north.
13. The proposal would redevelop the site to provide for general industrial (B2 use) and storage (B8 use) buildings. Whilst this is different from the existing office uses, given the business park location and the fact it is a Core Employment Area (where B uses are encouraged); no harm is considered to arise in this respect.
14. In terms of the physical scale of the buildings, it is acknowledged that the replacement buildings would be larger and a new building would be constructed. Nonetheless, the site is an existing business park where buildings of different sizes and shapes are to be expected. Furthermore, sufficient parking and turning space as well as spaces around the buildings is provided. Moreover, landscaping would be used to help integrate the buildings into the area as is the case with the current buildings. As noted, the A4 is a designated Green Route and tree lines around the site are important in maintaining separation between the business park and the residential areas. It is acknowledged the proposals would remove some vegetation along the Green Route in order to provide parking provision. However, the submitted plans indicate that a significant number of trees would be planted leading to betterment across the site. Importantly, the section of trees along Shepherds House Lane would be retained. As a result, it is considered the proposal would have an acceptable impact on the character of the area.
15. In terms of the visual appearance of the buildings, they would be clad in a metallic silver finish with buff coloured bricks as well as detailing on the windows through aluminium frames and roller shutters and glazed doors. It is noted this would have a more modern appearance and indeed is different from the existing buildings. Notwithstanding this, Suttons Business Park contains numerous designs and uses of materials and there is not a set or repeating appearance. Furthermore, views from the street scene are currently of a commercial nature and there would no change from this as a result of the proposal. As such, scheme is not considered to conflict with the character of the area.

### Residential Amenities:

16. The closest properties that could potentially be impacted would be 50 – 54 Shepherds House Lane as a result of the proposed unit 4. Whilst it is acknowledged that the unit would be of a large scale, it would be located 25 metres from these properties. This separation distance would ensure that no harmful impact would occur on residential amenity in terms of overbearing, overlooking or a loss of light. In addition, there is a strong vegetative barrier that already limits views of the unit and this would be retained. Therefore it is considered no harmful impact in planning terms would occur.
17. As a result of the proposed use it is acknowledged that some noise could occur however it should be noted that the properties already exist next to the business park and the railway line. Nonetheless, the door that was proposed to the rear of unit 4 has since been moved to the side elevation to eliminate the possibility of noise spill. As a result, it is considered necessary to ensure no windows or doors would be contained on the elevation facing the properties and this is controlled by condition 18. With respect to noise during construction, this would be limited to suitable working hours as controlled through condition 19. It is also noted that comments have been received with regards to hours of operation. However, the Environmental Health Officer has considered the case and has not objected on this point. As such, it is not considered necessary in planning terms to restrict operating hours.
18. With regards to other buildings within Suttons Business Park, the proposal would be of a sufficient distance away to mitigate any impact.

### Access and Movement:

19. **Traffic Generation:** A Transport Statement has been submitted with the application and it demonstrates that there will be no significant traffic impact associated with the proposal and would potentially lead to a reduction in the amount of trips generated. The Highways Officer has considered this statement and agrees with its conclusions. However, a Travel Plan is recommended in order to promote sustainable modes of travel to and from the site by condition (10). Secure, covered cycle storage and shower facilities have been indicated and details can be secured through a condition (9).
20. Further consideration should be given to the cumulative impact of the scheme as the LPA is aware of a further application regarding the construction of a retail element on the site of unit 21. The Highways Officer has considered further survey work completed by the applicant and is satisfied that the current proposal in conjunction with an appropriately sized retail element would not prevent either scheme going ahead in terms of traffic generation.
21. **Highway Safety and Access:** There are three existing accesses into the site from Suttons Park Avenue which is public highway. The submitted details indicate that these would not be moved in terms of their location but upgraded to better reflect the proposed layout of the site. The Highways Officer raises no objection to this.
22. Additionally, suitable servicing and turning areas for lorries are proposed and

these are considered acceptable. It is noted however that due to the scale of the proposal, during construction there would be a number of deliveries required. As such, the Highways Officer has requested a Construction Management Statement be controlled by condition (10).

23. **Parking:** Currently, there are 297 spaces across the site which provides for the existing office buildings (B1 use) and units 27 & 28 which have a B8 use. The proposal would provide 188 spaces across the site for the B2/B8 use buildings. Whilst this is a decrease in parking provision, it would still be in accordance with the Council's parking standards and it should also be noted that there would be a decrease in floor space across the site as a result of the proposal. As such, the Highways Officer is satisfied that the proposal would provide sufficient parking and does not raise an objection subject to condition 14.

24. **Sustainability:** Secure, covered cycle storage is indicated and a Travel Plan would also help ensure other transport modes than the private car would be used. The site is already well served by public transport and is within suitable distance to rail and road links.

#### Flooding and Drainage:

25. The site is located in Flood Zone 1 however as it is greater than a hectare in size a Flood Risk Assessment is required. The submitted FRA shows that the site is at low risk from flooding but to ensure flood risk would not increase as a result of the proposal, a surface water drainage strategy is required. The Council's drainage consultant has considered the FRA and agrees with its recommendations noting that there would be betterment across the site as a result of the drainage strategy proposed. As such, subject to a condition (5) ensuring infiltration tests have been undertaken, no objection is raised.

#### Landscape and Trees:

26. In terms of the landscape, the site is within Suttons Business Park which is an established business location in the Borough. The area is relatively urban however Suttons Business Park contains a significant amount of trees and the section along the A4 (adjacent to units 68 and 69) is a designated Green Route. The trees along the boundaries of the site are important in helping the larger buildings integrate into the area and also provide a screen and division between the business land use and the nearby residential land use. Although some trees would be lost as a result of the proposal, the line of trees to the boundaries would be retained and enhanced with new planting. As a result, the proposal would result in betterment across the site and therefore has an acceptable impact on the landscape.

27. Due to the scale of the works proposed, it is considered that suitable tree protection methods would be required and this can be controlled by condition. As such, the Tree and Landscape Officer does not object to the proposal, subject to conditions (7, 13 and 20).

#### Environmental Health

28. Due to the former uses, the land is potentially contaminated and a report into this

has been submitted with the application. The Environmental Health Officer has considered this report and is satisfied with its conclusions. As a result, it is recommended that a condition is placed in case any unexpected contamination is found (12).

#### Ecology:

29. An Ecology Report has been submitted with the application and concludes that due to the dominance of hard standing and buildings the site is of low ecological value. However, due to the risk to nesting birds any vegetation removal should occur outside of breeding season and potential wildlife enhancements could be included. The Ecology Officer has considered this report and raises no objection to the wildlife enhancements, subject to a condition requiring them to be agreed (8). However, the report noted potential bat roost features in units 68 and 69 and recommends a further survey be carried out. Until this survey is submitted, it cannot be determined if there would be a harmful impact on bats and therefore, the recommendation reflects this requirement.

#### Sustainable Design/Construction:

30. In line with Policy CC04 of the MDD, proposals for non-residential development over 100 square metres should as a minimum achieve the mandatory BREEAM requirements but seek to achieve higher. The applicant has stated a 'Very Good' rating could be achieved and, as such, a condition requiring this is proposed (x).

31. Policy CC05 requires non-residential proposals of more than 1,000 square metres gross floor space to deliver a minimum 10% reduction in carbon emissions through renewable energy or low carbon technology. An Energy Statement has been submitted which states how this would be achieved through the use of appropriate fixtures and fittings within the building and through PV solar panels outside the building. As such, it is considered necessary to condition that the development is carried out in accordance with this statement (17).

#### Community Infrastructure Levy:

32. As the proposal is for the construction of industrial and storage space, it would not be CIL liable development.

#### Archaeology:

33. Due to potential archaeological remains in the area, the Council's archaeological consultant has recommended a condition (4) be placed requiring the approval of a written scheme of investigation prior to development occurring on site. Subject to this condition, no harmful impact is considered to occur.

#### Employment Skills:

34. Policy TB12 of the MDD requires major applications to demonstrate how they can encourage the use of local skills and employment. Whilst this typically works better with larger residential schemes, the proposal is considered appropriate for this and therefore a condition requiring a plan to be submitted is included (6).

Other

35. Comments have been received from Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service requesting provision of fire hydrants in line with their own service requirements. However, the planning system cannot be used to fulfil the requirements of other legislation and in any case, there are existing buildings already on the site. As such, no harmful impact in planning terms is considered to occur.

**CONCLUSION**

The application is considered to be acceptable in principle as the loss of the offices is not considered to have a harmful impact to the extent it would warrant refusing the application and given the nature of the proposed replacement use within a Core Employment Area. The resultant buildings would be in keeping with the character of the area and subject to conditions, no harmful impacts would occur with regards to highways, drainage, contamination or trees. As such, the proposal is considered to accord with local and national planning policy and is therefore recommended for approval.

**CONTACT DETAILS**

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