

# **Planning Statement** including Draft S106 Heads of Terms



## **CONTENTS**

|            |  |           |
|------------|--|-----------|
| <b>1.0</b> | <b>INTRODUCTION</b> .....  | <b>1</b>  |
|            | Application Documentation.....   | 1         |
| <b>2.0</b> | <b>THE SITE</b> .....  | <b>3</b>  |
|            | Site Location and Context .....  | 3         |
|            | Planning History .....   | 4         |
|            | Contextual Planning Applications.....  | 6         |
|            | Pre-Application Discussions .....  | 7         |
| <b>3.0</b> | <b>THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT</b> .....  | <b>9</b>  |
|            | Description of Development .....   | 9         |
|            | Key Development Parameters.....  | 10        |
|            | Infrastructure and Enabling Works .....  | 11        |
|            | Indicative Development Sequencing .....  | 12        |
| <b>4.0</b> | <b>SUBMISSION CONTEXT</b> .....  | <b>14</b> |
|            | Slough Inclusive Growth Strategy .....   | 14        |
|            | Slough Joint Strategic Needs Assessment.....   | 14        |
| <b>5.0</b> | <b>EVALUATION AGAINST NATIONAL AND LOCAL POLICY AND OTHER MATERIAL<br/>PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS</b> ..... | <b>16</b> |
|            | National Planning Policy Framework .....   | 16        |
|            | The Development Plan.....  | 17        |
|            | Other Considerations .....   | 28        |
|            | Key Planning Considerations and the Planning Balance .....   | 32        |
| <b>6.0</b> | <b>CONCLUSION</b> .....  | <b>35</b> |

## **APPENDICES**

|            |                                     |
|------------|-------------------------------------|
| APPENDIX A | DRAFT HEADS OF TERMS                |
| APPENDIX B | <u>INDICATIVE</u> PHASING STATEMENT |

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This Planning Statement is prepared by David Lock Associates ('DLA'), on behalf of Equinix, in support of an outline planning application ('OPA') for the following proposed development:

*"Outline planning permission for the erection of up to 90,614sqm of GEA data centre development and including ancillary offices, substation, together with associated additional plant facilities, enclosures and gantries, groundworks, utilities, engineering operations and temporary ancillary uses and all other infrastructure works. Approval is sought for an emergency means of access on Wexham Road and access points on the Technology Boulevard. The proposed development is a phased development with each phase being a separate and severable part of the development. Matters relating to layout, scale, appearance, additional access points along Technology Boulevard and landscaping are reserved for subsequent approval."*

1.2 This Planning Statement provides a description of the proposed development and its context before assessing the proposals against national and local planning policies, as well as other material planning considerations. This document is structured as follows:

- **Section 2** – provides the site description and context;
- **Section 3** – defines the proposed development;
- **Section 4** – sets out the context for the submission;
- **Section 5** – outlines the planning policy context and assesses the scheme against the relevant policies;
- **Section 6** – concludes the Statement.

### Application Documentation

1.3 This Statement forms part of a suite of reports and drawings submitted in support of the OPA. A list of the submitted package with document references is appended to the Covering Letter and includes:

- Covering Letter
- Application Forms and Ownership Certificate
- Planning Application Fee

### Reports

- Planning Statement, including draft Heads of Terms (*this document*)
- Air Quality Impact Assessment
- Arboricultural Impact Appraisal and Method Statement
- Archaeological Investigation Report
- Daylight & Sunlight Assessment
- Design and Access Statement

- Design Code
- Ecological Impact Assessment
- Energy and Sustainability Statement
- Heritage Statement
- Landscape and Ecology Maintenance Management Plan
- Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment
- Outline Construction Management Plan (OCMP)
- Outline Utilities Assessment (incl. Outline Drainage Strategy Plan (Appendix C))
- Overall Biodiversity Gain Plan
- Site Specific Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy
- Socio-Economic Benefit Statement
- Statement of Community Involvement
- Technical Note: Summary of Geo-Environmental Reporting
- Telecommunication Assessment Report
- Townscape and Visual Impact Assessment
- Transport Assessment
- Travel Plan

#### Drawings

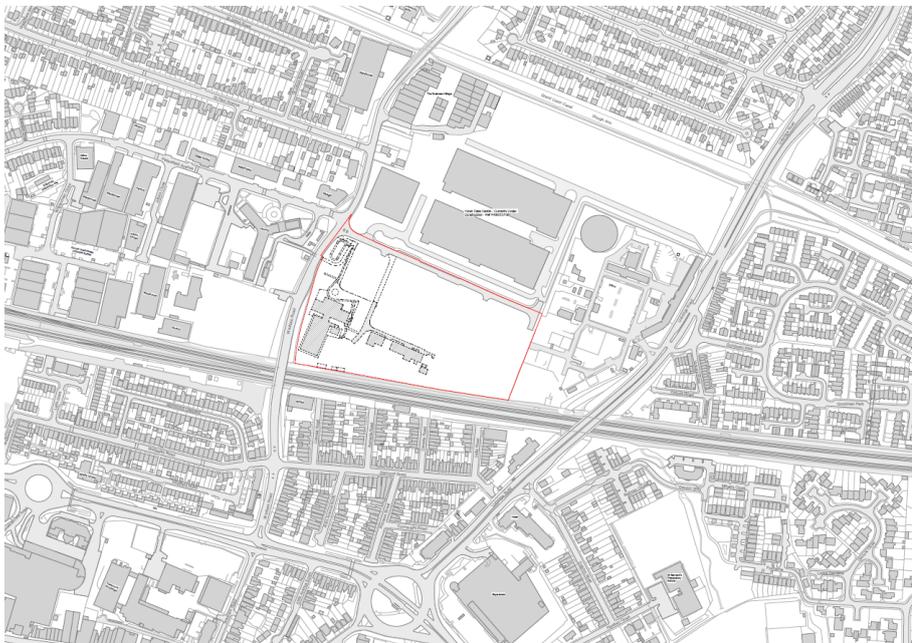
- Site Location Plan
- Existing Site Block Plan / Topographical Survey
- Parameter Plans
  - Development Zone
  - Plot Setbacks
  - Massing Heights
  - Site Access and Flows
  - Landscape
  - Uses
  - Sections AA' and BB'
- Detailed Access Drawings
  - Access Points and Visibility Splays:
    - Access Drawing Emergency Access and Access 1
    - Access Drawing Access 2
  - Access Points and Swept Path:
    - Access Drawing Emergency Access and Access 1 With Vehicle Swept Path
    - Access Drawing Access 2 With Swept Path Analysis

## 2.0 THE SITE

### Site Location and Context

- 2.1 The Application Site (the 'Site'), known as the former *AkzoNobel*, is located within the administrative area of Slough Borough Council ('SBC'). It is bound by Wexham Road to the west, the railway lines running between Slough and Langley to the south. To the immediate east is the site of Cadent Gas works and beyond that Uxbridge Road. The northern site boundary is formed by the newly formed access road (it is believed that the Council are in the formal process of naming this as 'Technology Boulevard' and is therefore referred to as such in the application documentation). Directly to the north of the Technology Boulevard, two data centres are currently being constructed for Yondr on land that was also formerly part of the AkzoNobel paint coating and manufacturing site. Indeed, this and the wider site have been used for the manufacture of paints and varnishes since the early 1920's.

**Figure 2.1 - Site Location Plan**



- 2.2 More widely, the site lies in a long-established industrial area where, in recent years, a mix of commercial uses have been introduced to the east, west and north of the Application Site. Beyond the railway to the south lies an area of largely Edwardian housing in addition to the recent residential uses to the north west of the Site, served off Petersfield Avenue.
- 2.3 Vehicle access and pedestrian access to the Site is from Wexham Road, via the recently named 'Technology Boulevard'. The Site benefits from excellent road connectivity with the M4 (just 1.4 miles south) providing easy access to the M25. Slough Railway Station is within a 15-minute walk and provides TfL Rail and Great Western Railway services between Reading and London Paddington. There are also bus services available from the nearby Wexham Road, with the closest bus stop being located immediately to the west of the site.

- 2.4 The Site is located within Flood Zone 1 – an area of low flood risk and preferable location for development.

### **Planning History**

- 2.5 The eastern two thirds of the application site have been cleared and the buildings demolished as part of a Prior Approval submission (P/00072/092) which was granted by SBC in July 2019. This phase of demolition work was carried out by Panattoni, the previous owners of the site, and was subject to Archaeological Investigations in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation agreed with SBC, and decontamination and remediation on areas of the site demolished prior to 2023.
- 2.6 This earlier phase of demolition and de-contamination works have been completed and included the removal of buildings, plant and ancillary structures and areas of hard standing located in the eastern and northern areas of the site.
- 2.7 As of June 2023, the Application Site incorporated six former industrial buildings including a single storey fuel store, a 5 storey and a 2 storey office building together with further 2 and 3 storey industrial buildings. A photographic survey of the Site confirmed that all of the remaining buildings were vacant, and that the ground was mostly made up of hardstanding. An application was submitted to SBC (ref P/00072/128) for demolition and enabling works which would facilitate delivery of the development proposed by this OPA. This application was conditionally approved by SBC on 7 March 2024. Of the 16 appended conditions, 7 were pre-commencement conditions.
- 2.8 The submission of details relating to condition 3 (Demolition and Construction Environmental Management Plan) and condition 4 (Dust Management Plan) of P/00072/128 dated 07/03/24 were discharged under planning reference P/00072/141 on 31 May 2024.
- 2.9 The submission of information pertaining to on-site drainage as required by the LLFA under condition 6 of P/00072/128 dated 07/03/24 was fully discharged under planning reference P/00072/138 on 4 April 2024.
- 2.10 Details submitted pursuant to condition 14 (Archaeology) of P/00072/128 dated 07/03/24 were discharged under planning reference P/00072/140 on 3 June 2024.
- 2.11 Information submitted against condition 15 (Construction Noise Levels and Mitigation) of P/00072/128 dated 07/03/24 was discharged under planning reference P/00072/148 on 31 May 2024.
- 2.12 Information submitted against conditions 13 (Design and Construction details for retaining wall and piling) and 16 (Design appearance detail of the retaining wall) of P/00072/128 dated 07/03/24 was submitted to Slough Borough Council on 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2024 under the reference P/00072/150 and is still pending a decision.

2.13 Table 1 outlines the pertinent planning application history associated with the Application Site. Recent history indicates an established industrial use with some ancillary office space.

**Table 1 - Site Planning History**

| Reference   | Description  | Decision (Date)                        |
|-------------|--|--|
| P/00072/092 | Application for the prior approval for the demolition of established industrial area   | Prior Approval granted<br>(15/07/19)   |
| P/00072/093 | Creation of new "trans shipping" area replacing part existing visitor car park and ground floor slab of previously demolished building. Widening of existing vehicular junction with Petersfield Avenue to enable articulated lorries and 12 tonnes lorries to access and egress. Tarmac vehicular accessible areas of site to falls connecting into existing on site and adjacent soakaways. Construction of ancillary buildings comprising; Portakabin office, Portakabin washrooms, Storage unit for vehicle maintenance, open sided canopy for temporary goods storage and small 1m <sup>3</sup> Cat 5 water supply tank.  | Approved with conditions<br>(10/07/20) |
| P/00072/096 | <p>Outline planning application (to include matter of principal points of access), to be implemented in phases, for mixed use development comprising:</p> <p>(a) Demolition of existing buildings and structure and preparatory works (including remediation) and access from Wexham Road;</p> <p>(b) Up to 1,000 residential dwellings (Use Class C3); along with flexible commercial uses including all or some of the following use classes A1 (Shops), A2 (Financial and Professions Services), A3 (Food and Drink), D1 (Non-residential Institutions) and D2 (assembly and Leisure); car parking; new public spaces, landscaping; vehicular and pedestrian access; and</p> <p>(c) The provision of commercial floorspace including all or some of the following use classes B2 (General Industry), B8 (Storage and Distribution) and sui generis data centre (including ancillary office space and associated plan and infrastructure provision); car parking, landscaping and vehicular and pedestrian access.</p> <p>(Matters of Scale, Layout, Appearance and Landscaping to be dealt with by reserved matters).</p> | Approved with conditions<br>(19/11/20) |

|             |  |  |
|-------------|--|--|
| P/00072/108 | Approval of reserved matters following the outline approval reference P/00072/096 dated 19th November 2020 for the mixed use development of land at the former Akzonobel Decorative Paints facility, Wexham Road, Slough SL2 5DB. Reserved matters application for full details of access (internal site arrangements), appearance, layout, scale, and landscaping for the first phase of the approved commercial floorspace, comprising data centre use (including ancillary office space and associated plant and infrastructure provision); car parking, landscaping and vehicular and pedestrian access. | Approved with conditions<br>(12/10/21) |
| P/17377/002 | Environmental Screening opinion for outline planning permission for the erection of up to 90,640 sqm of GEA data centre development (Sui Generis use), with ancillary office and plant, in addition to associated groundworks, utilities, infrastructure and engineering works. Means of access included, with matters relating to appearance, landscaping, drainage and layout of the development areas reserved for subsequent approval.   | EIA not required<br>(17/11/23)         |
| P/00072/128 | Planning application for the decontamination of the site, demolish the remaining buildings, undertake ancillary engineering work to stabilise the ground conditions and the delivery of ancillary retaining walls  | Approved with conditions<br>(07/03/24) |
| P/00072/138 | Submission of details pursuant to condition 6 (Drainage) of planning permission P/00072/128 dated 07/03/2024   | Approved<br>(04/04/24)                 |
| P/00072/141 | Submission of details pursuant to condition 3 (Demolition and Construction Environment Management Plan) & 4 (Dust Management Plan) of planning permission P/00072/128 dated 07/03/2024   | Approved<br>(31/05/24)                 |
| P/00072/148 | Submission of details pursuant to condition 15 (Construction plant noise) of planning permission P/00072/128 dated 07/03/2024  | Approved<br>(31/05/24)                 |
| P/00072/140 | Submission of details pursuant to condition 14 (Archaeology) of planning permission P/00072/128 dated 07/03/2024   | Approved<br>(03/06/24)                 |

### **Contextual Planning Applications**

- 2.14 The following planning applications in the vicinity of the site provide further relevant context to the proposals.

*Land at Former AkzoNobel Decorative Paints*

- 2.15 Land at the former AkzoNobel Decorative Paints site had previously secured outline planning permission in November 2020 (P/00072/096) for the mixed-use development of up to 1,000 homes with commercial and industrial uses. This outline application comprised the full extent of the former AkzoNobel site between the railway lines and the Grand Union Canal (including the current Application Site). As echoed in the Officer's Report, this permission established that *"the principle of the various commercial land uses proposed, including the proposed data centre use, was supported"*.
- 2.16 Reserved matters approval was granted in October 2021 for the first phase of development – 42,237sqm of non-residential uses comprising two data centre facilities and associated infrastructure (referred to as 'Yondr' herein), in the parcel of land to the immediate north the 'Technology Boulevard' and north of the Application Site. The data centres, now under construction, are just under 24m in height and are accessed via Wexham Road and 'Technology Boulevard' for pedestrian, cyclist and vehicular (including for construction, servicing and delivery) access.
- 2.17 The extant outline permission had reserved the Application Site for the development of up to 1,000 homes and up to 1,500sqm of flexible A1 (Shops), A2 (Professional Services), A3 (Restaurants), D1 (Community) and D2 (Leisure) uses, notwithstanding subsequent changes to land use classifications under the General Permitted Development Order. However, this element of the conditional planning permission has never been implemented by previous landowners. Instead, the then owner of the site (SBC) had a pre-purchase discussion with Equinix about the principal of using the site as a data centre campus. Following these discussions the then owner sold the freehold of the site to Equinix (the applicant) in order to deliver a data centre campus.

**Pre-Application Discussions**

- 2.18 A pre-application request was submitted to SBC in October 2022 in respect of the following proposed development:
- "Outline planning application for the redevelopment of land for a data centre campus, associated engineering works, and with vehicle access proposed from Wexham Road and 'Technology Boulevard' to the north (access to be approved, appearance, layout, scale and landscaping to be reserved"*
- 2.19 Following the initial pre-purchase meeting, in tandem with the pre-application submission, a formal Planning Performance Agreement (PPA) was prepared and signed in June 2023.
- 2.20 The applicant and the design team have undergone detailed pre-app conversations since October 2022 with SBC officers, local stakeholders and the public, comprising a number of

regular meetings (virtual) followed by agreed notes of those meetings as well as email correspondence and telephone calls. As part of these discussions SBC have been generally supportive of the redevelopment of the site for data centre uses. They have provided feedback regarding the scale and invited detailed work in the form of a Townscape and Visual Impact Assessment (TVIA) to support the pre-application and future OPA. Detailed pre-app discussions have also been held with Heritage England (HE) in the context of the impact of the proposals on the setting and significance of Windsor Castle and Windsor Great Park.

- 2.21 The Design and Access Statement indicates the design evolution that has occurred as a result of this extensive period of engagement. Additionally, the Statement of Community Involvement details the way in which queries by representatives from over 1,300 homes and places of work around the site have been addressed.

### **3.0 THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT**

#### **Description of Development**

- 3.1 It is proposed to redevelop the Application Site to provide a data centre campus, together with ancillary offices, staff facilities and associated engineering works. The full description of development is as follows:

*"Outline planning permission for the erection of up to 90,614sqm of GEA data centre development and including ancillary offices, substation, together with associated additional plant facilities, enclosures and gantries, groundworks, utilities, engineering operations and temporary ancillary uses and all other infrastructure works. Approval is sought for an emergency means of access on Wexham Road and access points on the Technology Boulevard. The proposed development is a phased development with each phase being a separate and severable part of the development. Matters relating to layout, scale, appearance, additional access points along Technology Boulevard and landscaping, are reserved for subsequent approval."*

- 3.2 Detailed Planning Permission is being sought for vehicle access points from the 'Technology Boulevard' and an emergency vehicle access from Wexham Road, along with scale of the proposed development, with all other access matters being reserved for subsequent approval.

#### **Use**

- 3.3 The proposal is primarily for data centre use (sui generis) with a Gross External Area (GEA) of up to 90,614 m<sup>2</sup> plus ancillary plant, substation and utilities.

#### **Access and Movement**

- 3.4 Vehicular access in and out of the Site for customers, staff and general maintenance will be provided from Wexham Road via the new Technology Boulevard with full details of the car parking provided at reserved matters stage. Emergency access to the substation and data centres will be located through a gated access from Wexham Road.
- 3.5 Access for pedestrians and cyclists will be provided and full detail of this provided at reserved matters stage.

### **Key Development Parameters**

- 3.6 The outline planning application for the Wexham Road Data Centre Campus is supported by a series of parameter plans to set key parameters of the proposed footprint and height, as well as vehicle access parameters for points of access not covered in detail in this outline application and landscape parameters. The proposed massing heights will be stepped to reduce visual impact, but the maximum heights will be 38.5 metres. There is allowance of an additional 3m above the 38.5m, for the height of the back up generator flues, coming to 41.5 meters in total.

### **Development Zone**

- 3.7 At both the pre-purchase discussion in October 2022 and the subsequent pre-application discussions and workshops with Council officers, stakeholders and the public the illustrative scheme of the site as supported by the parameters plan seeks to deliver redevelopment of the site as a data centre campus, with the development zone to be situated centrally within the site. Ancillary plant is located to the south and on the roofs of the data centre buildings behind perforated mesh architectural screening.

### **Uses**

- 3.8 The uses parameter plan identifies the areas within the site where particular uses will be concentrated. The front of house areas, will predominantly be located along the northern elevation creating an active frontage to Technology Boulevard. These areas include office space for customers and staff, reception areas, security rooms, conference rooms, storage areas and other spaces critical for personnel within the data centre. No plant should be located here. Back of House areas, ancillary plant, and any substation and external gantry spaces are to be located to the south of the site, adjacent to the railway lines. The data hall sits between these providing the primary frontage along Wexham Road.

### **Plot Setbacks**

- 3.9 The Plot Setbacks Parameter Plan shows the minimum distance between the development zone and key boundaries. This includes the illustration of a 15m set back between the pavement on Wexham Road and building mass to the west of the site, further a minimum set back of 8m will be provided to the south west corner of the site, between the building mass and red line boundary and increases to 15m noted previously. There will also be a 10m setback from Technology Boulevard adoption boundary to the north. A 5m setback is allowed for between the development zone and the red line boundary, adjacent to National Rail land.

### ***Massing Heights***

- 3.10 The proposed parameters for the maximum building heights subdivide the site into 4 areas. The proposed parameter massing steps up in height towards the centre of the site, with the highest point set a 38.5m, with a small area proposed to have an additional 3m allowance for flues. The lowest elements, set at 24m, face north towards Technology Boulevard and south towards the Network Rail boundary. This ensures a height that respects the scale of the development to the north and steps down to the southern residential areas.

### ***Sections***

- 3.11 The Sections AA and BB exhibit proposed heights, where the tallest point would be up to 38.5m with an additional allowance of 3m for flues.

### ***Site Access and Flows***

- 3.12 This Parameter Plan shows the Site Access and emergency vehicle flow through the site. Primary access points are to be provided via the Technology Boulevard. Emergency access will also be provided from Wexham Road. Along Technology Boulevard additional car, pedestrian and cycle access points are to be confirmed at reserved matters stage.

### ***Landscape Strategy***

- 3.13 Historically the site's industrial legacy excluded opportunities to provide high quality landscaping that provides biodiversity enhancements to the locality. The redevelopment of the site in its post decontamination era has provided an opportunity to deliver a greatly enhanced soft and hard landscaped face to the public realm.
- 3.14 Landscape parameters plans and the accompanying Illustrative Landscape Scheme indicate how areas of the site have been set aside to provide a green swathe of planting along in particular the Technology Boulevard, Wexham Road and the railway boundary. The details of the hard and soft landscaping and the way it delivers more than the nationally required bio-diversity net gain will be detailed in the subsequent reserved matters submission and discharge of condition submissions.

### ***Infrastructure and Enabling Works***

- 3.15 It is anticipated that the following infrastructure will be required to facilitate development:

- demolition of existing buildings, structures and hardstanding together with works to complete the de-contamination of the Site (*to be completed under in 2024 / 2025 under the provisions of planning permission P/00072/128*);
- ground and engineering works;
- provision of utilities infrastructure including power, fibre and water provision along with surface and foul water drainage, storm-water attenuation tanks and permeable paving; and
- other related engineering operations or works.

### **Indicative Development Sequencing**

- 3.16 The overall scheme to deliver up to 90,614 sqm of data centre GEA is anticipated to be delivered over a period of up to 20 years, broken down into the following stages;
- Stage 1a (year 1 – 3) Vehicle Access – Delivery of the vehicle access supporting the initial development / construction stages;
  - Stage 1b (year 1 – 5) Initial Electrical Substation – Delivery of the electrical plant to receive grid power, to support the first stage of the development (subject to available utilities connection / supply);
  - Stage 2 (year 4 – 7) Data Centre – Delivery of the first data centre block with its access point, and landscaping areas along Wexham Road, and the ‘Technology Boulevard’ and the southern boundaries; and
  - Stage 3 (year 5 – 20) Further Data Centre Development – Delivery of the remaining data centre blocks, the main electrical substation to receive grid power to support later stages of the development, and landscaping areas (subject to available utilities connection / supply and market demand).
- 3.17 Further details regarding the development’s indicative phasing are set out in the Indicative Phasing Statement and Indicative Sequencing Plan (22058-BWT-ZZ-XX-DR-A-3000 P02) provided at **Appendix B**.
- 3.18 The delivery of the proposed data centre campus is reliant upon a number of items to enable its delivery and also factors that will dictate the speed at which the development is delivered. Currently, there is strong national demand for data centre development and therefore the development will be delivered as quickly as possible to meet the demand. However, another critical consideration is the availability of utilities, particularly power supply and connection to serve the development.
- 3.19 The availability of a power supply is a key factor in determining the sequenced construction strategy – currently, there is an incoming power supply from a nearby Equinix site to support

the first stage of development, but subsequent stages are constrained until this initial supply can be sufficiently increased over the next 20 years. High Voltage ducting is proposed to enter the site from the southwestern boundary and be routed to the substation, from which Medium to Extra Low Voltage ducting will be routed around the site to serve the data centres and ancillary equipment.

- 3.20 Where appropriate, the submission reports and assessments provide additional written commentary to clarify how the report has addressed / relates to the stage delivery of this proposed development. Notwithstanding the anticipated delivery sequence outlined above, in order to test maximum development impacts and provide a robust assessment, specific submission reports test the impact and requirements of the development proposals for the whole site to be delivered as a single undertaking, within a shorter timescale.

#### 4.0 SUBMISSION CONTEXT

##### **Slough Inclusive Growth Strategy**

- 4.1 In Summer 2020, SBC published its Inclusive Growth Strategy – a key policy document for the Council which provides a framework for targeting and delivering inclusive growth to 2025. The development proposals are evaluated against the Inclusive Growth Strategy in further detail in **Section 5**.
- 4.2 The publication of this Strategy is particularly timely, given the economic climate created by the Covid-19 pandemic and the UK’s departure from the EU. Indeed, in the context of the current ‘cost of living crisis’, many economic commentators anticipate that development will continue to slow down as the market reacts to the impact of these events, so as to provide a once in a generation economic challenge. It is therefore imperative that, where appropriate, development investment is supported to rekindle then sustain growth in a time of immense economic uncertainty. It is also understood that since the publication of the Inclusive Growth Strategy, much work has also been undertaken to support the area of Employability and Skills in the Borough of Slough and to tackle increasing unemployment as a result of the pandemic and in particular from those seriously impacted by the effects on the Aviation industry and the businesses within the Team Heathrow footprint which are all located within close proximity to Slough.
- 4.3 AkzoNobel and Equinix are key partners in delivering the Council’s Inclusive Growth vision, with AkzoNobel considered an ‘economic anchor’ and Equinix a world-class employer. The proposed scheme aligns with the vision and direction set out in the Inclusive Growth Strategy, providing growth in areas of strong economic activity while creating both direct and indirect jobs within the Borough. The proposal also represents a significant opportunity for Equinix to expand and develop on its existing community and inclusiveness offer for Slough and the wider region, including its local apprenticeship scheme and active promotion of equality in the workplace.
- 4.4 The Inclusive Growth Strategy identifies Slough as the UK’s data centre hub, with at least 7 data centres located within the Borough. There is a drive to improve digital infrastructure, with key investments targeted towards business support provision, digital connectivity and transport solutions. The proposal therefore serves as a major opportunity to build on Slough’s reputation as an internal hub for data centres, expanding what is now acknowledged as a critical sector for the local and national economy.

##### **Slough Joint Strategic Needs Assessment**

- 4.5 SBC’s Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (‘JSNA’) was prepared in 2018 to highlight the wider social, environmental, and economic factors that impact on the health and wellbeing of Slough residents.

- 4.6 The JSNA highlights the need to provide continuing support for those who are currently out of the labour market and express a desire to re-enter the job market. In 2019, approximately 4.1% of Slough's population were unemployed (compared to 3% regionally) and 21.6% were economically inactive (of the economically inactive population, 23% want a job). This is slightly worse than Slough's 2016 data, where 3.8% were unemployed and 20.8% were economically inactive. SBC states that barriers faced by economically inactive people who aspire to enter the labour market include 'expensive childcare, inflexible job opportunities and low skills of the resident population'.
- 4.7 The proposal presents an opportunity for Equinix, a world-class employer, to create new jobs and develop on its existing community and inclusiveness offer for Slough and the wider region, including employment, training and local outreach events and partnership, mentoring and work experience with local schools. This further ties in with the Inclusive Growth Strategy with its focus on job creation and upskilling local residents to bridge the productivity gap.
- 4.8 The JSNA also highlights that a key employment inequality relates to women in employment, especially those with children and caring responsibilities. The JSNA attributes this inequality to Slough's ethnic makeup, as evidence suggests that women from black and minority ethnic groups face greater employment inequalities than their peers. As stated above and in the accompanying Socio-Economic Benefit Statement, Equinix has strong links in the existing community and actively promotes equality in the workplace.
- 4.9 In the JSNA, Slough outlines its priorities for improving employment activity, all of which the proposals align with. This includes:
- protecting existing business areas;
  - addressing the skills gap in the local population (encouraging employers to recruit locally and those on the Slough Trading Estate to support the Aspire project); and
  - protecting the viability and diversity in the town and district centres.
- 4.10 SBC is clear that its ambition is to:
- "make Slough the location of choice for business, for those already based here and those who may choose Slough in the future; for Slough businesses to thrive and grow, creating sustainable job opportunities for our residents and growth opportunities for our businesses; and for our residents to have the skills that they and businesses need to succeed in the future".*
- 4.11 The proposals address this ambition and will deliver economic benefits to the local and wider community. Detailed information on the community, social and economic benefits of this proposed development are covered in the Socio-Economic Benefit Statement supporting this application and further assessed in the planning balance later in this planning statement.

## 5.0 EVALUATION AGAINST NATIONAL AND LOCAL POLICY AND OTHER MATERIAL PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

- 5.1 Under Section 38(6) of the *Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004)*, the starting point for the determination of any planning application is the Development Plan. Other material considerations then need to be considered and weighed in the overall planning balance.
- 5.2 This section of the Statement identifies the most relevant national and local planning policy and provides an assessment of the proposals against the relevant policy. It then sets out an assessment of the planning balance of the impacts of the proposed development against the benefits of the proposed development.

### National Planning Policy Framework

- 5.3 National policy is set out within the National Planning Policy Framework ('NPPF') (December 2023) which, at its heart, contains a presumption in favour of sustainable development.
- 5.4 Paragraph 7 of the NPPF establishes the planning system's purpose, which is to contribute to achieving sustainable development that performs an economic, social and environmental role. Paragraph 11 clearly identifies that local planning authorities should approve proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay.
- 5.5 Section 6 of the NPPF recognises the need to build a strong, competitive economy. Paragraph 86 states that planning policies should be "*be flexible enough to accommodate needs not anticipated in the plan, allow for new and flexible working practices (such as live-work accommodation), and to enable a rapid response to changes in economic circumstances*". Local policies and decisions should also make "*provision for clusters or networks of knowledge and data-driven, creative or high technology industries; and for storage and distribution operations at a variety of scales and in suitably accessible locations*" (Paragraph 87).
- 5.6 Section 11 seeks to encourage the effective use of land, with Paragraph 124 encouraging local authorities to "*support the development of under-utilised land and buildings*".
- 5.7 Section 16 seeks to ensure heritage assets are conserved and/or enhanced and applications which are identified to cause harm to a designated asset, will be assessed in accordance with paragraphs 205-208. Planning applications which are identified to cause an impact on designated assets are required to be supported by a heritage impact assessment to describe the significance of the asset, and the level of detail in the report should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on the asset's significance.

- 5.8 The NPPF strongly emphasises the importance of good design and encourages local planning authorities to plan for climate change, including expecting new development to minimise its energy consumption via landform, layout, building orientation, massing and landscaping.
- 5.9 In the Rt Hon Rachel Reeves MP speech as Chancellor of the Exchequer on 8<sup>th</sup> July 2024 and Sir Partick Vallance FRS FMedSci FRCP Hon FREng the Minister of State for Science's (previously the Government's Chief Scientific Advisor) announcement of the same day the Labour Government expressly highlighted the importance of facilitating the delivery of new data centres in order to drive an increase in productivity and economic growth in the UK.
- 5.10 This announcement is reflected in paragraphs 84 and 85 of the draft revision to the NPPF, currently undergoing consultation until 24 September 2024, which places a strong emphasis on identifying sites for the commercial development of *inter alia* data centres and digital infrastructure, and on supporting clusters of high technology (including data centres) to support locational, regional and/or national economic growth and resilience. The draft revisions also comprise a key amendment at paragraph 122, which states all proposals for brownfield development should be regarded as acceptable in principle by decision-makers.
- 5.11 In this national context the proposal seeks to positively contribute towards building a strong and competitive economy by decontaminating and enhancing a currently vacant employment site to provide new development which will introduce improved commercial and employment facilities and will deliver a range of economic benefits. The development responds to changes in the economic climate by addressing a significant rise in data centre demand and is situated in an accessible location. The proposals will meet the requirements of high-quality design standards and will respond positively to climate change through both its design and future construction.

### **The Development Plan**

- 5.12 For the purposes of Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act, the relevant components of the Development Plan in the determination of this planning application are as follows:
- The Core Strategy 2006-2026 DPD (adopted December 2008)
  - The Site Allocations DPD (adopted November 2010)
  - Saved Policies from the Slough Local Plan (adopted March 2004)
- 5.13 This section considers each of these documents in turn, identifying the key policies relating to the proposed development of the Site.

### ***The Core Strategy 2006-2026 DPD***

#### *Core Policy 1 (Spatial Strategy)*

- 5.14 This policy sets out SBC's overall strategy for growth and development. Development is directed towards built-up areas and on previously developed land, while proposals for comprehensive regeneration of selected key locations will be encouraged at an appropriate scale. This policy also states that some relaxation of the policies or standards in the Local Development Framework may be allowed where this can be justified by the overall environmental, social and economic benefits that will be provided to the wider community.
- 5.15 In this context, the site is in a preferred location for development being located within the central built up area of Slough, with good existing transport connections and the proposals will provide wider community benefits to the environment, as set out in the submitted Socio-economic Benefit Statement submitted with this application. The socio and economic benefits of the scheme identifies the following benefits; an injection of £8.2 million in business rates to SBC per year providing additional revenue to fund essential local services, the regeneration of the existing site and improving the local character with a high-quality landmark building, high-quality landscaping and an increase of at least 10% Biodiversity Net Gain. The proposal will also provide opportunity for Equinix, who is an established, trusted and experienced data centre developer to contribute to Slough's community and who are committed to working in partnership with SBC to support their vision for inclusive growth. The proposed development is therefore completely in line with the Council's Spatial Strategy and includes benefits to the wider community detailed later in this planning statement and within the Socio-Economic Assessment supporting this planning application.

#### *Core Policy 5 (Employment)*

- 5.16 CP5 protects Existing Business Areas (such as the AkzoNobel site) against non-employment generating uses. Major warehousing and distribution development will be directed towards the eastern part of the Borough and Existing Business Areas that have good access to the strategic road and rail network.
- 5.17 The policy states that:
- "intensive employment generating uses which increase the level of in-commuting, increase skill shortages or reduce employment opportunities for local people will be expected to contribute toward appropriate mitigation measures, including new training, childcare and transport facilities".*
- 5.18 The policy also requires the location, scale and intensity of new employment development to reinforce the spatial and transport strategy. Where relevant, this includes capping the number of spaces in new development unless additional parking is required of road safety or operational reasons.

- 5.19 The proposed development is for employment uses within an Existing Business Area, the former AkzoNobel site, which is considered to have excellent connectivity to both the road and rail network, as well as public transport and is therefore an appropriate sustainable location for such development. The development will also provide direct employment benefit, both during the construction phase and on an ongoing basis during the operation of the data centre facility. This provides Equinix, as a key local employer, the opportunity to create new employment opportunities and expand on its existing community and inclusiveness offer. Further information and assessment against the Slough Inclusive Growth Strategy 2020-2025 is set out in additional detail below.
- 5.20 The development is consistent with the established industrial context in this location and will relate well to adjacent uses including Yondr's data centres. Although data centres generate fewer employment numbers once the building is in use in relation to traditional office space, they are important employment generating uses which generate a range of employment opportunities to the local community and have significant wider economic benefits. The development proposed will secure approx. 4,102 direct jobs during the construction phase and approx. 90-100 on-site jobs once the campus is operational. In addition, during the data centres' operation, about 260 indirect jobs could be created in Slough's local data economy and over 200 local unrelated service sector jobs e.g. retail / hospitality. Notwithstanding this local employment creation, the proposed development could create up to 163 direct, indirect and induced job nationally. Further detail is set out in the submitted Socio-Economic Benefit Statement.

*Core Policy 7 (Transport)*

- 5.21 This policy requires all new development to reinforce the principles of the transport and Spatial Strategy, which seeks to ensure that new development is sustainable and located in the most accessible locations.
- 5.22 Proposals (individually or collectively) are expected to reduce the need to travel, discourage reliance on the private car and improve road safety and air quality. Where appropriate, development is required to make contributions towards certain borough-wide initiatives, such as improvements to railway stations and key transport corridors. Finally, this policy seeks to ensure that there is no overall increase in the number of parking spaces in commercial redevelopment schemes, unless there are local road safety or operational reasons.
- 5.23 The proximity to public transport will play an important role in encouraging sustainable travel and reducing the reliance on the private car. The proposed development accommodates the optimal number of spaces possible within the confines of the site totalling up to 171 car parking spaces. Electric Vehicle Charging will be implemented in accordance with the Slough Low Emissions Strategy. Bicycle storage provision for up to 90 bicycles will also be made on

site. This application is accompanied by a Transport Assessment which provides an evaluation of current local environment for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users, establishes trip generation and traffic impacts associated with the proposal and demonstrates that the development, due to the manageable staffing levels and travel characteristics of the use, its employees and customers, that the development will not cause any unacceptable transport impacts and is considered acceptable against the requirements of Core Policy 7.

*Core Policy 8 (Sustainability and the Environment)*

- 5.24 This policy requires all development to be sustainable, of a high-quality design, improve the environment's quality and address climate change impact. Where feasible, development should minimise the consumption of energy and water and incorporate renewable resources and sustainable design and construction techniques. Development should be attractive, safe, accessible and respect its location and surroundings. It must not give rise to unacceptable levels of pollution, including noise and air pollution, and must sustainably manage surface water.
- 5.25 This application is supported by a Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment, carried out in line with relevant legislation, policy and guidance and which considers potential noise emissions from the site, both independently and cumulatively with the adjacent Yondr development. The assessment has considered potential impacts to surrounding noise and vibration receptors using the maximum height parameters and the illustrative scheme for the location of key plant and equipment and has also considered that the development will be delivered in stages. The assessment results have found no significant impacts on nearby receptors. The proposed development would not therefore cause any unacceptable or adverse impacts in relation to noise and vibration.
- 5.26 The application is also supported by an Air Quality Impact Assessment, which has been carried out based on the full development using maximum parameter heights, and the illustrative scheme for location and quantity of generators. The assessment has considered the construction phase (construction dust), operational phase (operational traffic and planned testing and emergency use of diesel generators: and identification of mitigation measures. The assessment evaluates the potential air quality impacts on the surroundings area in relation to human health and ecology and also proposes effective mitigation measures and includes potential emissions to the air from the Site, both independently and cumulatively with the adjacent Yondr development and the existing Slough Campus data centres operated by Equinix. Overall, the air quality modelling suggests that no adverse impacts are expected and no additional mitigation of emissions is required beyond the SCR systems already proposed to be fitted to protect human health or designated environmental receptors during operation of the data centre. The operational impacts in terms of air quality and noise would not give rise to unacceptable impacts.

- 5.27 In terms of construction impacts, this outline application is also supported by an Outline Construction Management Plan which outlines a framework and principles relating to management of proposed construction works at the Site and provides detail on working hours, noise mitigations, dust and Transport and vehicles access strategy, to ensure impacts during the construction stage are minimised in line with Core Policy 8.
- 5.28 All commercial development must also comply with SBC's Developer Guide Part 2 (General Development Guidance) requiring all major commercial development of this scale to achieve a BREEAM rating of 'Excellent' and to include around 10% of the energy generation capacity from low or carbon sources.
- 5.29 This planning application is supported by an Energy and Sustainability Statement sets out how the building design will respond to requirements under Core Policy 8 and the Developer Guide. In summary the proposed development will achieve a BREEAM 'Excellent' rating, and achieve, if feasible, a 10% reduction in energy consumption from renewable energy in Front of House Areas (Part L), in accordance with Slough's sustainability policies and supplementary planning guidance. The building will also recycle waste on site, reduce water consumption, incorporate sustainable design and construction techniques, limit local pollution, manage surface water in a sustainable way and reduce risk of flooding, protect, enhance and manage biodiversity in a sustainable manner.

*Core Policy 9 (Natural and Built Environment)*

- 5.30 Core Policy 9 stipulates that development must enhance and protect the historic environment, as well as respecting the character and distinctiveness of existing buildings, townscapes and landscapes and their local designations. Development must also protect and enhance water and natural environments. This policy also includes provisions for preserving and enhancing biodiversity in the borough, including along biodiversity-rich corridors.

*Built Environment*

- 5.31 Whilst the town centre of Slough itself comprises no assets of national significance, there are a number of locally listed buildings and areas of special character. The site also lies approximately 3.3km northeast of Windsor Castle (Grade I listed building) and Windsor Great Park (Grade I listed park land).
- 5.32 This planning application is supported by a Townscape and Visual Impact Assessment, prepared by FIRA, which sets out a full and robust assessment of the impact of the proposed development on the surrounding local townscape views and wider landscape views. The assessment has concluded that the proposals would result in relatively small impacts on the local townscape character; unavoidable visual impacts to those living and working in the immediate surrounds given the development's scale; and limited visual impacts from further

afield because the development becomes virtually indistinguishable from Slough's urban skyline from most viewpoints.

5.33 The TVIA also summarises an assessment undertaken to consider the proposed development in combination with other tall building proposals in Slough, and to consider their cumulative impacts on key views and receptors (discussed and agreed beforehand with SBC). The list of other visually significant projects comprises the following approved schemes and schemes which are the subject of pending planning applications, along with the approved up to heights:

- **01** – Former Octagon Offices, Brunel Way (P/04888/022) up to 7 storeys;
- **02A** – Horlicks Factory (P/00094/052) height up to 77m;
- **02B** – Horlicks Factory (P/00094/092) height up to 65.0m
- **03** – Queensmere Shopping Centre (P/19689/000) height up to 95.86m PENDING;
- **04** – Future Works (P/02272/030) height up to 83m;
- **05** – Former AkzoNobel site – Yondr Data Centre (P/00072/108) height up to 28.5m;
- **06** – Former BHS, 204-206 High Street (P/02683/015) height up to 13 storeys;
- **07** – Buckingham Gateway Site (P/04303/051) height up to 14 storeys PENDING;
- **08** – Beacon House, 50 Stoke Road (P/06964/016) height up to 8 storeys;
- **09** – Slough Canal Basin (Stoke Wharf) (P/07584/011) height up 47.95m;
- **10** – 15-23 Church Street (P/01571/013) height up to 17m;
- **11** – 7 Bath Road (Y/10427/011) height up to 7 storeys;
- **12** – Thomas House, Petersfield Avenue (P/02028/008) height up to 6 storeys PENDING;
- **13** – 79-83 Uxbridge Road (P/01303/018) height up to 4 storeys;
- **14** – Thames Central (P/02411/022) height up to 13 storeys;
- **15** – Grace House, Petersfield Avenue (P/19642/000) height up to 5 storeys;
- **16** – 190-192 High Street (P/03079/018) height up to 5 storeys PENDING;
- **17** – Landmark Place, High Street (P/10913/028) height up to 6 storeys; and
- **18** – 19-25 Lansdowne Avenue (P/01158/037) height up to 14.1m, plus roof plant.

5.34 The TVIA concludes that the proposed development once operational, and cumulatively with other local projects, would result in negligible impacts to national and local landscapes and in moderate adverse to minor beneficial impacts on local Townscape Character Areas. Similarly, the proposed development and other local projects would cumulatively result in moderate adverse to negligible visual impacts on key viewpoints. No additional mitigation measures have been proposed.

5.35 This application is supported by a Heritage Impact Assessment, prepared by Orion Heritage, which provides an assessment of the proposed development in relation to heritage assets. The proposed development is sited on a brown field site within the existing built-up area of Slough, which demonstrates that this proposal has taken account of the Spatial Strategy which aims to concentrate development in the town centre allowing the redevelopment of this site without causing any significant harm to the historic environment.

- 5.36 The Heritage Impact Assessment has been prepared following extensive pre-application with Historic England and concludes that the proposed development is expected to result in less than substantial harm on the setting of Windsor Castle and the setting of Windsor Great Park. This identified less than substantial harm is considered to be at the lower end of less than substantial. This harm triggers assessment of the proposed development against paragraph 208 of the NPPF, where the less than substantial harm identified to the significance of the designated heritage asset must be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, this balance is presented at paragraph 5.83 of this statement.
- 5.37 This application is also supported by an Archaeology Investigation Report, prepared by ERM which describes fully the archaeological work that has been carried out over a period of 4 years during the demolition and decontamination works to clean up the site prepare the site for redevelopment for data centre use. The Report demonstrates that an extensive period of survey and analysis has taken place and fully agreed with Berkshire Archaeology, who have confirmed their agreement to the Archaeology investigations at this site.

#### *Natural Environment*

- 5.38 This application is also supported by an Ecological Impact Assessment which identifies the on-site ecological baseline prior to enabling works taking place in 2024 and identifies potential impacts from the construction and operation of the proposed data centres and any required mitigation.
- 5.39 In line with National Planning Policy the application is supported by a Overall Biodiversity Gain Plan for the whole site, settling out how the required BNG of 10% will be achieved. Based on the current proposals and outlined assumptions, the Proposed Development is expected to result in an overall net gain of approx. 10.61% for habitats and 45.60% for linear habitats. Further detailed strategies for achieving BNG as the development is delivered over the sequence set out earlier in this statement, will be submitted at detailed reserved matters stage.

#### *Core Policy 12 (Community Safety)*

- 5.40 In line with policy, the proposed development seeks to create a higher-quality, greener, more inclusive, and safer environment which enhances the character appearance of the immediate area. In so doing, a greater sense of place would be created, pedestrian and cycling encouraged, natural surveillance improved and opportunities for crime and anti-social behaviour and the fear of these reduced, if not eliminated.
- 5.41 The proposals adopt a number of important principles to ensure the buildings and associated spaces proactively address the sites main street frontages, namely Wexham Road and Technology Boulevard. In particular, the proposed development would present a clear and

consistent building line to Technology Boulevard, define the access points, reintroduce active frontages, feature high-quality materials and lighting and incorporate extensive landscaping treatment to enhance the amenity of this key stretch of Technology Boulevard and its legibility and useability. In relation to Wexham Road, the proposed data centre is substantially set back, its ground floor level is largely below the height of the public realm, and again would feature high-quality external treatment, lighting, and landscaping.

### ***Site Allocations DPD***

- 5.42 The Site Allocations DPD supports and delivers policies of the Core Strategy through the identification of specific development sites. The Site was not identified in the Site Allocations DPD.

### ***Saved Policies from the Slough Local Plan***

#### *Policy EMP2 (Criteria for Business Developments)*

- 5.43 This policy requires business developments to be of a high-quality design and appropriate scale for its location. Development should not significantly harm the character of the surrounding area, result in a loss of neighbouring amenity (noise, overlooking etc) or significantly reduce the variety or range of business premises. Development should also incorporate appropriate landscaping, servicing and suitable access and turning for delivery vehicles and will not cause additional congestion to the existing highway network.
- 5.44 The proposed development, as presented within the Design and Access Statement and the detailed Design Codes will be of a high quality and of a scale appropriate to its location. The buildings would sit within the built-up area of Slough and be viewed within the wider context of Slough which currently has a varied skyline of a number of tall buildings in the centre of Slough and at the industrial estate to the west, as well as the towers from the power station to the west. The building would sit below the ridge of the Chiltern hills when view from the wider landscape to the south. The application is further supported by a number of technical reports which demonstrate that there will be no loss of neighbouring amenity and in transport terms the development can be safely accessed.

#### *Policy EMP12 (Remaining Existing Business Areas)*

- 5.45 EMP12 allows for a range of business developments within the Existing Business Areas (such as the former AkzoNobel site), with the proviso that B1(a) independent offices will only be permitted in accordance with a sequential test and where it would not increase the number of parking spaces. As noted, the proposed level of parking spaces will reflect the operational

requirements for the site and the proposed data centre use would be in accordance with the provisions of Policy EMP12 in terms of the scope of uses permitted under the adopted Local Plan (and having regard to The Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2020).

*Policy EN1 (Standard of Design)*

- 5.46 Proposals are required to reflect a high standard of design and improve their surroundings in terms of scale, height, massing, layout, siting, form, design, materials, access, visual impact and relationship to nearby properties, trees and watercourses.
- 5.47 The development is designed in response to the surrounding and wider area and incorporates design measures to ensure the data centre campus successfully assimilates with the existing industrial context, including masking the visually dominant Yondr data centres which are very visible due to their colouring from a number of local landmarks.
- 5.48 The development's layout and design will be subject to further subsequent approval but will have to be carefully considered to accommodate specific technical requirements associated with data centres whilst still delivering a high-quality scheme that respects the character and appearance of the surrounding area including wider strategically significant landscape e.g. Windsor Castle and Windsor Great Park.
- 5.49 The TVIA confirms the proposals (alone or taken cumulatively with other local tall-building projects) would result in relatively small impacts on the local townscape character; unavoidable visual impacts to those living and working in the immediate surrounds given the development's scale; and limited visual impacts from further afield because the development becomes virtually indistinguishable from Slough's urban skyline from most viewpoints.
- 5.50 The scheme design was developed in response to its surrounding and wider context, and the design responds positively to the road frontages and the relative siting of adjacent buildings, creates interest, and improves the quality of the built environment, such that the development will provide for a positive, high-quality landmark development at the Wexham Road Data Centre Campus.

*Policy EN3 (Landscaping)*

- 5.51 Under Policy EN3, comprehensive landscaping schemes will be required for all new development proposals. Existing mature trees should be retained where possible, and off-site planting may be required where there is a substantial loss of landscaping on site in order to enhance the setting of the area.

- 5.52 Strategic boundary landscaping areas and formal and street landscaping areas are set out on the Landscape Parameter Plan supporting this outline application. The landscaping strategy has been designed to achieve a positive interface between the site and the public realm, which includes areas of mixed habitat to provide suitable amenity, biodiversity and visual improvement. The detailed planting of these areas will be provided at reserved matters stage.

*Policy EN5 (Design and Crime Prevention)*

- 5.53 This policy requires schemes to be thoughtfully designed to reduce the potential for criminal activity and anti-social behaviour including by limiting the number of access points, providing secure boundaries, providing well-lit external areas, and the use of suitably robust material and defensive landscaping.
- 5.54 The need for security is intrinsic to the development of data centres and as such, the building itself will be completely fenced and gated off across all its boundaries with limited, monitored access into the Site. All details relating to the boundary details, and other security measures will be reserved for subsequent approval.
- 5.55 In addition to data centres' security needs and specific technical design requirements, the layout and design of the proposed development have sought to respond positively to the site and its location, and take a preventative place-making approach to potential criminal and anti-social activities, as described above under Core Policy 12.

*Policy EN6 (Interference with Telecommunication Signals)*

- 5.56 Policy EN6 prohibits the development of large buildings or structures where they would have the potential to interfere with telecommunications signals. Developers would only be granted subject to a condition requiring the appropriate mitigation measures to restore any impacted signals.
- 5.57 This application is supported by a Telecommunications Assessment Report which has been carried out to determine potential effects of the proposal on local broadcast services reception. The report concludes that the proposed development is not expected to cause any interference with any broadcast services in the local area. The report has found there to be no adverse impact caused and therefore no mitigation measures are required.

*Policy EN34 (Utility Infrastructure)*

- 5.58 This policy requires all development which increases demand for off-site services (e.g. water supply or drainage) to demonstrate sufficient capacity exists or that additional capacity will be provided in time to serve the development without harm to the environment.
- 5.59 The submitted Utilities Assessment confirms that adequate water infrastructure is available to service the site for potable water and foul and surface water drainage is readily available to support the proposed development in relation to personnel use and fire protection. There is no capacity available in the current supply for cooling processes, associated with the proposed data centre use. A space allowance within the outline scheme has been provided to enable connection to boreholes to extract water below ground, including water treatment to enable water to be used for process cooling. Details of water services to support each stage of the development will be provided as part of later reserved matters applications.
- 5.60 Currently, there is an incoming power supply from a nearby Equinix site to support the first stage of development, but subsequent stages are constrained until this initial supply can be sufficiently increased over the next 20 years. High Voltage ducting is proposed to enter the site from the southwestern boundary and be routed to the substation, from which Medium to Extra Low Voltage ducting will be routed around the site to serve the data centres and ancillary equipment. This sequencing will also affect provision of fibre infrastructure.

*Policy T2 (Parking Restraint)*

- 5.61 This policy requires commercial redevelopment schemes to ensure that there is no increase in the total number of car parking spaces unless there are safety or operational reasons.
- 5.62 As outlined above, the proposal includes 171 car parking spaces. It is demonstrated within the Transport Assessment that this level of parking is sufficient for the proposed use of the site and will ensure sufficient parking is provided for safe access to the site for all users.

*Policy T8 (Cycle Network and Facilities)*

- 5.63 This policy applies a presumption against development proposals which would prejudice the implementation of Slough's proposed cycle network. This presumption also applies against developments which do not include suitable cycle access to and through the site and cycle parking racks and other facilities for cyclists as an integral part of the development. The policy also stipulates that, where a major development would result in increased demand for travel, the Council will seek a financial contribution by way of agreement towards, and/or required by condition(s), appropriate improvements to the cycleway.

- 5.64 The Transport Assessment explains that safe and suitable cycle access, segregated from vehicle access will be provided to access the site. 90 cycle spaces are to be securely provided as part of the development proposals to support cycle use to the site. Shower and changing facilities are proposed within the buildings to encourage sustainable travel among employees and visitors. The exact location and design of these parking spaces will be the subject of subsequent approval.

### **Other Considerations**

#### ***Emerging Local Plan***

- 5.65 SBC is presently in the process of preparing a new Local Plan which will guide development in the borough to 2036. In November 2020, the Council consulted on its proposed spatial strategy, which includes delivering major redevelopment within the centre of Slough, selecting other key locations for appropriate sustainable development, protecting the built and natural environment, accommodating and mitigating against a third runway at Heathrow and promoting the northern expansion of Slough.
- 5.66 It should be noted that the Proposed Spatial Strategy did not contain any specific planning policies or allocate any sites for consultation. It also made it clear the existing planning policy framework for Slough would remain in force until replaced by new Local Plan policies in the future. Nevertheless, it sets out the most up to date statement of the Council's position with regards to strategic planning issues
- 5.67 As part of the Proposed Spatial Strategy Regulation 18 Consultation document (November 2020), the former AkzoNobel site was recognised as a Key Site for a possible new residential neighbourhood in line with outline permission P/00072/96. This included provision for a new bus link through the Site which would link to Uxbridge Road once the National Grid/Cadent site was redeveloped. However, this relied on former site landowner, Panattoni, for delivery of the envisioned 1,000 dwellings and circa 40,000sqm of warehousing.
- 5.68 SBC's Local Development Scheme indicates that the publication of the plan was targeted for Summer 2021, ahead of submission to the Secretary of State in Winter 2021, towards adoption of the Plan in Summer 2022. However, the publication of the Plan and subsequent stages have been delayed. As the emerging Plan is at an early stage, it is not currently considered to carry material weight in determining planning applications.

#### ***Slough Inclusive Growth Strategy 2020-2025***

- 5.69 In Summer 2020, SBC published its Inclusive Growth Strategy which provides a framework for targeting and delivering inclusive growth in the Borough to 2025. The Strategy outlines the priorities and objectives to bolster the local economy in the context of the wider economic

climate caused by the Covid-19 pandemic and the UK's departure from the EU by capitalising on new opportunities to achieve large-scale regeneration.

5.70 The Strategy supports the Local Plan in focusing growth in areas of strong economic activity. AkzoNobel is recognised as an important 'economic anchor' that will play a pivotal role in delivering the Strategy. Equally, Equinix is considered a world-class employer providing valuable jobs and investing in upskilling local people. The Strategy sets out six key priorities for achieving inclusive growth:

1. creating secure and productive jobs;
2. a skills system working for all;
3. regeneration and infrastructure unlocking growth;
4. enterprise and scale-up ecosystem;
5. inclusive and sustainable neighbourhoods; and
6. connecting and celebrating Slough.

5.71 As outlined in Section 4, SBC has also highlighted a need to provide continuing support for those who are currently out of the labour market and express a desire to re-enter the job market. In this context, the proposal will enable Equinix to create further local jobs and reduce the local productivity gap.

5.72 There is a strong focus on providing jobs and skills to the local population to bridge the productive gap, creating an appropriate balance of sectors and industry to promote economic resilience, and improving infrastructure and the built environment. SBC is also seeking to overcome the challenge of land availability and ensuring that priority sectors have the space to grow, and the supply of employment land can meet expected demand.

5.73 The proposal represents a significant opportunity for Equinix to expand and develop on its existing community and inclusiveness offer for Slough and the wider region which includes the following:

- local apprenticeship scheme which started in 2011;
- employment support for former armed forces personnel;
- partnership, mentoring and work experience with local schools;
- active promotion of equality, understanding and inclusion of women, BAME and LGBTQ in society and the workplace;
- calendar of employment, training and local outreach events and initiatives;
- charity funding, volunteering and employee contribution donation matching; and
- partnership support for various local businesses in connection with employee health, wellbeing and training packages.

5.74 The proposed development is for employment use, which further contributes towards key priorities one and two of the Strategy and builds on Equinix's position as a world-class employer. The proposal intensifies currently under-utilised employment land to provide enhanced facilities that will contribute towards strengthening the local economy. This

regeneration is in line with the Council's Inclusive Growth Strategy, particularly key priority three. The proposals entail substantive inward investment to reinforce existing industries, in line with key priority four. The proposal incorporates measures to ensure that development is inclusive and sustainable, improving the built environment and responding positively to climate change. As such the proposed development is considered to be entirely 'in-step' with the objectives for inclusive growth which the Council has recently set out and it would strongly support the stated aims under the Strategy. As detailed in the Socio-Economic Benefits Statement, the proposed development is expected to create approx. 966 local jobs (direct, indirect and induced) during operation, and an uplift of approx. £37.54m of economic activity in the local area per year.

### ***Climate Emergency***

- 5.75 In June 2019, SBC declared a climate emergency and committed to achieving zero carbon emissions by 2050. In December 2021, SBC adopted its Climate Change strategy and action plan which identifies data centres as a key source of emissions within the borough. This is associated with appliance efficiency and large energy demand (for cooling or other purposes) that result in significant amounts of wasted heat. The Sustainability Strategy submitted in support of this application sets out that the design team will coordinate a feasibility study to evaluate the feasibility to export heat to the surrounding neighbourhood, to ensure that any possible future local heat network is fully considered, and options remain available for later stages of the design process. This possibility could be highly beneficial to the local community. It is expected that in the next few decades most residential buildings will shift from gas boilers to heat pump enabling them to potential connect and make use of waste heat generated by the data centre.
- 5.76 In a similar vein, the Core Strategy requires new development, where feasible, to minimise the consumption and unnecessary use of energy, recycle waste, generate renewable resources, reduce water consumption and incorporate sustainable design and construction techniques.
- 5.77 SBC is also seeking to improve air quality across the Borough. While the Council has four established Air Quality Management Areas ('AQMAs'), the Application Site is not within any of these areas. Nonetheless, an Air Quality Assessment has been prepared in support of this application which demonstrates negligible impacts during construction (from the equipment) following the implementation of suitable construction management measures, and minor to negligible impacts on air quality and ecology receptors during operation (not enough to necessitate further NO2 mitigation measures).
- 5.78 The Council has prepared a Low Emission Strategy ('LES') document which forms part of the Air Quality Action Plan and that applies to development across the borough. The draft LES sets out development thresholds and the mitigations expected from each classification of

development. Major development will be required to submit an Air Quality Assessment and provide type 1, 2 or 3 mitigation. These include, but are not limited to:

- **Type 1 (industrial):** 10% EV Charging units; green infrastructure; zero emission heating and power systems where possible. However, no type 1 mitigation is defined for data centre uses.
- **Type 2:** monitored travel plan; Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP); measures to support public transport/cycling/walking; provision of a fleet emission reduction strategy; using reasonable endeavours to use/require vehicle use complying with the latest European Emission Standard.
- **Type 3:** off-set mitigation to support – Slough Low Emission Programme; feasible implementation of Clean Air Zone (CAZ) and ULEV standards for buses; Slough Electric Vehicle Plan; Cycle hire and network provision programme; infrastructure for low emission.

5.79 As part of their close collaboration with the European Data Centre Association Equinix helped develop and, became a founding signatory of, the Climate Neutral Data Centre Pact (CNDCP, “the Pact”) in 2021. The Pact commits participating data centre operators to:

- Achieve climate neutrality by 2030
- Improve the efficiency of energy use
- Purchase 100% carbon-free energy
- Prioritize water conservation through the selection of efficient and appropriate cooling solutions
- Increase the reuse, repair and recycle of Equinix owned servers, electrical equipment, and other related electrical components
- Reuse data centre heat where practical, environmentally sound and cost-effective

5.80 It is Equinix’ strategic target for existing and new data centres in UK to be matched 100% with renewable energy GOs.

5.81 The proposal makes provision for design features that respond positively to climate change and minimise the impact on the environment. The proposals are in compliance with national and local environmental standards and contribute to a more sustainable environment. Together, the proposed measures will *inter alia* work to secure front of house areas which meet the BREEAM “Excellent” rating; generate energy from renewable resources; recycle waste on-site; incorporate sustainable design and construction techniques, including the use of recycled materials and low carbon building materials where feasible; reduce water consumption; limit local pollution; and achieve a minimum 10% biodiversity net gain.

### **Key Planning Considerations and the Planning Balance**

- 5.82 The NPPF dictates that local planning authorities should approve development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay.
- 5.83 The proposals are in compliance with the Council's strategic planning objectives for the Borough and the proposed development responds to detailed requirements of local planning policy under the adopted development plan.
- 5.84 The application site is in a preferred location for development and has no material physical or planning constraints. Development in this location complies with and supports SBC's spatial strategy and is an appropriate reuse for a brownfield site within the built-up area of Slough.
- 5.85 Paragraphs 5.32 and 5.33 of this statement set out the conclusions of the Heritage Impact Assessment which identifies that the proposed development is considered to lead to less than substantial harm to the setting and significance of Windsor Castle and Windsor Great Park, identifying that the identified harm would be to assets of the highest possible significance. In assessing the proposed development in accordance with the NPPF the identified harm is assessed against public benefits of the proposal in the planning balance required by paragraph 208. The following public benefits must be weighed within the balance:
- Redevelopment of a vacant, underutilised, brownfield employment site in a sustainable location bringing it back into productive use;
  - Key local and wider economic benefits, including employment generation and local training and education opportunities and investing in local community initiatives and activities.
  - Providing digital infrastructure to address a nationally identified critical need for expanding digital economy, which supports economic growth.
  - High quality design and external appearance, controlled through a set of design rules within the submitted Design Code, which will provide substantial improvement to the visual appearance of the local townscape and streetscape.
  - Delivering sustainable construction and the achievement on 'BREEAM' Excellent in accordance with Slough's policy and adopted supplementary planning guidance.
  - An increase and improvement in landscape areas, including biodiverse planting and a 10% biodiversity net gain.
- 5.86 The proposed redevelopment also aligns with the NPPF's aim of making more efficient use of land and the drive in the Inclusive Growth Strategy to achieving large-scale regeneration

and meeting the demand for employment land. It is recognised that Slough has a particular challenge with land availability, given the tightly drawn boundaries of the surrounding Green Belt. This proposal presents an opportunity to appropriately and sustainably intensify the use of currently under-utilised brownfield land to provide economic growth, employment and a greatly enhanced facility that will better serve the local economy. This proposal will generate local employment opportunities which will, in turn generate a benefit to the local community and economy.

- 5.87 The proposal also further reinforces the local importance of two 'economic anchors' (Equinix and AkzoNobel) which have been identified as critical to meeting the objectives of the Inclusive Growth Strategy for the period to 2025. This is particularly important in the current economic climate created by the Covid-19 pandemic, the UK's departure from the EU, and the subsequent on-going cost of living economic crisis and as a result market uncertainty has caused the delivery of development to significantly slow. The proposal strengthens Slough's economic position as it becomes the location for the world's second biggest data centre hub and commercial centre by creating new jobs for local people and bringing investment through regeneration and growth. Indeed, it is considered that site intensification is justified and appropriate, considering adjacent regeneration and increased demand for data centre uses and represents an efficient use of land and the comprehensive planning submission and reports robustly assesses the impact of development. The proposal is designed such that responds positively to the local context, setting out a palette of colours and materials within the to be approved detailed Design Code, characteristic of the locality, and providing visual mitigation to the height and bulk of the massing.
- 5.88 The proposed development will deliver high quality design as set out in the accompanying Design and Access Statement and Design Code as well as improving the environment by increasing landscape areas and Biodiversity next gain which are huge benefits in improving the environment for the local community.
- 5.89 All the benefits identified are considered to significantly and demonstrable outweigh the less than substantial harm identified by the proposals on the setting of and significance of heritage assets identified above and within the Heritage Assessment and in accordance with paragraph 208 of the NPPF.
- 5.90 Through well-considered design, the proposed development fully complies with local policies and respond to SBC's declaration of a climate emergency. Sustainability is an integral part of the proposals, and the development will be able to positively respond to climate change.
- 5.91 Further, the proposed development responds to continued demand for digital communication infrastructure as an increasingly critical feature of the local and national economy. There is strong government support for facilitating the growth of the data and digital infrastructure sector, which has remained a well-performing and expanding sector despite the general economic slowdown. This approach is further reflected in the Inclusive Growth Strategy,

where SBC places importance on improving digital infrastructure. This sector is key to the continued success of the local economy and the planning system, with demand expected to rise steadily over time. The proposals provide an opportunity to expand a critical commercial sector of the local and national economy, while building on Slough's reputation as a strong data centre capital.

- 5.92 The proposed development will deliver a significant package of economic and employment-related benefits while responding to sustainability requirements and climate change within a sustainable and accessible location.

## **6.0 CONCLUSION**

- 6.1 This Statement sets out a proposal for the redevelopment of the former AkzoNobel industrial site for the provision of a new data centre campus in Slough. The development proposed will bring a vacant and underutilised centrally located site back into use ensuring it is better utilised and will provide critical data centre facilities in a highly-accessible part of Slough. The proposed facilities are suited to this long-established commercial gateway to the town which is considered a key component to the continued growth and success of Slough's economy.
- 6.2 The development proposals comply with national and local policies and should be considered in the context of national priorities wherein the Government is seeking to accelerate growth, increase flexibility, and minimise barriers to development. This is particularly important in the currently 'once in a lifetime' challenging economic climate, where a widespread slowdown in development due to market uncertainty and potential post pandemic economic recession is self-evident.
- 6.3 Data and digital infrastructure form a major sector of the global, national, regional and importantly the local economy. It continues to grow due to the immense growth and reliance on it by reason of the accelerated changes forced upon the economy and society by the global pandemic. An additional accelerator is now the introduction of AI into numerous applications of our daily lives.
- 6.4 Indeed, on 16 January 2024 the UK government formerly acknowledged that it wants to boost the nation's data centre infrastructure as part of a plan to make Britain more attractive to scale-up companies. In the announcement, Technology secretary Michelle Donelan MP sought plans to "reboot the development of Britain's data centre network." This initiative came after it was highlighted to the UK government that planning restrictions and a lack of adequate power infrastructure are holding back the development of new data centres.
- 6.5 The announcement indicated that digital infrastructure will be key to the government's ambition for the UK to become what Donelan described as a "scale-up powerhouse" with "all the right ingredients" to create a business environment that is attractive to growing companies, but that to succeed it will need to tap into the nation's "unlocked potential."
- 6.6 Elsewhere, ministers have been looking at the security and resilience of the UK data centre network, and in December 2023 launched a consultation on new regulations to improve the security and resilience of data infrastructure. A new regulator for digital infrastructure could be launched as part of the proposals.
- 6.7 Moreover, within a week of winning the General Election of July 2024 the Chancellor of the Exchequer the Right Honourable Rachel Reeves highlighted the need for pioneering industries, such as that provided by digital infrastructure providers, to build growth on strong and secure foundations built on sustainability, investment and reform. In the same week Sir

Patrick Vallance RFRS FMedSci FRCP HoFREng the new Minister of State for Science, Research and Innovation in the UK commented in a speech that the UK needs to delivery greatly enhanced digital infrastructure with additional data centres.

- 6.8 Consequently, there is strong local and national support for this expanding sector highlights the essential role it plays in helping to stabilise the economy, and its performance will be key for protecting Slough's position as a commercial centre and data centre hub. The proposals contribute towards the growth of this critical sector, therefore strengthening the success of the local economy.
- 6.9 The proposals presented in this report represent a major investment opportunity that would optimise and secure the long-term use of a large and currently unoccupied and underutilised site. The proposals represent a modern and high-quality commercial development which has been designed to respect the amenity and the character and appearance of the surrounding area. In addition, given the nature of data centres, there would be an overall reduction in traffic movements during peak periods which would result in a significant betterment to local highway conditions and safety in the vicinity of the site.
- 6.10 The proposed data centres would generate approximately 504 direct jobs once operational and more significant numbers of indirect employment opportunities in the Borough and beyond. They would generate substantial value for the local, regional and national economies and fundamentally support the rapidly expanding digital economy.
- 6.11 Whilst some adverse impacts may arise in relation to air quality and noise during the potential use of the proposed emergency generators, given the extremely low likelihood of a complete power failure occurring, these impacts are not considered to be significant.
- 6.12 It is also recognised that the proposed development has been considered by Historic England (HE), following a lengthy and detailed pre-application enquiry with HE to which they have concluded that the proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to identified heritage assets, including Windsor Castle, Windsor Great Park and associated historical features. It is however considered that the public benefits arising from the scheme and fully detailed within the assessment and planning balance set out above will outweigh this identified less than substantial harm.
- 6.13 Having regard to all material considerations, the scheme will provide for a number of broad ranging and substantial planning benefits in support of the new Government and Slough Borough Council's objectives for economic growth in that the scheme offers benefits to local people in the form of the reuse of vacant industrial land, a new gateway development for the town and perhaps most importantly sustainable economic growth in a form that delivers local jobs for local people.

## **APPENDIX A            DRAFT HEADS OF TERMS**

The following Heads of Terms are proposed for this planning application and are based on the signed s106 Agreement for a similar Equinix data centre site which lies within the Slough Trading Estate (ref P/20054/001). The Heads of Terms will be subject to further and detailed negotiations with Slough Borough Council.

### **1. Commencement Notice and Payment of Contribution Covenants**

The Developer covenants with the Council to give the Council the Commencement Notice no less than five Working Days prior to Commencement of Development.

In the event the Commencement of Development has occurred, but the Commencement Notice has not been given to the Council in accordance with paragraph [X], the Council shall set the date that it reasonably believes to have been the date of Commencement of Development.

The Developer covenants with the Council not to permit the Commencement of Development unless and until the Council has received in full the Local Employment Training and Business Contribution.

The Council covenants with the Owner and Developer to only expend the Local Employment Training and Business Contribution towards economic development, support for small and medium-sized enterprises and skills & employment. The skills and employment measures will support the delivery of Slough's Skills and Employment Plan – Pathways to Employment to drive employment growth.

The Council covenants with the Owner and Developer that the whole of any part of the Local Employment Training and Business Contribution not be committed to expenditure in accordance with the provisions of paragraph [X] on the expiration of ten years from the date of payment then, on the application by the paying party only, any remaining unspent part of any or all of the contribution that remains together with the accrued interest shall be repaid to the paying party at the end of the appropriate payment period as specified in this paragraph.

### **2. District Heating Network**

The Developer covenants with the Council as follows:

- If a District Heating Network is installed and is ready to be connected to the Development, the Developer shall within 3 months of receiving notification of the same from the Council submit a Feasibility Study to the Council for approval in writing.
- If the parties (acting reasonably) agree that the Feasibility Study submitted under paragraph [above] demonstrates that it is practical and reasonable for the Developer to install, operate

and maintain the District Heating Network Infrastructure and for the Development to connect to the District Heating Network or (failing agreement between the Council and Developer or as appropriate, the Owner) the arbitrator appointed pursuant to clause [X] determines that it is practical and reasonable for the Developer to install, operate and maintain the District Heating Network Infrastructure and for the Development to connect to the District Heating Network, then the Developer shall undertake such works as shown in the District Heating Network Connection Details to connect the Development to the District Heating Network provided that:

- The Developer shall not be obliged to carry out any works outside of the Land; and
  - The Developer shall not be obliged to carry out any works until the District Heating Network has been installed and is operational.
- Subject to paragraph [X], once the District Heating Network Infrastructure has been installed and connected to the District Heating Network the connection of the Development to the District Heating Network shall remain in place for the lifetime of the Development (subject to the District Heating Network to which the District Heating Network Infrastructure is connected also remaining in place and operational for the life of the Development) and at no cost to the Council provided that this shall not prevent the Developer (or, as appropriate, the Owner) from renewing, replacing, upgrading, altering or relocating the District Heating Network Infrastructure (with the written approval of the Council) or temporarily disconnecting the Development from the District Heating Network for the purposes of carrying out any inspection or works.
- If the Feasibility Study submitted under paragraph [X] concludes that it is not practical and/or reasonable for the Developer to install the District Heating Network Infrastructure and/or for the Development to connect to the District Heating Network then the Developer and the Owner shall not be obliged to connect the Development to the District Heating Network and shall have no further liability.

### **3. Euro VI Standards**

The Developer covenants with the Council to use reasonable endeavours that all HGVs (over 3.5 tonnes) accessing the Land in relation to construction phase of the Development shall be in full compliance with the Euro VI Standards.

### **4. Travel Plan**

*Travel Plan and Travel Plan Monitoring* -the Developer covenant with the Council as follows:

- To pay the Council the Travel Plan Monitoring Contribution prior to first Occupation of the Development;
- To not Occupy the Development until the Developer has appointed a Travel Plan Coordinator for the Land at its own expense and shall provide the Council with details of their name, office address, email address and telephone number;
- To implement the Travel Plan for a period of not less than five years from the date of Occupation of the Development, and use reasonable endeavours to ensure that each of the targets in the Travel Plan are met;
- To ensure that any occupier or tenant of the Development (other than any statutory undertaker or public authority in so far as and to the extent that the relevant undertaker or public authority is occupying or a tenant of the relevant part of the Development in its capacity as a statutory undertaker or public authority for the purposes related to their statutory function) complies with the terms and requirements of the Travel Plan and any changes thereto;
- A Baseline Survey shall be commissioned by the Developer in accordance with the Travel Plan;
- Within two months of the Baseline Survey being undertaken, the Developer will resubmit until approved by the Council, a Final Travel Plan showing the Baseline Survey results and any updated measures and targets as a result of the Baseline Survey;
- The Final Travel Plan shall be updated by the Developer during the Travel Plan Monitoring Period to reflect any reasonable recommendations notified by the Council to the Developer which are based on the results of the Travel Plan Monitoring;
- The Travel Plan shall be monitored by the Developer using the current TRICS UK standards, in place at the time when each monitoring survey is due; or subsequent standards if the monitoring becomes overdue and for the avoidance of doubt if the monitoring becomes overdue the monitoring standards in place at the time the survey is being conducted will be the standard that is required to be followed and not those in place at the time the survey was due;
- Further TRICS SAM Survey shall be undertaken during the same calendar month as the Baseline Survey, in the fifth year from first Occupation;
- To submit the results of the TRICS SAM Survey monitoring to the Council and TRICS at no charge for inclusion within the TRICS database;
- To submit the Travel Plan Annual Monitoring Report to the Council for its approval, detailing survey results (in applicable years), progress towards targets, and implementation of measures (including Remedial Measures as appropriate) and the Travel Plan Monitoring

Report shall be submitted in accordance with the Travel Plan (as amended and agreed by the Council and Developer from time to time); and

- Any Remedial Measures that are required following the submission of the Travel Plan Annual Monitoring Report will be implemented within two months (or such other period of time as agreed in the Travel Plan or otherwise agreed in writing by the Council) after the submission of the Travel Plan Annual Monitoring Report.

The parties covenant as follows:

- That the Travel Plan Monitoring Period shall cease following approval of the Year 5 Travel Plan Annual Monitoring Report by the Council unless there is a failure to implement the Remedial Measures in which case the Travel Plan Monitoring Period will be extended by such time as the Council reasonably requires for the implementation of such Remedial Measures; and
- Should the Council propose a meeting with the Developer or Travel Plan Coordinator in order to discuss the progress of action implementation, target achievement, or other issues, the Developer or Travel Plan Coordinator shall attend the proposed meeting which shall take place within 21 days of the Council's request being made and shall be on a date and at a place determined by the Council (acting reasonably).

*Travel Plan Targets* – the Developer covenants with the Council as follows:

- To use reasonable endeavours to ensure that each of the targets in the Travel Plan are met; and
- In the event that the Travel Plan is not being complied with or fails to meet its approved objectives or targets the Developer shall provide to the Council for its approval an updated Travel Plan within 60 days of the annual review, in which Remedial Measures are outlined to achieve targets together with a revised Action Plan.

## **5. Local Employment Training and Business Promotion**

The Developer covenants with the Council as follows:

- During the Construction Period of the Development use its reasonable endeavours to:
  - o Provide employment opportunities for local people at the construction of the Development;
  - o Advertise employment opportunities at the construction of the Development to local people;

- Engage with the Council, local employment and agencies to deliver the [above] outcomes provided that neither the Owner, Developer nor any occupier of the Development shall be required to offer employment to any candidate who does not have the necessary skills, knowledge or qualifications to perform the employment being advertised having the benefit of the necessary training;
  - Provide opportunities for Local Businesses to supply goods and services in relation to the construction of the Development;
  - Engage with the Council to deliver the outcome at paragraph [X] provided that in the reasonable opinion of the Developer such Local Businesses have the necessary skillset and workforce to perform the services required;
- Shall provide to the Council's Economic Development team prior to each annual anniversary of the Commencement of Development up to Completion of the Development evidence of how the Developer has used reasonable endeavours to deliver the outcomes [above].
  - Shall not be obliged to spend more than [ten thousand pounds (£10,000)] in total per annum in discharging its obligations pursuant to the preceding paragraphs.

The developer covenants to pay the Council [X] towards local employment training and business promotion upon the first occupation of the first data centre.

The developer covenants to pay the Council [X] towards local employment training and business promotion upon the first occupation of the second data centre.

The developer covenants to pay the Council [X] towards local employment training and business promotion upon the first occupation of the third data centre.

## **APPENDIX B      INDICATIVE PHASING STATEMENT**

This Phasing Statement has been prepared to support this outline application and provides further indicative detail to the Indicative Development Sequencing set out within the Planning Statement.

The development is likely to be delivered over a period of up to 20 years. As explained below this period of delivery of the scheme is dictated by the availability of power. There is current certainty that the first stage of the development can be delivered within 5 years, supported by the initial/temporary substation. The later stages are dependent on power availability being extended to allow stage 2 and stage 3. This Phasing Statement provides an indicative breakdown for the future delivery of the development taking into account to availability of power and the planning process timeframe.

*NOTE: Drawing Number 22058-BWT-ZZ-XX-DR-A-3000 prepared by Bryden Wood supports this statement and presents on a series of 4 indicative plans which demonstrate the indicative sequencing of the development which is explained in the text below.*

### **Indicative Development Sequencing**

The overall scheme to deliver up to 90,614 sqm of data centre GEA is anticipated to be delivered over a period of up to 20 years, broken down into the following stages:

- Stage 1a (year 1 – 3) Vehicle Access – Delivery of the vehicle access supporting the initial development / construction stages;
- Stage 1b (year 1 – 5) Initial Electrical Substation – Delivery of the electrical plant to receive grid power, to support the first stage of the development (subject to available utilities connection / supply);
- Stage 2 (year 4 – 7) Data Centre – Delivery of the first data centre block with its access point, and landscaping areas along Wexham Road, and the 'Technology Boulevard' and the southern boundaries; and
- Stage 3 (year 5 – 20) Further Data Centre Development – Delivery of the remaining data centre blocks, the main electrical substation to receive grid power to support later stages of the development, and landscaping areas (subject to available utilities connection / supply and market demand).

The delivery of the proposed data centre campus is reliant upon a number of items to enable its delivery and also factors that will dictate the speed at which the development is delivered. Currently, there is strong national demand for data centre development and therefore the development will be delivered as quickly as possible to meet the demand. However, another critical consideration is the availability of utilities, particularly power supply and connection to serve the development.

The availability of a power supply is a key factor in determining the sequenced construction strategy – currently, there is an incoming power supply to support the first stage of development, but

subsequent stages are constrained until this initial supply can be sufficiently increased over the next 20 years.

Where appropriate, the submission reports and assessments provide additional written commentary to clarify how the report has addressed / relates to the stage delivery of this proposed development. Notwithstanding the anticipated delivery sequence outlined above, in order to test maximum development impacts and provide a robust assessment, specific submission reports test the impact and requirements of the development proposals for the whole site to be delivered as a single undertaking, within a shorter timescale.

### **Indicative Planning Process Timeframes for Sequencing**

#### **Stage 1 (Year 1 to 5 from issuing a conditional Outline Planning permission with its associated s106 Agreement)**

#### **Delivery of Access Points 1 and 2 and the Emergency Access Point and Delivery of the initial / temporary Substation.**

Stage 1 is split into (a) and (b) and captures elements of the planning process and delivery of vehicle access points and the temporary substation. The planning process and delivery of the temporary substation could potentially span stage 1 and stage 2 and is needed to support the first data centre. Stage 1 is not captured on the TVIA sequenced views as access points would not be visible on these views and the substation is of a temporary nature and will be replaced by the main/permanent substation in stage 3.

#### *Stage 1(a) Delivery of Vehicles Accesses (year 1-3 from OPA approval)*

Year 1-2 - Submission and approval of Discharges of Conditions on OPA prior to access works and approval for highway agreements (Section 278 approval)

Year 2-3 - Initial construction stages and the delivery of vehicle accesses following OPA approval, and DISCs

#### *Stage 1(b) Delivery of initial/temporary substation (year 1-5 from OPA approval)*

Year 1 – pre reserved matters submission pre-application and discussions

Year 2 - 3 Submit and seek approval for reserved matters for the initial/temporary substation

Year 3 – 4 Submit and seek approval for discharge of conditions on OPA/reserved matters relating to this stage and any other technical permit approvals

Year 4 -5 – delivery of utilities including the temporary substation to receive grid power, to initial/temporary substation and to support the first stage of the development (subject to available utilities connection / supply).

**Stage 2 (year 4-7 from Outline Planning permission)**

**Delivery of the first data centre and completion of temporary substation**

Year 4 First Data Centre. Pre reserved matters submission and pre-application discussions

Year 4 – 5 Submit and seek approval for reserved matters for the first Data Centre

Year 5 - 6 Submit and seek approval for discharge of conditions on OPA/reserved matters relating to this first data centre stage and any other required technical approvals

Year 5 – 7 delivery of first data centre with its access point and landscaping areas along Wexham Road, and Technology Boulevard and the southern boundaries, completion of temporary substation

**Stage 3 (year 5-20 from Outline Planning permission)**

**Delivery of further data centre development and Main Substation (Indicative phasing for delivery of Main Substation and 2 further buildings)**

There is uncertainty at this stage as to when required power will be available to deliver the further data centre development and main substation (post stage 2 first data centre). For the purposes of this statement, it is presumed that, each further data centre would take 5 years in terms of process to seek RMA approval, the discharge of conditions, other required technical approvals and build out. Stage 3 has therefore been broken down into stage 3a (data centre building 2 and main substation) and stage 3b (data centre building 3 and final fit out and completion of the development).

*Stage 3a Indicative Building 2 Phasing*

Year 5 Further Data centre. Pre reserved matters submission and pre-application discussions

Year 6 - 7 Submit and seek approval for reserved matters for further data centre development and the main substation

Year 7 – 8 Submit and seek approval for discharge of conditions on OPA/reserved matters relating to further data centre development and the main substation

Year 8-10 delivery of further data centre development and main substation (coming forward with available power supply and connection to the grid) with access points and internal layout for further data centre to the east.

*Stage 3b Indicative Building 3 Phasing*

Year 10 Further Data Centre. Pre reserved matters submission pre-application discussions

Year 11-12 Submit and seek approval for reserved matters for further data centre development

Year 12-13 Submit and seek approval for discharge of conditions on OPA/reserved matters relating to further data centre development

Year 13-15 delivery of further data centre development (coming forward with available power supply and connection to the grid) with access points and internal layout for further data centre to the east.

Year 15-20 Indicative final fit out and completion of the development

**Indicative Phasing and Outline Planning Condition**

The stages and phasing presented above is indicative only due to the complexity and uncertainty associated with the availability of power needed to build out the entirety of the development. We can confirm that a suitably worded condition could be attached to an outline planning permission to secure a detailed phasing plan to be submitted for each stage of the development (not including stage 1a as all detail for delivery of the initial access points is included in the OPA for these elements) prior to or as part of reserved matters submission for each stage of data centre development.

24-09-2024 RMP/ES/EQU001



Hazard Identification Legend

| Hazard Identification (if none state 'None relevant') | Control and Mitigation Measures |
|---|---------------------------------|
|   |                                 |

Note:

Hazards listed above are only those considered significant risks and:

- a) not likely to be obvious to a competent contractor or other designers;
- b) unusual; or
- c) likely to be difficult to manage effectively

- = Stage 1 (a&b)
- = Stage 2
- = Stage 3a
- = Stage 3b

= Construction Compound/ Area for future development stage (Details of future stages to be agreed at reserved matters)

= Landscaped Area

Plans show the illustrative scheme divided into indicative development stages. Layout and stages are indicative only, and subject to further development of the scheme and availability of power and other utilities on site. Full details of building sequencing will be outlined fully at reserved matters stage. Drawings are intended to provide an overview for how the site may develop over the timeframes outlined within the Outline Planning permission.

Illustrative only. Not for Approval.

|        |            |                        |             |
|--------|------------|------------------------|-------------|
| P02    | 2024-09-23 | For Planning           | EHG SG      |
| P01    | 2024-09-19 | For Planning           | EHG SG      |
| P01.01 | 2024-09-19 | For Review and Comment | EHG SG      |
| REV    | DATE       | DESCRIPTION            | DWN CHK APP |

Do not scale from this drawing. All dimensions to be verified on site prior to the commencement of any work or the production of any shop drawings. All discrepancies to be reported to Bryden Wood Technology Ltd. This drawing is to be read in conjunction with all related Consultant's drawings and any other relevant information. This drawing is the copyright of Bryden Wood Technology Ltd.

Key:

Project:

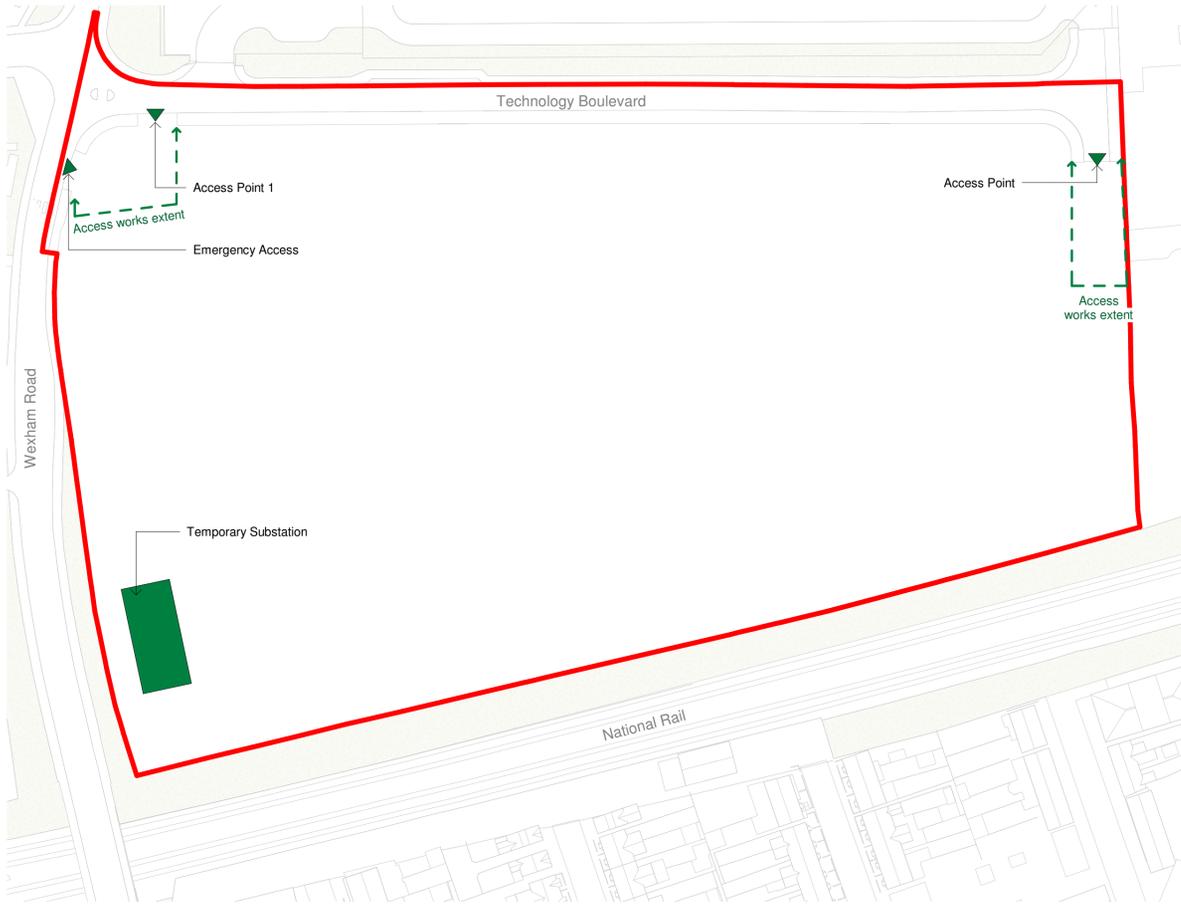
Equinix Akzo Nobel DC

Drawing Title:  
Indicative Sequencing Plans

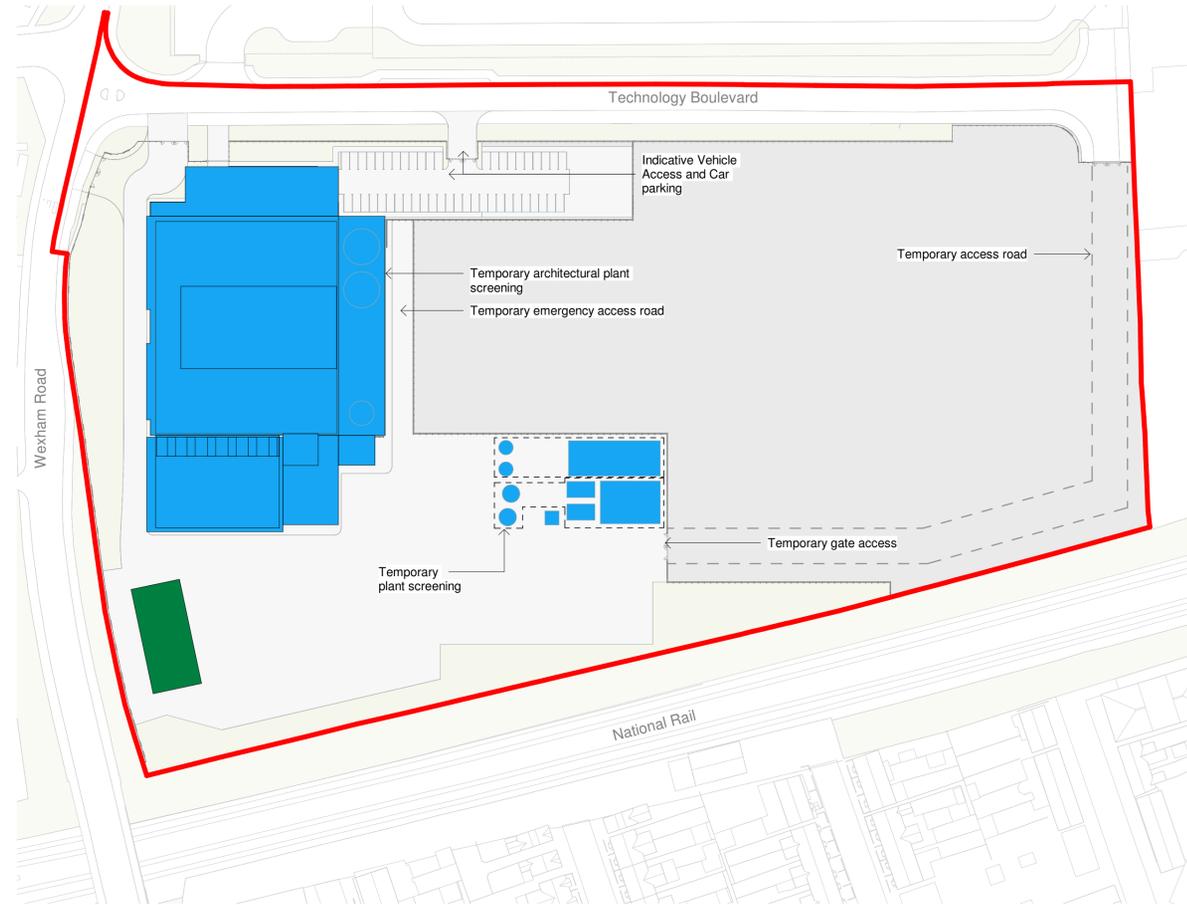
Drawing Number:

22058-BWT-ZZ-XX-DR-A-3000

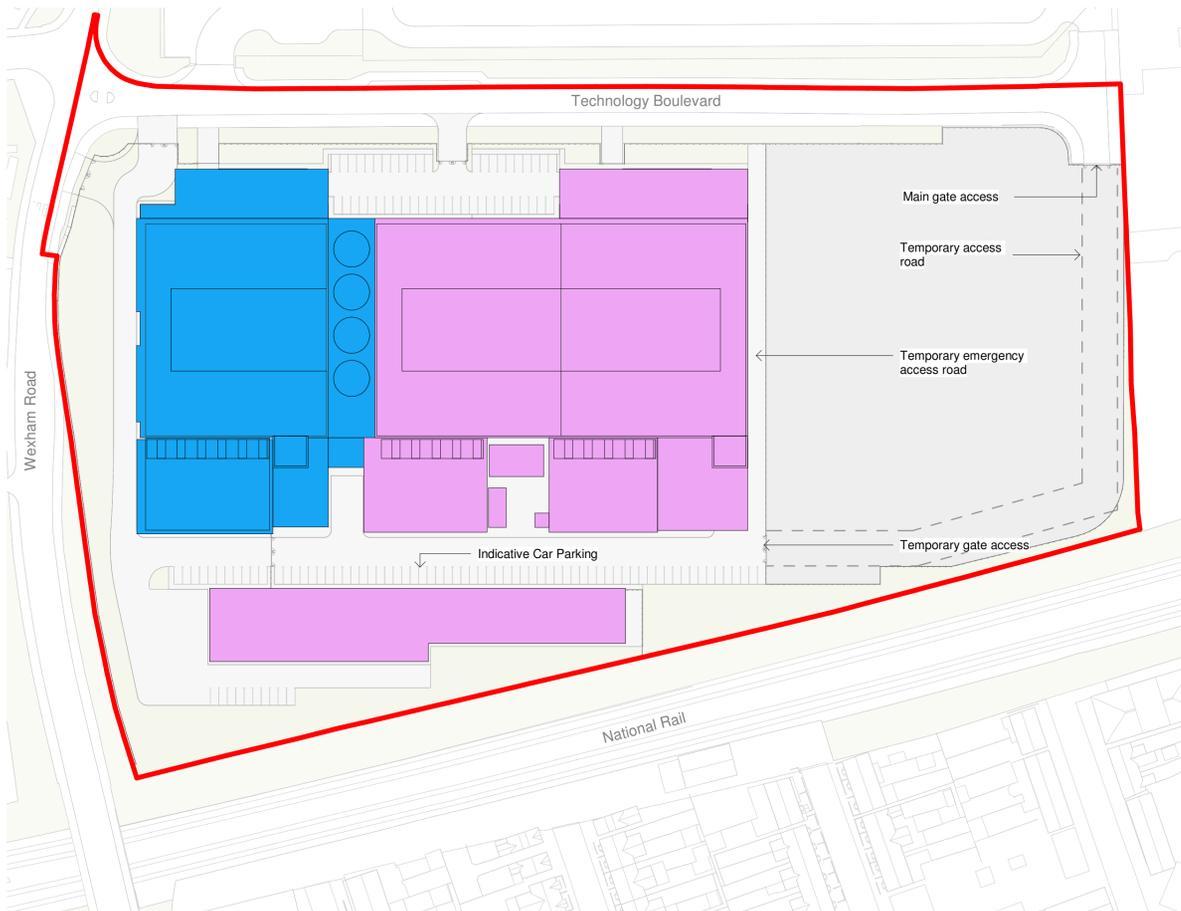
Scale: Paper Size: Status: Revision:  
1:1000 A1 S4 P02



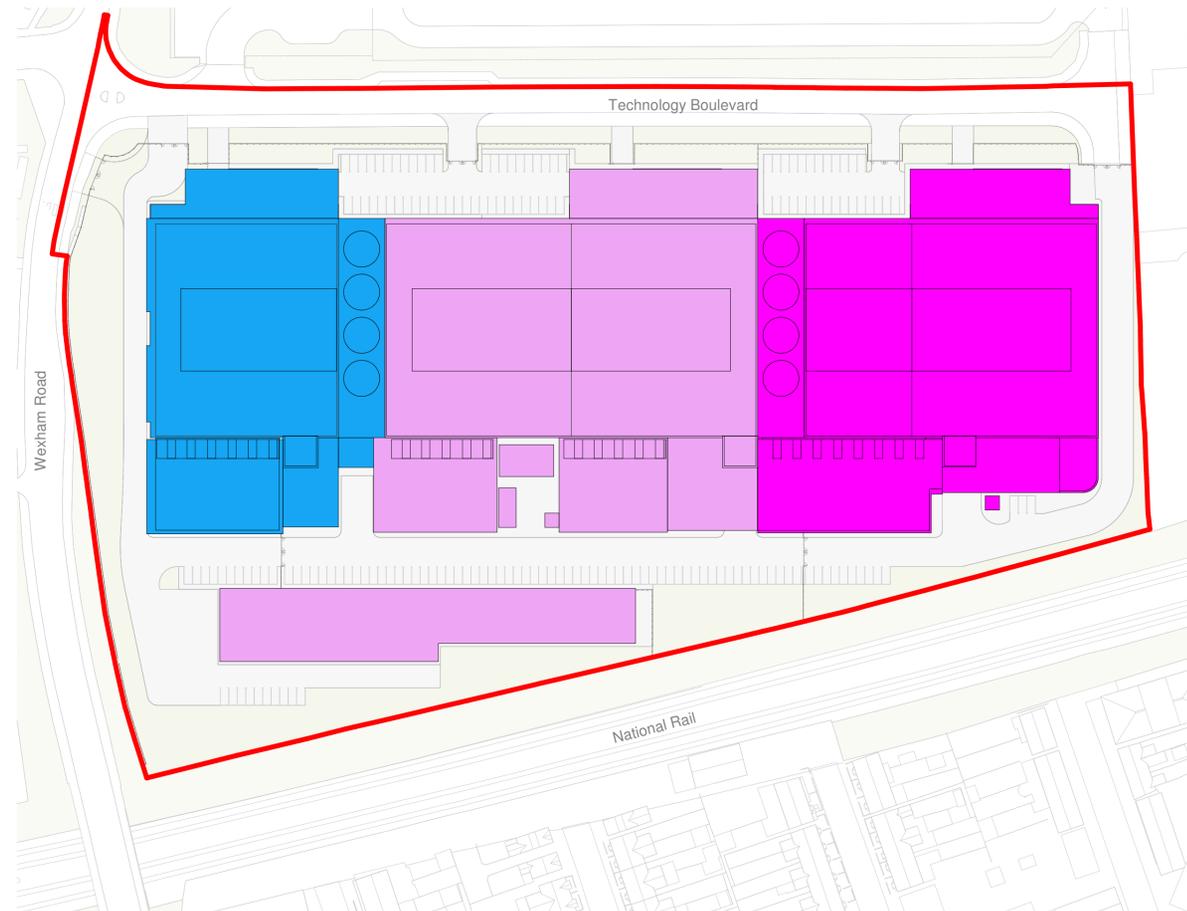
Indicative Sequencing- Stage 1 (a&b)



Indicative Sequencing- Stage 2



Indicative Sequencing- Stage 3a



Indicative Sequencing- Stage 3b- Final Development