

Beehive Centre Redevelopment

Topic paper 3 – business needs, floorspace supply and assessed economic benefits

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1. Business needs and locational requirements

Office and laboratory

Importance of Greater Cambridge

1.1 Cambridge's globally recognised strength in life sciences and technology sectors significantly contributes to both regional and national economies. Iceni's 2024 study (described in more detail at paragraph 2.3) provides important context on the Greater Cambridge economy, explaining that this success, referred to as the 'Cambridge Phenomenon', has been driven by a concentration of high tech and life science research companies in and around Cambridge. At the core of this is the University of Cambridge and major research institutes such as Medical Research Council Laboratory of Molecular Biology, Cancer Research UK Cambridge Institute and National Institute of Health Research on the Biomedical Campus, Addenbrooke's Hospital, the Babraham Institute and Wellcome Sanger Institute as well as Anglia Ruskin University.

1.2 The Iceni report outlines key statistics to demonstrate the importance of the economy:

- Global scale Cambridge is ranked the 3rd science hub worldwide (after the Bay Area and Boston) and, on a population-weighted basis, is Europe's "unicorn" capital with 47.9 billion-dollar firms per million inhabitants.
- Sector profile Professional, scientific & technical services account for 21 % of all jobs, with education (15 %), health (14 %) and ICT (9 %) also strongly represented, giving Cambridge roughly double the national average share of professional-services and ICT employment.
- Recent expansion Between 2011 and 2022 total employment grew by over 45,000 jobs (20 %), one quarter of which was in research & development and a further 12 % in ICT.
- Density of high-growth firms Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire record the highest density of high-growth companies in the UK (2.2 and 1.6 per 1,000 population).
- Talent and skills 52 % of residents hold a Level-4+ qualification (vs 34 % for England) and 36.6 % of the workforce is in professional occupations.
- Innovation corridors The cluster sits at the intersection of the London–Cambridge Innovation Corridor, the Oxford–Cambridge Arc and the Cambridge–Norwich Tech Corridor, expanding market reach and capital flows.

Continued growth is essential for maintaining the UK's global competitiveness, economic resilience, innovation capacity, and sustainable talent pipeline.

Significance of clustering

1.4 Economic theory and policy both recognise that geographic clustering of related firms, institutions and talent drives higher rates of innovation and productivity. Paragraph 87 of the NPPF requires deicisions to provide for "clusters or networks of knowledge- and data-driven, creative or high-technology industries". Michael

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¹ Iceni Projects Limited on behalf of Greater Cambridge Shared Planning (September 2024), Greater Cambridge Growth Sectors Study: Life science and ICT locational, land and accommodation needs.



Porter's cluster framework underpins much UK policy,² and *Invest 2035* targets support to "high-performing life-science clusters like Cambridge".

1.5 The Iceni 2024 evidence (described in more detail in paragraph 1.7) shows that cluster scale and critical mass are decisive: stakeholders emphasise that "a significant critical mass [is needed] to create a community that can attract and retain a concentrated labour pool on site, creating a network and community of workforce, as well as a viable offer of facilities, both technical and amenity focused." ³

Greater Cambridge is a mature cluster: the university, research hospitals and seven major science parks create dense networks of formal partnerships and informal knowledge spill-overs. This ecosystem sustains start-ups, scale-ups and global corporates, making the locational requirement not just floorspace but a place-based environment that offers critical mass, collaboration potential and high-quality public realm.

Locational and accommodation requirements

- 1.7 The Iceni report *Greater Cambridge Growth Sectors Study: Life science and ICT locational, land and accommodation needs*, provides detail on the locational and accommodation requirements of the two key sectors. ⁴
- 1.8 The specific priorities for the two growth sectors include:

Life sciences:

- Preference for integrated, high-quality locations with good amenities and public transport connectivity.
- Edge-of-centre campuses and out-of-town parks most common; growing interest in urban hubs due to amenities and workforce access.
- Essential critical mass to create a community to attract and retain skilled labour, create a network and
 offer facilities.
- Importance of proximity to research institutions and clinical facilities (e.g., Cambridge Biomedical Campus).
- Amenity offer as part of a place making strategy including café, restaurants, green spaces, gyms, sustainable / functional transportation and market housing that is affordable.
- Strong preference for sustainable, reliable transport infrastructure, particularly public transport and road network access.
- Space for interaction and collaboration, particularly for start-up and scale-up businesses.
- Sufficient space and scale as facilities tend to be lower density and have logistical needs.
- High demand for scale-up space (500-2,500 sqm) currently underprovided.
- Start-ups reliant on affordable incubator space and institutional support.

ICT sector:

- Strong preference for city-centre or high-quality edge-of-centre locations.
- Prioritise premium-quality office stock with strong amenity provision to attract and retain talent.
- High importance placed on public transport, particularly rail connections to London.
- · Essential requirement for innovation hubs, co-working, and flexible spaces for start-ups and SMEs.
- Clustering beneficial, particularly at early stages; larger firms prioritise skilled workforce availability and broad amenity offer.
- Affordable market housing availability is increasingly a key locational factor.

² Harvard Business Review, Clusters and the New Economics of Competition by Michael E. Porter.

³ Iceni Projects Limited on behalf of Greater Cambridge Shared Planning (September 2024), Greater Cambridge Growth Sectors Study: Life science and ICT locational, land and accommodation needs.

⁴ Iceni Projects Limited on behalf of Greater Cambridge Shared Planning (September 2024), Greater Cambridge Growth Sectors Study: Life science and ICT locational, land and accommodation needs.



Retail and town centre uses

Reduced provision of retail and town centre use

- 1.9 The Proposed Development will include approximately 5,178sqm GIA of retail and town centre uses to serve future employees and the community.
- 1.10 Due to the nature of the Proposed Development and the need to make efficient use of land, there will be a shift in the type of retail accommodated on the site, with a move away from large-format retail to smaller-format retail.
- 1.11 The Cambridge Local Plan does not:
 - a. include the Beehive Centre within the existing hierarchy of shopping designations (see Policy 6); or
 - b. contain other related local plan policy protections that could either retain or secure re-provision of the existing retail quantum or type/mix.
- The proposed development would also result in the loss of an existing leisure facility, comprising a fitness centre with a swimming pool and gymnastics offering. The parties are agreed that there is a partial conflict with Policy 73 amounting to negligible harm, resulting from the loss of an existing leisure facility on the site and the absence of a like-for-like replacement. The LPA has formed a mitigation scheme in the form of an off-site leisure contribution to resolve the policy conflict to be secured through the S.106 agreement.

Sequential and retail impacts on nearby shopping centres

1.13 Retail and town centre policies have been considered by the LPA and the Applicant with respect to the Proposed Development. The following statement from the Committee Report (Paragraph 13.42), which summarise this matter in detail, is an agreed statement:

"In summary the supporting retail statement(s) has adequately demonstrated that the proposed development passes the sequential and retail impact tests and would not give rise to any unacceptable impacts on local centres or the city centre. Accordingly, the proposed quantum and (potential) mix of retail and town centres uses would be acceptable having regard to the nature of the development, including its out of centre location and the potential for it to impact upon other local centres, including town centre Beehive Centre vitality and viability, in accordance with the requirements of Policy 6 of the CLP and the relevant aims and objectives contained within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)."



2. Floorspace supply and demand

- 2.1 Forecasting future demand in emerging, high-growth sectors, particularly in dynamic locations such as Cambridge, is inherently uncertain. Demand forecasts can be significantly influenced by international market dynamics, inward investment trends, and changes in sector-specific growth.
- 2.2 Similarly, the pipeline of available sites is uncertain due to wider industry challenges, market viability, and site-specific developer issues.
- 2.3 On behalf of the Greater Cambridge Shared Partnership, Iceni has carried out an assessment of need and supply across three key documents:
 - Greater Cambridge Employment and Housing Evidence Update, January 2023. Updates 2020 evidence
 and identifies a need of 289,700sqm of office floorspace and 600,000sqm of R&D floorspace between
 2020 and 2041.
 - Greater Cambridge Growth Sectors Study: life science and ICT locational, land and accommodation needs, September 2024. A study on the employment space requirements for key sectors that drive employment growth in Greater Cambridge. In addition to the locational and accommodation requirements summarised above, this contains an assessment of need against the pipeline. The need figures are taken forward from the Employment and Housing Evidence Update.
 - Greater Cambridge Office and Laboratory Employment Trajectory, October 2024. This sets out planning
 commitments for offices and laboratories and should be read in conjunction with the above study. This
 document provides a breakdown of the floorspace supply and updates tables in the growth sectors
 study. These updated tables are relied on in this topic paper.
- 2.4 There is a shared understanding between Cambridge City Council and the Applicant with this point from the Committee Report:

The current outline planning application through its scale, design and edge of centre location, provides an important opportunity to secure an identified need for office and lab floorspace in the City. Supporting the proposals in this instance recognises the inherent challenges in delivering physically available and viable floorspace in the short to medium including the contribution it can make in order to maintain the Cambridge region as a national and global destination for life sciences and ICT research in the much longer term.

- 2.5 While there is agreement on the need for the Proposed Development and the qualitative locational and accommodation need factors identified by Iceni, the Applicant is of the view that the Iceni report underplays the general need position, to the extent that it is relevant, for several reasons:
 - Demand has been suppressed by supply constraints for at least a decade.
 - This statement is disputed by the LPA.
 - There is insufficient allowance for the replacement of obsolete commercial stock.
 - The LPA disagrees with this statement.
 - The figures do not fully reflect recent Government growth ambitions for Cambridge.
 - Underlying employment growth is underestimated, not adequately reflecting robust Cambridge Ahead data indicating significantly higher job growth.
 - The LPA disagrees with the above statement.
- 2.6 In addition, and as acknowledged in the committee report, the parties agree that the theoretical committed supply includes long-term sites which "may not be readily deliverable" i.e. consents in the pipeline need to be carefully evaluated for realistic delivery prospects before being counted against need.



- 2.7 These points are explored in more detail in the Economic Proof of Evidence so are not represented here; this paper focuses solely on summarising the agreed factual evidence base provided in the core evidence documents.
- 2.8 This section summarises the evidence on need, supply and summarises the conclusions from this.

Iceni evidence on need

- 2.9 The Employment & Housing Evidence Update (Iceni, Jan 2023) bases quantitative needs on (i) labour-demand modelling and (ii) trend-based gross completions, with market signals used to reconcile the two. A two-year flexible margin and 7.5% operating vacancy are applied to all scenarios.
- 2.10 The floorspace need is derived from three inputs:
 - Labour-demand model: converts job growth to floorspace using standard densities.
 - Gross completions trajectory (2011/12-2020/21): ten-year trend rolled-forward.
 - Market signals: availability, absorption and rental evidence.
- 2.11 Within these forecasts margins are added to provide a flexible supply and choice of sites, and a percentage allowance to reflect the expectation that a level of vacancy is necessary in stock to allow for choice and churn.

Labour demand

- 2.12 The Employment and Housing Evidence Update concludes that a central employment forecast is the most likely scenario. This assumes that higher recent growth rates between 2011 and 2020 continue in high growth sectors for the first five years, before gradually reverting to the longer term 2001-20 average. This scenario assumes job growth of 66,600 between 2020 and 2041, equivalent to an annual (CAGR) growth rate of 1.3%.
- 2.13 The job forecasts are converted to floorspace based on a density of 11sqm (NIA) for office and 28sqm (GEA) for R&D. A two year margin and 7.5% vacancy are then added, which gives:
 - Office floorspace: 289,700sqm.
 - R&D 443,900sqm.

Net completions

- 2.14 In addition to labour demand forecast, completion trends are also considered. This rolls forward data on completions (net and gross) for the 2011/12 2020/21 period. A two year margin and 7.5% vacancy are also added to this.
- 2.15 **Table 2.1** summarises the two evidence streams and shows the adopted requirement used. The next section explains how the different evidence streams are reconciled.



Table 2.1 - Range of employment floorspace projections (2020-2041) (sqm), including flexible margin and vacancy adjustment

Sector	Completions (net)	Completions (gross)	Central scenario (labour forecast)	Adopted requirement
A: B1 mix	178,300	212,200	-	
B: Office	212,300	508,600	289,700	289,700
B + 50%A: Office inc 50% B1	301,450	614,700	-	
C: R&D	586,200	667,600	443,900	600,000
C + 50%A: R&D inc 50%B1	675,350	773,700	-	

Source: Iceni, Employment and Housing Evidence Update

Reconciling labour demand and completions: need

2.16 The office floorspace requirement of 289,700 sgm is taken directly the labour-demand model. The figure does not rely on past completions: it sits within the historic net completions range (212,300 - 301,450 sqm) but remains well below the gross completions out-turn (508,600 - 614,700 sqm). Iceni do not expect future need to exceed the historic net completions due to changing ways of working. No additional 'replacementrate' uplift is applied; Iceni judge that any losses of obsolete stock can be managed through ongoing monitoring within the headline 289,700 sqm requirement.

> For R&D, the initial labour-demand calculation gives 443,900sqm. Trend completions indicate a higher potential demand, ranging from 586,200 sqm to 675,350 sqm in net terms, or between 667,600 sqm and 773,700 sqm in gross terms (as shown in Table 2.1).5 Iceni notes that the large expansion of Addenbrooke's Hospital Campus in 2019 (approximately 60,000 sqm) significantly influenced this trend. Taking this analysis into account, Iceni concluded that planning for around 600,000 sgm of R&D floorspace would be appropriate.

Accordingly, the combined quantitative need is approximately 889,000 sgm (289,700 office + 600,000 R&D) over 2020-41.

Cambridge Ahead data

Iceni's Employment and Housing Evidence Update refers briefly to recent research conducted by the Centre for Business Research at the University of Cambridge on behalf of Cambridge Ahead. A recent release of this data, from March 2025, finds that employment grew in Greater Cambridge by 4.0% between 2018 and 2024, compared to 1.5% projected by the Office for National Statistics (ONS). Cambridge Ahead's methodology involves analysis of Companies House data and direct verification with local employers. While acknowledged by Iceni, this data was not directly incorporated into Iceni's employment growth forecasts.

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⁵ The higher figures include an assumption that 50% of B1 mixed-use space, such as that at Cambridge Science Park (Plots 1-21, 22, 25-27) and land adjacent to Cambridge North Station, contributes towards R&D floorspace requirements.

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Iceni evidence on supply

- 2.20 The Greater Cambridge Office and Laboratory Employment Trajectory report includes sites that have planning permission for employment uses and/or have been allocated for employment uses in the Cambridge Local Plan 2018 or the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2018. Permissions include approvals subject to S106 agreements and those applications held up by Environment Agency objection.
 - The report presents net floorspace (accounting for any space lost on the existing site), gross internal areas and removes duplicates (eg when there is an outline permission and reserved matters application(s)).
 - Permissions are then categorised to different sectors (eg ICT, tech, science) and floorspace types (office, dry lab, wet lab etc).
- 2.23 **Table 2.2** compares Iceni's position on the overall supply to the demand side position. These are updated tables as of October 2024.

Table 2.2 - demand vs floorspace supply by type, October 2024 (excluding first proposals)

Туре	Demand 2020-41 (sqm)	Floorspace supply commitments (sqm)	Completions 2020-24	Balance
Office (inc losses)	265,300	161,591	33,006	-81,611
Dry lab / ICT / physical science inc. West Cambridge	28,500	286,751	23,031	277,152
Office / dry lab (dedicated to life science)	24,400	145,369	17,744	103,225
Wet labs (including CBC / genomic dry labs)	423,800	371,820	44,388	-46,678
Mix / not categorised	-	206,135	-	206,135
R&D stretch	147,700	-	-	-147,700
Total	889,700	1,171,666	118,169	310,523

NB: these figures do not match the Iceni study due to double counting in the wet lab category.

2.24 **Table** 2.3 shows the assumed phasing.

Table 2.3 - Floorspace supply by type and period, October 2024

Туре	2020-24 (completed)	2025- 29	2030- 41	2042+	First proposals / notes
Office	33,006*	105,515	56,076	0	NEC / Cambridge East
Dry lab / ICT	23,031	30,973	45,778	0	_
Dry lab ICT / science (West Cambridge)	0	96,667	56,667	56,667	-



Туре	2020-24 (completed)	2025- 29	2030- 41	2042+	First proposals / notes
Office / dry lab (life-science-dedicated)	17,744	126,908	18,461	0	-
Wet labs – general	19,440	128,345	15,637	0	Cambridge East / NEC / Babraham
Wet / dry lab – genomics (Wellcome Genome Campus)	4,417	73,083	24,500	0	-
Wet labs – clinical (Cambridge Biomedical Campus)	20,531	71,860	58,395	0	CBC
Mix / unknown type	0	113,879	92,256	0	-
Total	118,169	747,230	367,770	56,667	-

NB: these figures do not match the Iceni study due to double counting in the wet lab category.

2.25 Based on the Iceni 2024 study:

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- Total demand (2020-2041): 889,700 sqm.
- Supply from committed permissions: 1,171,666 sqm.
- Completions (2020-2023): 118,169 sqm.
- Balance: surplus of 310,523 sqm (aggregate terms).

While these figures provide a useful baseline, it is acknowledged by all parties that such projections carry inherent uncertainties, particularly given the dynamic nature of these sectors and ongoing market challenges around the deliverability and viability of permitted schemes. These headline figures have not been tested by reference to the deliverability of schemes as you might test whether housing permissions were likely to deliver units. The following excerpt from the Committee Report summarises the position:

Life sciences:

- Historical shortage of wet lab space (2020-2023 period).
- Theoretical committed supply includes long-term sites that may not be readily deliverable.
- Acute shortage of scale-up lab space (particularly 500–1,000 sqm and up to 2,500 sqm). Historically, Cambridge's market has better supported either smaller start-ups or more mature firms.
- Constraints arise from viability issues and larger firms absorbing available space. Future developments should allocate approximately 40% of space for the scale-up segment.
- Significant future supply of wet lab space is anticipated post-2025; however, shortfalls in scale-up
 provision could persist, and longer-term supply commitments (towards 2041) might remain insufficient
 without allocations from the emerging Local Plan.

ICT:

- Future supply of general office space appears broadly adequate in the short-to-medium term, though there could be additional requirements post-2030 depending on specifics of current supply delivery.
- Persistent demand for high-quality start-up and particularly scale-up spaces is anticipated. The
 adequacy of future supply in meeting these needs remains dependent on details of specific
 development proposals, although current indications suggest improved provision.



Shared understanding with Council

The Iceni report appropriately focuses primarily on quantitative assessments of supply and demand; nevertheless, there is an acknowledged shared understanding of qualitative factors, such as specific locational and accommodation requirements identified previously, and the points raised within the Committee Report excerpt below.

"There is shared recognition that significant challenges remain in balancing the floorspace requirements of the life sciences and ICT sectors with realistically deliverable sites.

Consequently, adopting a flexible, case-by-case decision-making approach is essential to maintain a resilient supply pipeline capable of responding effectively across economic cycles.

In the context of this planning application, there is shared recognition that the proposals can significantly assist in meeting current and growing needs, especially considering that:

- High-quality office space demand is likely to exceed short-term availability in the City.
- Lab space availability is currently insufficient in Cambridge.
- Start-up and scale-up space continues to be acutely underprovided across the Cambridge region.

The current outline planning application through its scale, design and edge of centre location, provides an important opportunity to secure an identified need for office and lab floorspace in the City. Supporting the proposals in this instance recognises the inherent challenges in delivering physically available and viable floorspace in the short to medium including the contribution it can make in order to maintain the Cambridge region as a Beehive Centre national and global destination for life sciences and ICT research in the much longer term."

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3. Economic benefits

- 3.1 This summary presents the economic benefits of the Proposed Development, based on the detailed Economic Proof of Evidence. The key benefits listed immediately below are agreed between parties in the Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) and therefore represent consensus rather than matters in dispute:
 - Estimated 6,445 direct jobs (905 entry-level, 1,225 mid-skilled, 4,315 high-skilled).
 - Additional annual economic output (GVA): £600m (£660m total gross, including existing site).
 - Additional annual worker expenditure in wider economy: £10.1m.⁶
- 3.2 The following provides additional detail on these headline economic benefits, as well as further impacts not included in the summary above.

Scenarios considered

The Economic Proof primarily focuses on an illustrative scheme scenario, which is one possible way in which a development could come forward within the proposed parameters and reflects a balanced provision of wet lab and dry lab-enabled office spaces across the proposed development. Two other scenarios – an office-only maximum scenario and a conservative minimum employment density scenario – were assessed for completeness. These scenarios, while less likely due to reliance on either complete office usage or minimal employment densities, still demonstrate substantial economic benefits, highlighting the robustness of the economic case.

Construction phase

- Construction of the Proposed Development is expected to support approximately 870 construction jobs annually over an eight year construction period, equivalent to around 6,945 job-years.⁷
- These construction workers are estimated to spend approximately £1.3 million each year in the local economy, totalling around £10.5 million across the full construction duration.⁸ The spending estimate uses conservative assumptions adjusted from historic expenditure figures.

Operational phase

Direct employment

Upon completion, the Proposed Development will provide approximately 88,752 sqm (NIA) of mixed commercial floorspace, including office, lab, lab-enabled office, retail, and community uses. The illustrative

⁶ This is slightly higher than estimates presented in the 2024 material and SoCG, which found that the workers would generate an additional £9.6m (£10.2m in total) of worker expenditure each year. The difference is due to the use of updated data on earnings. The minor difference are due methodological updates rather than matters of principle; they do not alter the overall scale of the economic benefits.

⁷ This is slightly lower than the average of 990 jobs estimated in the 2024 planning application. The reduction reflects the use of updated construction GVA per job data, ensuring that this assessment relies on the most current available information.

⁸ These figures have fallen slightly since the 2024 planning application which found that the workers would spend a total of £11.9m in the local area over the duration of the construction period (£1.5m per annum). This is due to the reduction in construction jobs due to the updated GVA per construction worker figure.



scenario forecasts approximately 6,445 jobs (5,755 full-time equivalents, or FTEs), representing a net addition of 5,590 jobs compared to the existing retail park, covering various skill levels and occupations. The gross additional jobs support 25% of Cambridge's job target to 2031 (22,100 net additional jobs between 2011 and 2031), outlined in the Cambridge local plan.9

Existing jobs

3.7 The current site supports around 855 jobs (approximately 670 FTEs), primarily in retail and related services.

Occupational breakdown

The Proposed Development will create new jobs across all skill levels. An additional 4,315 high-level jobs 3.8 (including managers, professionals, and technical occupations), 1,070 mid-level jobs (including skilled trades, administrative, and service occupations), and 520 entry-level jobs (including sales and elementary roles) are anticipated compared to the existing site. This diversity of employment opportunities provides opportunities for a range of people.

Worker expenditure

3.9 Operational workers are estimated to spend around £10.7 million annually in local businesses and services, representing a net uplift of approximately £10.1 million compared to the existing site. This spending provides ongoing economic stimulus to local businesses.¹⁰

Net additional employment (wider economic effects)

3.10 Following standard Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) additionality guidance and factoring in displacement (25%) and a regional multiplier (1.7), the Proposed Development is forecast to generate around 7,130 net additional jobs within the East of England region. Approximately 2,850 of these jobs are anticipated to benefit Cambridge residents, and around 4,640 jobs are expected to benefit residents of Greater Cambridge.

> The relatively low displacement rate reflects the strong strategic rationale of the development, its specialist provision catering to the life sciences and technology sectors, and its position within an internationally competitive innovation cluster, reducing potential job displacement.

Gross value added

3.12 The additional employment generated by the Proposed Development will produce approximately £600 million per year in new economic output, measured as Gross Value Added. This represents around 18% of Cambridgeshire's total GVA in professional, scientific, and technical activities for 2022.

Tax receipts

The increased economic activity from the Proposed Development is expected to generate additional tax revenues of between £180 million and £240 million annually. This estimate is derived using a standard

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⁹ Cambridge City Council, 2018. Cambridge Local Plan 2018.

¹⁰ This is slightly higher than estimates presented in the 2024 material, which found that the workers would generate an additional £9.6m (£10.2m in total) of worker expenditure each year. The difference is due to the use of updated data on earnings.



methodology, applying national averages of tax receipts as a proportion of GVA. This assessment of tax receipts represents the Applicant's view of potential economic benefits.

Business rates

3.14 Based on local Valuation Office Agency benchmarks, the Proposed Development would yield approximately £11.4 million in annual business rates, an additional £8.5 million compared to the existing site.

Approximately £3.4 million of this additional amount would be retained directly by Cambridge City Council.

This assessment of tax receipts represents the Applicant's view of potential economic benefits.



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