

PSD13B – Email from Cushman and Wakefield to Programme Officer of 7th January 2020 & Inspectors’ Response

Referring to our conversation please see below a short response on behalf of Unipart to the comments from the Council and the Inspectors.

Statement on behalf of Unipart

The Unipart site is identified as a category 1 employment site within Oxford City, as defined by the submitted Local Plan. The Council acknowledges that Class B8 uses are included within Category 1 sites and that these are for specific reasons linked to nationally and regionally important employers. Unipart is such an employer and this is acknowledged by the Council.

Unipart is a storage and distribution business (Use Class B8). The Cowley site accommodates 1,000,000 sq. ft. of Class B8 floorspace.

The Council states that *“it does not consider it a sound approach to have a general B8 allowance on site SP8.”* The Council’s statement does not stand up to reason. The Unipart Cowley site is a Class B8 site. There are no restrictions on occupation in planning terms. The existing use of the site is a material planning consideration, which would clearly outweigh the draft policy in the determination of any planning application for the redevelopment of the site. Accordingly, the proposed draft policy is unsound because it is not justified, it is not effective and is inconsistent with national policy.

This is a site specific matter. An amendment to the site specific policy will not have an impact on the wider employment land policies contained within the submitted Local Plan. If it would be of further assistance, my client is agreeable to meeting the Council and, if necessary, the Inspectors to discuss the site and the policy. If a site visit would be helpful please do not hesitate to contact me.

Kind Regards

Mark Jackson MRTPI
Partner | Planning | Development

Response from Inspectors to OCC & Cushman & Wakefield seeking Statement of Common Ground

We have received the attached letter on behalf of Unipart, who argue that Policy SP8 should reflect the existing use.

Unipart contend that this is a B8 site containing 1,000,000 square feet of Class B8 floorspace. Paragraph 4.15 of Document PSD.13 states: “Whilst there is an office building on the site, this building is to serve the extensive industrial buildings on the site, which are used purely for logistics purposes, which was their original use”. On the other hand, the submitted plan states that site SP8 is an important employment site and it only allows B8 use where it supports the employment activities.

Any policy for this site must have regard to existing use rights. If the position described by Unipart is correct, the policy should reflect it. There is no specific evidence in Document PSD.13 or the Council’s response, PSD.13A to establish the use rights of these premises, but

they should be verifiable as a matter of fact. To this end, please will Unipart and the Council provide us with a short statement of common ground containing agreement as to the existing use rights of the site, documented if possible. If it is the case that the site is in B8 use as described in the attached letter and in Document PSDS.13, the SoCG should also contain an agreed modified policy, having regard to the suggested main modification set out in PSD.13.