Letter to Support Development of the Babraham Research Campus (BRC)

Summary:

This submission is to put the case for the Babraham Research Campus to be allocated as an employment development area in the 2023 Local Plan.

The Babraham Research Campus (BRC) is a key component of the Cambridge Southern Research Cluster, a world-leading life science research and development cluster. The Campus freehold is owned by UK Research & Innovation (UKRI), which is a national funding agency that invests in research and innovation across the UK. The Campus is unique in its co-location of the world class research of the Babraham Institute, with start-up and scale-up bioscience companies. The Institute receives strategic and primary funding from UKRI through the Biotechnology and Bioscience Research Council (which is part of UKRI and herewith is referred to as UKRI BBSRC).

The BRC provides a unique bioscience ecosystem that differentiates it from the many privately funded business and science parks that rely on purely commercial finance. It provides start-up laboratory and office space designed for early stage businesses on flexible lease terms which vary from those a commercial landlord would offer, as well as enabling co-location with leading discovery science and science-led facilities. In addition, the Campus provides a dynamic networked community enabled by conferencing and meetings facilities and business support services. It offers the opportunity for life-science companies to start-up, grow and scale on a single site within a supportive like-minded community.

The Campus provides Research and Development (R&D) space and enables access to science-led facilities for bioscience start-ups and early stage scale-ups that would otherwise be difficult (if not impossible) to obtain in the traditional property market.

The Campus has seen significant growth over the past decade to meet the needs and demands of the life sciences sector. There is evidence of an unmet demand for the specialist space and environment provided by BRC from businesses

Vision:

Our vision is for the Babraham Research Campus to be one of the best places in the world for discovery bioscience research and innovation and a leading sustainable ecosystem to start, nurture, scale and grow bioscience business, capturing new opportunities.

To sustain this vision and ensure that the science, start-up and scale-up companies have the environment they need to thrive, the Campus needs to continue its growth.

Background:

The Babraham Research Campus (BRC) is one of the UK's leading locations to support early-stage bioscience enterprise and is distinct in its co-location of bioscience companies with the world leading discovery research of the Babraham Institute. The BRC site is owned by UKRI.

There are currently over 60 companies, with 1,500 employees, and 300 academic researchers (including PhD students) located on the 430-acre parkland site, which is situated 6 miles south of Cambridge.

The BRC provides a dynamic networked environment where discovery research and business come together with a scientific coherence that accelerates innovation and strengthens links between academia and the commercial world. Delivering a connected ecosystem where life science companies can develop their science, build and scale-up their business, and institute researchers are able to deliver world leading bioscience in a highly networked and interactive community.

World class research and business come together to promote innovation and strengthen links between academia and the commercial world. The Campus provides critical bio incubator capability and wider support to drive company creation and emergence.

Strategic partnerships enable the provision of scale-up space for more established companies and provide links to high quality funding streams and other support to enhance science capability and boost company growth. Shared spaces, and science-led facilities support the research and innovation undertaken on the Campus and increase connectivity across the Campus community.

Evidence shows that this distinct and coherent colocation of research and innovation on the Babraham Research Campus is helping to create jobs and economic growth, developing new products and therapeutics and maximising the impact of UK bioscience.

The Campus partners (UKRI BBSRC, Babraham Institute and BBT Ltd) recognise that there is an opportunity to build on the current success of the Babraham Research Campus to further develop and enhance its impact. The Campus partners wish to capture this opportunity and boost the contribution of the Campus to the local community, the regional life science Cluster, and to national prosperity.

The Research & Innovation Campus:

The Campus, which is operated managed and developed by Babraham Bioscience Technologies Ltd (BBT), supports a sub-set of bioscience companies - those in the early stage for incubation and with an ambition to scale to an Initial Public Offering (IPO). Space and support for these companies is underserved both in the locale and UK. The uncertain viability and higher risk profile of such companies makes them less attractive as tenants on more commercially oriented science parks. Furthermore, such science parks offerings of shell and core buildings on long leases are unfavourable to early stage companies. The Campus thus provides distinct support and is helping to address a market failure.

In that respect a UKRI BBSRC supported research and innovation Campus such as the BRC fills an otherwise a largely unoccupied niche in the UK Innovation system. There is evidence highlighting the critical role of public investment in the Babraham Research Campus helping to overcome a clear market failure, the removal of which has led to faster growth in the life science sector in Cambridge, and brought benefit to the UK more widely.

The Place:

The Campus community is delivering research and innovation with a focus on key questions in biology that resonate with the campus commercial community, and society more widely. This coherence has enabled breakthrough research and

innovation opportunities to be captured, for example in areas such as antibody technologies. Current strengths and synergy between the academic research and commercial development undertaken on the Campus include understanding fundamental and disease biology, coupled with delivering the capabilities for drug discovery and development. These strengths and synergies are also supporting the development of thematic alliances as platforms for future breakthrough science, innovation and business models.

The Campus is recognised as an exciting and vibrant place to carry out world leading discovery research and start and grow bioscience companies. Excellent people and talent are attracted to work in the organisations including the Babraham Institute that comprise the Campus community. Furthermore, the dynamic and highly connected ecosystem on the Campus creates a low risk environment in which people can share knowledge and skills, develop, and take risks. This contributes to an enterprising, and collaborative Campus culture that supports people and their development.

There is an opportunity to further attract world leading researchers, innovators and entrepreneurs to the Campus, as well retain global talent and encourage the development of skills and expertise across the Campus community. There is a specific opportunity for example to expand the PhD and Postdoctoral research community on the Campus, and through apprenticeships to build technical capabilities. Further benefits are also possible through encouraging greater fluidity in the movement of talent between organisations on the Campus, and into the wider Cambridge cluster and broader UK economy.

Economic Impact:

A recent report (to be published), commissioned by the campus partners (BBT, BI and UKRI BBSRC), has provided evidence that demonstrates the significant contribution the BRC makes to the economy and society. It also highlights the major contribution organisations on BRC make to the local, national and international ecosystems. A research team led by experts from Cambridge University was appointed to deliver this report. The outputs from the study will inform the future strategy for the campus and provide a comprehensive evidence-based understanding of the overall contribution BRC makes to the Cambridge cluster and UK economy.

The study has provided evidence that companies located on the BRC have achieved remarkable growth over the period 2011-2017 and performed well in comparison to companies located on other business and science parks in the Cambridge region. The data suggests that the support structures provided by the BRC are a key factor enabling these companies to grow and make an impact in local, national and international ecosystems.

The total gross GVA impact of the operational activities of the campus on the UK economy has more than tripled over the period 2011-17 from £80m in 2011/12 to £286m in 2017/18.

Investor engagement, and specific events (e.g. the annual Babraham Investment Conference) as well as links with other local agents including the Cambridge Biomedical Campus, international investors, serial entrepreneurs and the University, have contributed to attracting high quality private investment into the companies

located on the Campus: £300M invested in Campus companies in 2017/18, and £1.2 bn to date. Evidence suggests that being located on the Campus accelerates the rate at which and amount of investment that companies have been able to raise. The establishment,by campus partners, of the Campus accelerator and incubator programmes (Accelerate@Babraham), and BBT's investment in the management company of the Start Codon accelerator fund, provide further access to support and investment for the Campus and wider community.

The Campus currently offers 15,000 m^2 of laboratory and office space for early stage companies, and an additional 14,500 m^2 of space for more established businesses. Biomed Realty (a US real estate company), and Kadans (an investor and developer form the Netherlands) have invested in property on the campus which is let as laboratory and office space.

On site employment by campus tenant companies has risen from 900 in 2011 to 1500 in 2018. This is projected to rise to 1750 by the end of 2020, as two new buildings on site are completed and occupied. Once these buildings have been completed all Campus areas with planning consent will have been fully developed.

Public investment through the provision of land and grants for construction of Campus capabilities, such as bio-incubator, conferencing, and meeting facilities by the UKRI BBSRC have been key to establishing the innovation infrastructure and wider environment of the Campus, with £100M investment by the UK taxpayer to date. This is in addition to the long-term strategic investment by UKRI BBSRC in the science and science-led services capability of the Babraham Institute. It is this public investment that has helped attract further private sector investment into the Campus to provide follow-on space for growing companies from BioMed Realty, Kadans and previously Imperial College London.

The Campus has been highly successful in attracting companies to the site and is driving investment in the Cluster. However, this brings challenges in enabling the research and science-led capabilities on the Campus to flourish and offering space for new companies that wish to locate on campus or established companies that outgrow their current space or wish to scale-up. A key priority and opportunity for the Campus is to enhance support to enable companies to scale-up, grow and be retained in the UK. For this to happen, additional infrastructure is required, both for bio- incubator provision, and to deliver the space to allow companies to scale.

There is an opportunity to grow and extend the existing campus capabilities to deliver the vision for the campus. We have identified an additional 20,000 m2 (including 15, 000 m2 undeveloped land and existing buildings identified for demolition or development) which, subject to planning permission, could provide the prospect for the next phase of Campus growth.

The BRC stakeholders recognise the importance of sustainable growth (e.g. housing, transport, energy, etc.) and are active on a number of local authority transport initiatives (e.g. Cambridge South East Transport project, CAM Metro, Whittlesford Parkway). We sit within a key transport corridor (A1307-A11-A505) and continue to support the efforts of the Combined Authority and Greater Cambridge Partnership to introduce sustainable transport options. The Campus has provided funding towards the Wandlebury to Campus multi-user path and the release of land to site the continuation of the path into Babraham Village.

We are committed to reaching net zero emissions. In the area of energy, we have adopted technologies such as Air Source Heat Pumps and CHP-Absorption chilled water for cooling and heating our buildings, small scale PV and purchase our energy via Clean Renewables contracts. In the past decade, all new buildings on campus have been constructed to BREEAM standards to ensure energy consumption and water usage are kept as low as is practicable in high technology buildings. However, we continue to look further at how we can be more economical with our energy demand and how to increase our adoption of local renewable sources.

The Campus is spread over 430 acres and less than a third of the land has buildings or other developments across it. The River Granta flows through the centre of the estate and the land on the southern side of the river is a mixture of woodland, meadow and arable farmed. We have planted over 20,000 trees across the woodlands on both sides of the river in the past 30 years and continue to plant trees and hedgerow. In this setting we have been able to both grow our built estate and increase the biodiversity of our land. The setting is not unique but it is treasured and we have made it our purpose to sustain and improve the landscape whilst growing the Campus. Importantly the land to the south of the river is open to the wider community to use and enjoy.

Underpinning all of this is the community of people that has grown over the decades the campus has existed. We have a cohort of staff that lives in the locality, which spans all types of employment and not confined to the world of science. We train people and provide skilled jobs to the local population and use local companies in our supply chain. Through our heritage and history we are connected to the community outside the boundaries of the campus and continue to be connected to the village of Babraham, through its Parish Council, Primary School and Cricket Club. There is contribution to this community in the form of key worker and student housing within the campus boundary.

The Campus is an established site, with investment in infrastructure to sustain future growth. There is space to grow further and as a place of scientific excellence since 1948 any growth is bound to an existing, vibrant working community.

To sustain our vision for the Babraham Research Campus to be one of the best places in the world for discovery bioscience research and innovation there is a continued need for expansion of Babraham Research Campus. To achieve this, it is important the 2023 Local Plan has the Campus designated as an employment area in order to facilitate the development needs of the Campus. Without this there is a danger of seriously constraining the potential of the Campus, and thus the jobs and economic growth agenda of the region and the UK more widely.