

**THE DONCASTER (CITY GATEWAY – RAILWAY SQUARE AND PHASE 1)
COMPULSORY PURCHASE ORDER 2023**

**PROOF OF EVIDENCE OF CHRIS DUNGWORTH
FOR AND ON BEHALF OF CITY OF DONCASTER COUNCIL**

PINS REF: APP/PCU/CPOP/F4410/3324357

STATEMENT OF TRUTH

The evidence which I have prepared and provide for this public inquiry reference APP/PCU/CPOP/F4410/3324357 in this proof of evidence is true and has been prepared and is given in accordance with the guidance of my professional institution and I confirm that the opinions expressed are my true and professional opinions

Date: 27 March 2024

Signature:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'A. Smith', is written over a horizontal line.

1 **INTRODUCTION: NAME, QUALIFICATIONS, JOB TITLE, PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE**

- 1.1 My name is Chris Dungworth, and I am the Head of ‘Business Doncaster’, which is the City of Doncaster Council’s (the “Council”) Inward Investment team.
- 1.2 Business Doncaster, as the Economic Delivery team within Doncaster Council, have a specific remit to deliver economic development services which includes attracting new inward investment, supporting existing Doncaster businesses and new start-ups, support for recruitment and upskilling of employees, destination marketing and Tourism.
- 1.3 I hold a Higher-Level Certificate in Business and Finance from Sheffield Polytechnic. I have worked for Doncaster Council for twenty years, all engaged within the Economic Development and Regeneration areas of the Council. I have been Head of Business Doncaster since October 2018
- 1.4 Prior to working at the Council, my background was in Purchasing and Supply Chain management working in the engineering sector.
- 1.5 Since the start of 2022 I have worked alongside the project team for the Railway Square Extension and the Gateway Office Development Scheme (“the Scheme”) who were charged with acquiring the land needed to deliver the scheme. As well as having overall responsibility for the support provided by Business Doncaster, I specifically provided guidance and advice around property and the provision of sites to Adrian Banks (“Mr Banks”), a member of my service area who worked as an investment officer within Business Doncaster until October 2023. Mr Banks had the role within the project team of supporting the relocation of tenants that would be affected by the compulsory purchase order (“CPO”) including putting forward alternative properties.
- 1.6 Since Mr Banks’ departure, I have had primary responsibility for dealing with finding alternative properties for tenants displaced by the CPO.

2 **SCOPE OF EVIDENCE**

- 2.1 My evidence relates to the steps taken by Business Doncaster to date to provide owners, tenants and occupiers (that will be impacted by the CPO), with details of alternative properties available across the borough of Doncaster.
- 2.2 Specifically, whilst Business Doncaster has provided assistance to all owners, tenants and occupiers falling within the area of the CPO, my evidence relates to

the two statutory objectors to the scheme, being:

2.2.1 Wolseley UK Limited ('Wolseley'); and

2.2.2 Taskmaster Resources Ltd ("Taskmaster").

3 WOLSELEY

3.1 Wolseley are a national firm supplying building materials, with a focus on supplying trade customers. Wolseley's branch within the Order Land (being the land shown on the Order Map, found at **(POE/1)**) specialises in the supply of plumbing, heating, parts and bathroom products

3.2 In order to deliver the Scheme (being the Railway Square Extension and the Gateway Office Development, further detailed in Scott Cardwell's evidence at paragraph 4, Wolseley's premises will need to be demolished and so Business Doncaster have worked directly alongside Joanne Chipp-Smith ("Ms Chipp-Smith") at the Council to assist with the task of assisting Wolseley to find suitable alternative premises.

3.3 Mrs Chipp-Smiths' proof sets out in detail the individual steps taken along with the relevant correspondence, meetings and financial offers with Wolseley, this can be found at paragraph 8 of Ms Chipp-Smiths' proof.

3.4 Business Doncaster were first engaged by the Council to assist in the identification of alternative premises for Wolseley on 7 March 2022 **(POE/CD/1)**.

3.5 In order for Business Doncaster to assist in the search for alternative premises, it was necessary for the team to establish the requirements for Wolseley's new premises. As such, Mr Banks liaised with Wolseley directly to best understand this, details of which I have set out below:

Requirements for alternative premises

3.6 Business Doncaster (through Mr Banks) were first engaged in the CPO process on 7 March 2022, when Mr Marcus Rudkin of Doncaster Council Property Services team asked Mr Banks to assist in finding alternative properties for the re-location of Wolseley from their current location within the Order Land **(POE/CD/2)**.

3.7 It was originally confirmed by Mr Thomas Leech, the property portfolio manager for Wolseley, that they required a building of around 7,000 – 8,000 sq. ft. which could

accommodate a contract branch, a trade counter and a showroom. Mr Richard Corby of Lambert Smith Hampson was named as the contact liaison for Wolseley regarding property searches.

3.8 Regular correspondence and discussions, initially by Mr Banks and then myself, took place with Ms Helen Holmes (“Ms Holmes”) of Wolseley and Mr Richard Corby (“Mr Corby”) of Lambert Smith Hampson the (retained property agent for Wolseley) and details of this correspondence is set out below:

3.8.1 On 14 March 2022, Mr Banks emailed Mr Corby to introduce himself and explained that he had also engaged with local property agents to find suitable properties (**POE/CD/3**).

3.8.2 Further correspondence via email took place with Mr Corby on 15 March 2022 where he was introduced to Mr Jason Barnsdale of Barnsdale and Co, who were agents for a site on Woodfield Way in Doncaster (**POE/CD/4**).

3.8.3 On 30 March 2022, Mr Corby confirmed to Mr Banks that all details of properties had been forwarded to his client (**POE/CD/5**).

3.8.4 On 18 August 2022, Mr Rudkin of the Council’s property services team introduced Mr Banks by email to Ms Holmes, the Wolseley Property Portfolio Manager (**POE/CD/6**).

3.8.5 On 24 August 2022, Mr Banks contacted Ms Holmes and introduced himself as the Business Doncaster contact (**POE/CD/7**).

3.8.6 On 31 October 2022, Ms Holmes contacted Mr Banks to see if any further properties had become available (**POE/CD/8**).

3.8.7 On 22 November 2022, Mr Banks responded to Ms Holmes and sent a number of new properties that had become available, which were the Croda Site on Wheatley Hall Road and Shaw Lane Industrial Estate in Doncaster (**POE/CD/9**).

3.8.8 On 25 November 2022, Mr Banks sent Ms Holmes and Mr Corby details of Total Park, a new development that Wolseley may be interested in (**POE/CD/10**).

3.8.9 After a phone call between Mr Banks and Ms Holmes on the 9 January 2023 (**POE/CD/11**), Mr Banks followed up with an email to Ms Holmes

on the 10 January detailing a further property on Wheatley Hall Road **(POE/CD/12)**.

- 3.8.10 On 16 January 2023, Ms Holmes contacted Mr Banks to say the Croda site put forward by Business Doncaster was not suitable **(POE/CD/13)**.
- 3.8.11 On 20 January 2023, Mr Banks was asked to amend the property specification further, and this was subsequently widened, so the search was now for a building of around 5,000–25,000 sq. ft. He commenced contacting agents on this basis **(POE/CD/14)**.
- 3.8.12 On 25 January 2023, Mr Banks sent a number of new properties to Mr Corby and Ms Holmes for Wolseley's consideration. These were properties located on Woodfield Way, Century Close, Shaw Lane, Churchill Road, and Centurion Business Park **(POE/CD/15)**.
- 3.8.13 On 2 February 2023, Mr Corby contacted Mr Banks and advised him that the recent properties put forward by Business Doncaster for consideration by Wolseley were not suitable for various reasons **(POE/CD/16)**.
- 3.8.14 On 15 February 2023, Mr Banks sent across to Ms Holmes a further property for consideration. This was Holmeroyd Way, Carcroft **(POE/CD/17)**.
- 3.8.15 On 23 May 2023, Mr Banks sent Ms Holmes details of a property that had come to market in Kirk Sandall, (an outer suburb of Doncaster, where Wolseley already have another store) **(POE/CD/18)** .
- 3.8.16 On 16 August 2023, Mr Banks received an email from Ms Holmes informing him that that they were showing interest in a property on Sprotborough Road and asked him to investigate any noise restrictions along with the need for any planning application **(POE/CD/19)**.
- 3.8.17 Mr Banks replied on 22 August 2023 stating that change of use would be required but there would be no highways issues **(POE/CD/20)**.
- 3.8.18 On 1 September 2023, Ms Holmes contacted Mr Banks to ask about operating hours on site in respect of night deliveries to the

Sprotborough Road property (**POE/CD/21**).

- 3.8.19 On 8 September 2023, Mr Banks sent details of further units that may be suitable for Wolseley to Ms Holmes. These were Merchants Way, Wheatley Trade Park and Wheatley Retail Park and Peregrine Court (**POE/CD/22**).
- 3.8.20 On 11 September 2023, I held a phone conversation with Mr Nick Manson, Branch Manager of the Wolseley Kirk Sandall Unit, who had been asked to assist in finding suitable premises due to his knowledge of Doncaster (**POE/CD/23**).
- 3.8.21 A subsequent follow up phone call between myself and Mr Manson took place on 25 September 2023. No further suitable properties had become available (**POE/CD/24**).
- 3.8.22 On 25 October 2023, Mr Alex Dochery of Business Doncaster received a phone call from Ms Holmes advising him that Wolseley were looking at a unit on Oswin Avenue, Balby (a suburb of Doncaster) and asking if anything else was available. Mr Dochery replied offering two units in Bentley (a suburb of Doncaster) and Kirk Sandall, which Ms Holmes confirmed had already been put forward and discounted (**POE/CD/25**).
- 3.8.23 On 1 November 2023, Mr Dochery received further email correspondence from Ms Holmes asking if any further units had become available (**POE/CD/26**).
- 3.8.24 On 21 November 2023, Ms Holmes got in touch with me to discuss requirements relating to any new premises and possibly carrying out a further property search (**POE/CD/27**).
- 3.8.25 On 22 November 2023, I held a catch up Zoom meeting with Ms Holmes to discuss progress made and further property options following our call the previous day (**POE/CD/28**).
- 3.8.26 On 23 November 2023, I sent Ms Holmes an updated property search document detailing all current properties available in Doncaster that may be of further interest to Wolseley (**POE/CD/29**).
- 3.8.27 On 28 November 2023, I sent details to Ms Holmes and Mr Corby of a

property scheme by Fit Out UK that would be under construction on Wheatley Hall Road and advised that the developer would be open to a conversation with Wolseley (**POE/CD/30**).

- 3.8.28 On 29 November 2023, Mr Corby replied that he would review the information and also that he was speaking to Mr Clive Watson at Portland Autos about the available ex Jewson's site on Wheatley Hall Road (**POE/CD/31**).
- 3.8.29 On 4 December 2023, Mr Dungworth held a catch up meeting with Ms Holmes along with Ms Chipp Smith. Confirmation was given that Wolseley were pursuing the Jewson Building Option (**POE/CD/32**).
- 3.8.30 On 5 December 2023, Mr Dungworth forwarded a new property to Ms Holmes and Mr Corby on Wheatley Hall Road that had just come onto the market (**POE/CD/33**).
- 3.8.31 On 6 December 2023, Mr Dungworth had a telephone conversation with Ms Holmes where she confirmed Wolseley were pursuing the ex-Jewson building but were concerned about noise restrictions on vehicle movements at night (**POE/CD/34**).
- 3.8.32 On 12 December 2023, Mr Dungworth confirmed by email that there were no planning restrictions relating to noise on the Jewson site (**POE/CD/35**).
- 3.8.33 On 19 December 2023, Mr Dungworth forwarded a further property to Ms Holmes and Mr Corby that had just become available on Wheatly Hall Road. Mr Corby responded to say he would discuss the unit with Ms Holmes (**POE/CD/36**).
- 3.8.34 On 20 December 2023, I exchanged further emails with Ms Holmes regarding night deliveries to the Jewson site. I said there are no restrictions, and Ms Holmes responded saying it is a concern for the site with it being near residential houses (**POE/CD/37**).
- 3.8.35 On 18 January 2024, I attended a site visit to the Jewson site with Mr Corby, Jewson staff were also in attendance (**POE/CD/38**).

Searches undertaken to locate alternative premises.

- 3.9 To identify available properties, Business Doncaster use a property search facility

through our own website and CRM system provided by Alcium Ltd of Sheffield. This is a common system used by a number of investment agencies which takes property feeds from Property Pilot, a website used by most property agents. To make sure we do not miss properties we also constantly look at commonly available web-based property search sites including Rightmove. We also speak on a regular basis to local and regional investment agencies.

- 3.10 A spreadsheet document outlining a large list of private sector properties put forward to Wolseley has been provided as part of this evidence. The spreadsheet includes comments and Wolseley feedback and has links to the property particulars for each site. I attach this to my proof as **POE/CD/39**. A summary of these sites is below:

Unit 29, Wheatley Hall Road Business Park, Wheatley Hall Road, Doncaster, DN2 4LP

- 3.10.1 Trade counter / industrial warehouse on main arterial route.

Total Park, Balby Carr Bank, DN4 5JP

- 3.10.2 New build industrial warehouses. These are now under construction, but timescales may have been too late for Wolseley.

Units 1 & 2 Holly House, Kelham Street Industrial Estate, Holly St, Doncaster, DN1 3TR

- 3.10.3 2 industrial units with offices close to city centre but would need conversion.

New Build Industrial Units, Woodfield Way, Doncaster, DN4 5JP

- 3.10.4 New build industrial units in the Lakeside area, an area of stated interest. Wolseley were considering and were informed because of the location there would be high interest in the site, the site has gone to an alternative company as Wolseley were too late submitting a bid.

Kestrel Court, Unit 2, First Avenue, Auckley, Doncaster, DN9 3RN

- 3.10.5 Built in 2020, these are new industrial units but not within stated required area.

Unity J5 - M18, Doncaster, DN8 5GS

- 3.10.6 New build industrial units available for sale or rent. These are not yet completed and well away from Wolseley's desired area.

Unit 5, Holmeroyd Business Park, Carcroft Common, Doncaster

3.10.7 In the north of Doncaster and well away from Wolseley's desired area.

First Point Business Park, Woodfield Way, Doncaster, DN4 5JP

3.10.8 Located in Wolseley's stated area but under construction. There was a lot of interest in this property from a number of companies.

Quest Park, Wheatley Hall Road, Doncaster, DN2 4LT

3.10.9 This includes new build trade counter units of 3,000 sq.ft, but was considered too small by Wolseley.

Woodside House, Sidings Court, White Rose Way, Doncaster, DN4 5NU

3.10.10 Industrial / trade unit in Wolseley's required area, but has been let to another plumber's merchant. Wolseley considered the building but I understand they were not able to make an offer quickly enough.

New Build Industrial Units, Woodfield Way, Doncaster, DN4 5JP

3.10.11 These are new build industrial units, and there is a lot of interest in them.

Former Croda Site, Churchill Road, DN1 2TF

3.10.12 These are new units which are not yet built. These were not considered by Wolseley as they would not be built within the required timeframe.

Unit 2 Connection Business Park, Woodfield Way Doncaster, DN4 5JP

3.10.13 This is a new build industrial unit. Wolseley agreed heads of terms in relation to this unit in 2022, but due to delays the agent had to re-let to another interested party.

Units 6 7 & 8, Century Close, Kirk Sandall, DN3 1QR

3.10.14 This is an industrial trade counter. The feedback we received from Wolseley was that it was too close to the Wolseley Kirk Sandall operation.

Shaw Lane Industrial Estate, Ogden Road, Doncaster, DN2 4SE

3.10.15 This unit was sent to Wolseley, but the feedback received from Wolseley was that there was limited circulation space so not suitable.

Warehouse at Churchill Road, Doncaster, DN1 2TF

3.10.16 This unit was sent to Wolseley, but the feedback received was that the unit is substantially larger than they require and would need extensive refurbishment and subdivision to be made suitable.

Middle Bank House, Middle Bank, Doncaster, DN4 5PF

3.10.17 This unit is currently a detached office building. Feedback received from Wolseley was that it was not suitable in any way.

Centurion Retail Park, York Road, DN5 9TP

3.10.18 This unit was sent to Wolseley, but the feedback received was that it was considered but rejected as it was on a retail park and too large.

Unit 1A, Sprotbrough Retail Park, Sprotbrough Road, Doncaster, DN5 8BN

3.10.19 This was a unit which has the parking required by Wolseley, but no yard. Feedback received from Wolseley was that the unit was not suitable due to issues with vehicle movements and noise in a residential area.

11/23 Kingsgate, Waterdale Shopping Centre, Doncaster, DN1 3EY

3.10.20 This unit was sent to Wolseley, but the feedback received was that the unit was in a retail area and not suitable.

Frenchgate Shopping Centre, DN1 1SQ

3.10.21 This unit was sent to Wolseley, but the feedback received was that it is in a retail area and not suitable.

40-44 Silver Street, Doncaster, DN1 1HQ

3.10.22 This unit was sent to Wolseley, but the feedback received was that it is in a retail area and not suitable.

Sandall Stones Road, Kirk Sandall, DN3 1QR

3.10.23 This unit was sent to Wolseley, but the feedback received was that it is too close to Kirk Sandall unit.

Units 1 & 4, Abbey Business Park, Bentley, Doncaster, DN5 9TJ

3.10.24 There were two units available at this site: unit 1, which is 5,904 sq. ft, and unit 4 which is 5,963sq.ft. Feedback received from Wolseley in relation to these units was that the site has too many access issues.

Unit 17, Shaw Wood Business Park, Shaw Wood Way, DN2 5TB

- 3.10.25 This unit is part of a detached, modern warehouse / production. Feedback received from Wolseley was that the unit is too close to Wolseley's Kirk Sandall branch.

11 Merchant Way, Wheatley Hall Road, Doncaster, DN2 4B

- 3.10.26 This is an ex-motor trade / retail unit. The feedback from Wolseley was that parking at the unit is an issue and is too big.

Unit A1, Wheatley Hall Retail Park, Wheatley Hall Road, Doncaster, DN2 4PE

- 3.10.27 This is a retail unit, which would require a change of use application.

Unit 9 Wheatley Trade & Business Park, Doncaster, DN2 4BH

- 3.10.28 This is a retail unit, which would require a change of use application.

Peregrine Court Units 1 & 2 Second Ave, Auckley, DN9 3RZ

- 3.10.29 This is a new build, which was not complete at the time when Wolseley carried out their viewing and is too far from Wolseley's desired area.

Unit 18 Durham Lane Armthorpe, DN3 3FE

- 3.10.30 Wolseley have said that this is too far from their desired area.

Former Data Centre/Call Centre, Carolina Way, Doncaster, DN4 5PN

- 3.10.31 This property is a former office premises, and it is not suitable for conversion.

Unit 4d Martree Business Park, DN2 4BQ

- 3.10.32 Wolseley have said that this unit is possibly too small and has restricted parking access which is unsuitable for them.

Former Jewson's building, Wheatley Hall Road, DN1 2TE

- 3.10.33 Wolseley have viewed this unit and are very interested. However, the unit needs substantial refurbishment.

Ex Car showroom Wheatley Hall Road

- 3.10.34 The details of this unit have been sent to Wolseley's agent, and

feedback is awaited from Wolseley.

- 3.11 A number of the sites put forward to Wolseley meet all of their criteria, and other available sites have been put forward but may not meet every requirement that Wolseley have asked for. As part of the search, we widened the scope to include available retail properties that may have been of interest.
- 3.12 We are also aware that Mr Corby (being a property agent) was trying to identify sites through the agent network and was also struggling to find suitable properties. There may also have been properties identified directly through agents that Business Doncaster were unaware of, or where the agents became aware of their availability before us.
- 3.13 Throughout this period where Business Doncaster have been assisting with finding a relocation property for Wolseley, Mr Banks and I regularly discussed options for Wolseley before submitting properties to them. We were aware that a number of properties would not meet their full requirements but with the lack of properties on the market, we put forward all options for them to look at and consider. Our role, as with all investors, is to identify vacant properties and submit them to our clients. Business Doncaster do not recommend properties and get involved in any negotiations on properties. Our role has always been to identify properties only and submit them forward for interest. It is up to the company to deem them suitable and negotiate with the landlord or property owner.
- 3.14 Having put forward a number of properties to Wolseley, it is disappointing that to date all of them have been rejected as unsuitable for their purposes.
- 3.15 In total, Business Doncaster was able to locate 34 properties all of which, in our opinion, met some, if not all, of the requirements set out by Wolseley. To date, all alternative premises located have been rejected by Wolseley.
- 3.16 Of these 34 properties, we consider that a total of **8 locations** were substantively capable of meeting all of the requirements requested by Wolseley in terms of the size (square footage), location, yard and parking. I have set out more details of these sites below:

Unit 29, Wheatley Hall Road Business Park, Wheatley Hall Road, Doncaster, DN2 4LP

- 3.16.1 We were informed this property was proposed by an agent to Wolseley on 10 March 2022 (**POE/CD/40**).

- 3.16.2 The property was leasehold with a term of £45,000 per annum.
- 3.16.3 This property was proposed specifically as a prominent trade counter / warehouse on a main arterial route.
- 3.16.4 It is believed Wolseley were at one time interested in this property, but this interest was withdrawn.
- 3.16.5 The property has now been let.

Units 1 & 2 Holly House, Kelham Street Industrial Estate, Holly Street, Doncaster, DN1 3TR

- 3.16.6 This property consisted of two industrial units and was proposed in an email to Mr Corby on 14 March 2023 (**POE/CD/41**).
- 3.16.7 Both units were available as a freehold interest for £580,000.
- 3.16.8 This property was proposed specifically as two industrial units for sale or let.
- 3.16.9 This property was rejected by Wolseley as out of town and would need conversion.
- 3.16.10 The units have now been sold.

Quest Park, Wheatley Hall Road, Doncaster, DN2 4LT

- 3.16.11 This property was proposed in an email to Mr Corby on 14 March 2023 (**POE/CD/41**).
- 3.16.12 The property is a leasehold interest with a term to be negotiated.
- 3.16.13 This property was proposed specifically as a new build trade counter on Wheatley Hall Road.
- 3.16.14 This property was rejected by Wolseley on the basis that there were concerns the trade counter units (which were 3,000 square ft) were too small.
- 3.16.15 The property is now leased.

Woodside House, Sidings Court, White Rose Way, Doncaster, DN4 5NU

- 3.16.16 This property was proposed in our email to Mr Corby on 14 March 2023 (**POE/CD/41**) advising him it was being dealt with directly by a property agent.
- 3.16.17 The property is a leasehold interest with a term to be negotiated.
- 3.16.18 This property was proposed specifically as a high quality industrial / trade unit.
- 3.16.19 This property was considered by Wolseley as it was in an area of specific interest, but another offer was made by a plumber's merchant and therefore, whilst considered, the property was no longer available.

Former Croda Site, Churchill Road, DN1 2TF

- 3.16.20 This property was proposed in our email to Ms Holmes and Mr Corby on 28 November 2023 (**POE/CD/30**) and previously in an email to Ms Holmes and Mr Banks on 10 January 2023 (**POE/CD/12**).
- 3.16.21 The property is a leasehold interest with terms to be discussed.
- 3.16.22 This property was proposed specifically whilst it was still in the process of going through the planning process prior to subsequently being built.
- 3.16.23 This property was rejected by Wolseley on the basis that the property would not be available within the required timeframe as no date of completion could be confirmed by the developer.
- 3.16.24 The Units are still not under construction.

Centurion Retail Park, York Road, DN5 9TP

- 3.16.25 This property was proposed in an email to Ms Holmes of 25 January 2023 (**POE/CD/15**)
- 3.16.26 The property is a leasehold interest with a term to be discussed.
- 3.16.27 This property was proposed specifically as an open retail unit to let on a popular retail park close to the City Centre.

3.16.28 This property was rejected by Wolseley on the basis that the property was on a retail park and was considered too large with restricted vehicle access.

3.16.29 The property is still available.

Units 1 & 4, Abbey Business Park, Bentley, Doncaster, DN5 9TJ

3.16.30 This property is formed of two units and was proposed in an email from Business Doncaster on 25 October 2023 (**POE/CD/42**).

3.16.31 The property is a leasehold interest with a term to be discussed.

3.16.32 This property was proposed specifically as an industrial unit on a main thoroughfare close to the City Centre.

3.16.33 This property was rejected by Wolseley on the basis that it was too far from the required area and there were too many access issues.

3.16.34 The property is now let.

Former Jewson's building, Wheatley Hall Road, DN1 2TE

3.16.35 This property was proposed in a call between myself and Ms Holmes on 22 November 2023 (**POE/CD/28**).

3.16.36 The property is a leasehold interest with a term to be discussed with the developer purchasing the building.

3.16.37 This property was proposed specifically as an ex-builders merchant building on a main arterial route.

3.16.38 This property has been viewed by Wolseley and we understand they are interested in the property. The building requires significant upgrade and redevelopment which has meant Wolseley have identified and selected another building. The property is still available.

3.17 A lot of work, time and effort has been put in to try and secure a property for Wolseley, both by Council staff and property agents, with many discussions taking place with all parties and a number of viewings taking place. The search has been difficult, compounded by the fact that few properties have been available and those that have been forwarded have either not met the specification required by

Wolseley or are not in their preferred location.

- 3.18 As the above demonstrates, Business Doncaster have remained actively engaged in the searches for alternative premises for Wolseley. At times, we have been able to find properties which were very well suited to the requirements set out by Wolseley. However, these have either been rejected or, due to delays caused by Wolseley, the properties were no longer available.
- 3.19 An example of this can be seen when considering **Unit 2 Connection Business Park** which is listed within **POE/CD/39**. This was a property where 2 of the 3 requirements were met and in fact, Wolseley agreed heads of terms back in 2023. However, due to delays in negotiations between Wolseley and the retained property agent, the agent had to re-let the property to another interested party.
- 3.20 Business Doncaster and the Council continue to actively co-operate with Wolseley to locate suitable alternative premises and will continue to do so throughout the course of this CPO.
- 3.21 I am confident that within the list of alternative premises provided there have been a number of properties which would have been suitable and therefore, I hope that with the active co-operation of Wolseley we will be able to secure an alternative premises for their relocation.

4 TASKMASTER

- 4.1 Taskmaster are an employment recruitment agency, focusing on the delivery of roles within the utilities, industrial and public sector. It operates out of 4 Trafford Court, under a lease. Following the acquisition of the freehold interest in Trafford Court, the Council are now Taskmaster's Landlord. This lease is due to end on 31 August 2024. I am aware the Council have served a S.25 notice under the Landlord and Tenant Act 1954, which if unopposed would bring their lease to an end in August 2024.
- 4.2 In order to deliver the Scheme, Trafford Court, and therefore Taskmaster's premises, will need to be demolished and so Business Doncaster have worked directly alongside Ms Chipp-Smith to assist with the task of helping Taskmaster to find suitable alternative premises.
- 4.3 Ms Chipp-Smiths' proof sets out in detail the individual steps taken along with the relevant correspondence, meetings and financial offers with Taskmaster, this can be found at paragraph 9 of Ms. Chipp-Smiths' proof.

- 4.4 Business Doncaster were first engaged by the Council to assist in the identification of alternative premises for Taskmaster on 1 March 2023 (**POE/CD/43**).
- 4.5 In order for Business Doncaster to assist in the search for alternative premises, it was necessary for the team to establish the requirements for Taskmaster's premises.
- 4.6 As such, Mr Banks liaised with Taskmaster directly to best understand their requirements of alternative premises, details of which I have set out below. We were informed that Taskmaster would only consider City Centre properties as they needed accessibility for clients using public transport.

Requirements for alternative premises

- 4.7 On 1 March 2023, Mr Banks introduced himself to Mr Andrew Skorupka (Mr Skorupka") by email following an introduction by Ms Chipp Smith offering three properties on St Sepulchre Gate, High Street and Scot Lane (**POE/CD/44**).
- 4.8 On 11 March 2023, Mr Skorupka replied to Mr Banks stating that the properties offered were too large and retail focused, and that they would prefer office space (**POE/CD/45**).
- 4.9 On 22 June 2023, Mr Banks contacted Mr Andrew Skorupka with a list of five properties for Taskmaster to consider. These were Alba House, Frazer House, 113 Thorne Road, Kings Mews, Cussins House (**POE/CD/46**).
- 4.10 On 5 July 2023, Mr Banks emailed Mr Skorupka with a further property offer, Cavendish Court (**POE/CD/47**).
- 4.11 On 6 July 2023, Mr Darren Chandler, the Taskmaster Doncaster branch manager, emailed Mr Banks to introduce himself and arrange a meeting to discuss the Taskmaster requirements (**POE/CD/48**).
- 4.12 On 25 July 2023, Mr Banks exchanged emails with Mr Chandler relating to setting up property viewings on the 27 July 2023 (**POE/CD/49**).
- 4.13 On 31 July 2023, Mr Banks emailed Mr Chandler and Mr Neil Bertman, the Taskmaster Divisional Manager, with lease costs for properties they had viewed at Alba House, Lazarus House and Kings Mews (**POE/CD/50**).
- 4.14 On 2 August 2023, further correspondence was received from Mr Chandler regarding facilities at Kings Mews (**POE/CD/51**).

- 4.15 On 30 August 2023, Mr Banks emailed Mr Chandler to ask if he had heard anything from the agent about the Kings Mews building as he had asked them to contact Taskmaster directly (**POE/CD/52**).
- 4.16 On 31 August 2023, Mr Chandler and Mr Banks exchanged emails with regards to chasing the agent for further updates on Kings Mews (**POE/CD/53**).
- 4.17 On 8 September 2023, further emails were exchanged between Mr Banks and Mr Chandler regarding a particular site, Kings Mews (**POE/CD/55**).
- 4.18 On 25 September 2023, Mr Banks emailed Mr Chandler and Mr Bertman with information that they had requested about Kings Mews following information being sent by the agent of these properties (**POE/CD/57**).
- 4.19 On 24 November 2023, I emailed Taskmaster to introduce myself following Mr Banks leaving Business Doncaster (**POE/CD/58**).
- 4.20 On 28 November 2023, I met Mr Chandler at Taskmaster's Trafford Court offices to go through progress and site options. These included a number of retail options which were Colonades House, Colonades Shopping Centre, Printing Office Street, 16 Baxtergate, 9 Priory Walk, 31 Hallgate, 22 Frenchgate, 43 Market Place, 26 Hallgate, 4 Wood Street, 42 High Street (**POE/CD/59**).
- 4.21 On 29 November 2023, further email correspondence was exchanged between Mr Chandler and myself regarding site options (**POE/CD/60**).
- 4.22 On 4 December 2023, catch up emails were sent between myself and Mr Chandler regarding further viewing of Kings Mews (**POE/CD/61**).
- 4.23 On 13 December 2023, an email between myself and Mr Chandler arranged a viewing of St Leger Court (**POE/CD/62**).
- 4.24 On 20 December 2023, Mr Chandler viewed St Leger Court with me (**POE/CD/63**).
- 4.25 On 7 March 2024, Business Doncaster received an email from Mr Bertman informing us that Mr Chandler was leaving the business (**POE/CD/64**).
- 4.26 Of the office properties submitted, the following were capable of meeting the requirements requested by Taskmaster, specifically the location size (square footage) and parking. I have set out more details of these sites below:

Alba House, South Parade, Doncaster. DN1 2DY

- 4.26.1 On 5 July 2023 Business Doncaster forwarded detail of this property was sent to Taskmaster for consideration (**POE/CD/47**).
- 4.26.2 The property is a leasehold interest with a three-year minimum term for £17,500 per annum.
- 4.26.3 This property was proposed specifically as a City Centre office building with car parking,
- 4.26.4 This property was viewed by Taskmaster but rejected on the basis that it was not as suitable for their purposes as some of the other properties they had viewed and was furthest from the railwaystation.

Fraser House, Nether Hall Road, DN1 2PW

- 4.26.5 On 5 July 2023 Business Doncaster sent details of this property sent to Taskmaster for consideration (**POE/CD/47**)
- 4.26.6 The property is a leasehold interest of £18,000 per annum.
- 4.26.7 This property was proposed as a modern City Centre office building.
- 4.26.8 This property was rejected by Taskmaster on location and price.

Ground Floor and Basement 113 Thorne Road, DN2 5BQ

- 4.26.9 On 5 July 2023 Business Doncaster sent details of this property to Taskmaster for consideration (**POE/CD/47**)
- 4.26.10 This property is a leasehold interest with a rent of £17,000 per annum.
- 4.26.11 The property was proposed and a ground floor and basement office facility on the fringes of the City Centre.
- 4.26.12 This property was rejected by Taskmaster on location and price.

Kings Mews, East Laith Gate, DN1 1JD

- 4.26.13 On 5 July 2023 Business Doncaster sent details of this property to Taskmaster for consideration (**POE/CD/47**).
- 4.26.14 This property is a leasehold interest of three years at £20,000 per annum +£1,200 per parking space.

- 4.26.15 This property was proposed as Units 2a and 2b close to the City Centre with car parking.
- 4.26.16 This property was viewed twice by Taskmaster and taken forward in direct discussions with Craven Wildsmith, the property agent.

Cussins House, Wood Street, DN1, 3LW

- 4.26.17 On 5 July Business Doncaster sent this property to Taskmaster for consideration (**POE/CD/47**).
- 4.26.18 This property is a flexible leasehold interest to be negotiated.
- 4.26.19 The property was proposed as City Centre office space with car parking.
- 4.26.20 This property was rejected by Taskmaster because of its size.

Lazarus House, Princes Street, DN1 3NJ

- 4.26.21 On 5 July Business Doncaster sent this property to Taskmaster for consideration (**POE/CD/47**).
- 4.26.22 The property is a leasehold interest to be negotiated at £35,000 per annum + £2,000 service charge.
- 4.26.23 The property was proposed as a landmark City Centre office.
- 4.26.24 The property was of interest but rejected by Taskmaster because of the price.

Colonnades House, DN1 1ER

- 4.26.25 At a meeting on 28 November 2023, I mentioned the property to Taskmaster, for their consideration (**POE/CD/59**).
- 4.26.26 The property is a leasehold interest at a rent of £53,000 per annum.
- 4.26.27 The property was proposed as upper floor offices located close to the railway station.
- 4.26.28 This property was rejected by Taskmaster as being too large for the requirement.

St Leger Court, White Rose Way, DN4 5HX

- 4.26.29 At a meeting on 28 November 2023 Chris Dungworth mentioned the property to Taskmaster for their consideration (**POE/CD/59**).
- 4.26.30 The property is a leasehold interest with terms to be negotiated.
- 4.26.31 The property was proposed as an office building on the fringes of the City Centre with a dedicated car park.
- 4.26.32 This property, owned by City of Doncaster Council, was viewed on the 20 December 2023 and was of interest. Taskmaster have subsequently started lease and cost discussions with Ms Chipp Smith.

5 SUMMARY CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 Business Doncaster has made extensive efforts, firstly through Mr Banks and then through me working with both Wolseley and Taskmaster, to find a property solution that would allow them to relocate from their existing premises.

Wolseley

- 5.2 Throughout the process we have been aware there was a shortage of available premises in Doncaster that would meet every one of Wolseley's stated requirements and we have fed this information back to them on a number of occasions.
- 5.3 Despite the shortage of like-for-like properties, we were able to offer 8 properties which substantively matched Wolseley's stated requirements and offered many more that met some of their requirements.

Taskmaster

- 5.4 A number of office solutions have been presented to Taskmaster, including Kings Mews and St Leger's Court, that I understand Taskmaster were interested in. Business Doncaster have arranged viewings and accompanied Taskmaster on these visits. For operational needs, Taskmaster were only interested in properties in the City Centre so that restricted options, especially when Taskmaster were asking for dedicated car parking spaces to be included as part of the requirements.
- 5.5 Locating suitable properties always involves a tradeoff of needs, likes and 'nice to haves'. Very rarely is any party able to meet their full wish list and so compromises always needs to be made. In my professional opinion, I consider that we have

provided Wolseley and Taskmaster with:

- 5.5.1 Properties that were a reasonable alternative to their current locations, matching all or nearly all of their stated requirements; and
 - 5.5.2 A full range of properties which were reasonably available on the open market.
- 5.6 I and the Business Doncaster team will continue to work with other teams in the Council to assist in the location of alternative premises for Wolseley and Taskmaster.
- 5.7 With the active co-operation from both for Wolseley and Taskmaster, I am confident suitable alternative premises can be secured, taking into consideration each of Wolseley's and Taskmaster's requirements where at all possible.