

**THE DONCASTER (CITY GATEWAY – RAILWAY SQUARE AND PHASE 1)**

**COMPULSORY PURCHASE ORDER 2023**

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**SUMMARY PROOF OF EVIDENCE OF CHRIS DUNGWORTH**

**FOR AND ON BEHALF OF CITY OF DONCASTER COUNCIL**

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**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 is written on a white horizontal line. The signature is cursive and appears to be 'A. Gupta'.

**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 include 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 High-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 My Proof of Evidence sets out in detail the steps taken by Business Doncaster to assist in the search of alternative properties available across the borough of Doncaster, specifically in relation to:
  - 1.4.1 Wolseley UK Limited ('Wolseley'); and
  - 1.4.2 Taskmaster Resources Ltd ('Taskmaster').
- 1.5 These steps are summarised below:

**2 WOLSELEY**

- 2.1 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/2)**) specialises in the supply of plumbing and heating draining and parts.
- 2.2 Business Doncaster were first engaged by the Council to assist in the identification of alternative premises for Wolseley on 7<sup>th</sup> March 2022
- 2.3 Since then, Business Doncaster have assisted in the search for alternative premises, initially led by Adrian Banks, who has since left Business Doncaster, along with my assistance.

- 2.4 We have considered the requirements of Wolseley at all times when searching for alternative premises. These were specifically:
- 2.4.1 A building of around 7,000 – 8,000 sq. ft. which could accommodate a contract branch, a trade counter and a showroom.
- 2.5 We have been in contact with Wolseley on a regular basis since 14 March 2022 and continue to be in contact frequently with proposals on new alternative premises identified and seeking updates on previously identified properties.
- 2.6 As a result of this regular contact, we have been able to propose to date at total of 34 properties, of which **8 locations** substantively met all 3 specific requirements provided by Wolseley, these properties are:
- 2.6.1 Unit 29, Wheatley Hall Road Business Park, Wheatley Hall Road, Doncaster, DN2 4LP;
- 2.6.2 Units 1 & 2 Holly House, Kelham Street Industrial Estate, Holly Street, Doncaster, DN1 3TR;
- 2.6.3 Quest Park, Wheatley Hall Road, Doncaster, DN2 4LT;
- 2.6.4 Woodside House, Sidings Court, White Rose Way, Doncaster, DN4 5NU;
- 2.6.5 Former Croda Site, Churchill Road, DN1 2TF;
- 2.6.6 Centurion Retail Park, York Road, DN5 9TP;
- 2.6.7 Units 1 & 4, Abbey Business Park, Bentley, Doncaster, DN5 9TJ;  
and
- 2.6.8 Former Jewson's building, Wheatley Hall Road, DN1 2TE
- 2.7 Whilst we were aware that a number of properties would not meet Wolseley's full requirements, there was generally a lack of properties on the market and therefore we put forward all options for them to look at and consider. Our role was to identify vacant properties, rather than to provide recommendations or to be involved in negotiations. It is for the company to determine whether these are suitable and negotiate with the landlord or property owner.

- 2.8 To date, all alternative premises located have been rejected by Wolseley.
- 2.9 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 **TASKMASTER**

- 3.1 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<sup>st</sup> August 2024. I am aware the Council have served a s.25 notice under s.25 of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1954, which if unopposed would bring their lease to an end in August 2024.
- 3.2 Business Doncaster were first engaged by the Council to assist in the identification of alternative premises for Taskmaster on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2023.
- 3.3 Since then, Business Doncaster have assisted in the search for alternative premises, initially led by Adrian Banks, who has since left Business Doncaster, along with my assistance
- 3.4 Our searches were again based on the specific requirements provided by Taskmaster, which were that the property needed to be located in the City Centre as they needed accessibility for clients using public transport.
- 3.5 We have been in contact with Taskmaster on a regular basis since 1 March 2023 and continue to be in contact frequently with proposals on new alternative premises identified and seeking updates on previously identified properties.
- 3.6 To date, we have been able to propose to date multiple properties, of which **8 locations** substantively met all 3 specific requirements provided by Taskmaster, these properties are:
- 3.6.1 Alba House, South Parade, Doncaster, DN1 2DY;
- 3.6.2 Fraser House, Nether Hall Road, DN1 2PW;
- 3.6.3 Ground Floor and Basement 113 Thorne Road, DN2 5BQ;

- 3.6.4 Kings Mews, East Laith Gate, DN1 1JD;
  - 3.6.5 Cussins House, Wood Street, DN1 3LW;
  - 3.6.6 Lazarus House, Princes Street, DN1 3NJ;
  - 3.6.7 Colonnades House, DN1 1ER
  - 3.6.8 St Leger Court, White Rose Way, DN4 5HX
- 3.7 As previously explained, our role was to identify vacant properties, rather than to provide recommendations or to be involved in negotiations. It is for the company to determine whether these are suitable and negotiate with the landlord or property owner.
- 3.8 To date, all alternative premises located have been rejected by Taskmaster other than the Kings Mews property, which I understand they are progressing.
- 3.9 Business Doncaster and the Council continue to actively co-operate with Taskmaster to locate suitable alternative premises and will continue to do so throughout the course of this CPO

#### **4 SUMMARY CONCLUSIONS**

- 4.1 As is demonstrated in my Proof of Evidence and Summary, Business Doncaster have and continue to make extensive efforts, firstly through Adrian 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

- 4.2 Throughout the process we have been aware there has been 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.
- 4.3 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

- 4.4 A number of office solutions have been presented to Taskmaster including Kings Mews and St Leger 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.
- 4.5 Locating suitable properties always involves a trade off 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:
- 4.5.1 Properties that were a reasonable alternative to their current locations, substantively matched all or nearly all their stated requirements; and
- 4.5.2 A full range of properties which were reasonably available on the open market.
- 4.6 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.
- 4.7 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 for Wolseley's and Taskmaster's requirements where at all possible.