

LAND SOUTH OF THE A421 AND NORTH OF
ST NEOTS ROAD (A428)

LOCAL PLAN CALL FOR SITES SUPPORTING STATEMENT

PROPOSED ALLOCATION OF LAND FOR EMPLOYMENT PURPOSES

AUGUST 2020

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This statement has been prepared on behalf of The Howbury Hall Estate and seeks the allocation of land south of the A421 north of St Neots Road for employment purposes.
- 1.2 The land is owned by the Howbury Hall Estate. The Estate is working with and fully supports the promotion of the land by Countryside Properties as part of its wider plans for a mixed use extension at the western side of Great Barford. The purpose of this representation is to emphasise the availability of the land and to demonstrate how it could come forward for development separately should the Council not support the more comprehensive, larger scale proposals
- 1.3 The submission includes an indicative Master Plan prepared by PRC which demonstrates how the site could come forward to provide a new high-quality business area at the eastern edge of Bedford delivering 47,250 sqm of a mix of B1, B2 and B8 floorspace. The Master Plan has been prepared following a careful assessment of the opportunities and constraints which exist at the site.
- 1.4 This statement also reviews the location and the proposals and is set out as follows:
- 2.0 Site Location
 - 3.0 Concept & Indicative Master Plan
 - 4.0 Ownership & Deliverability
 - 5.0 Conclusions
- 1.5 The statement should be read in conjunction with and provides additional information to that set out in the main 'Call for Sites' response form.

2.0 SITE LOCATION

The Estate

- 2.1 The estate is located to the north east of the main Bedford urban area. It is comprised partly of farmland, (both pasture and crop) and partly Parkland toward the south of the estate. There are a number of buildings within the estate including the main residential property, Howbury Hall, (Grade II Listed) other residential estate properties, barns, outbuildings and stables some of which are also listed.
- 2.2 The overall landholding comprises approximately 186 hectares (460 acres) having been reduced from around 202 hectares (500 acres) as a result of the improvements to the A421 Bedford Bypass which runs (east / west) through the southern portion of the estate.

The Promotion Site

- 2.3 The site which is the subject of this 'Call for Sites' submission is located to the south east of the estate directly adjoining the southern side of the A421 and northern edge of St Neots Road. The land is currently in agricultural use.

Road Connections

- 2.4 The site would be accessed from Ste Neots Road which in turn links with the A421. The A421 then provides access to the 'Black Cat' roundabout on the A1 to the east within a six minute drive and Junction 13 of the M1 to the south west within a sixteen minute drive from the site.
- 2.5 The site is therefore well connected from a highway perspective meaning that employment traffic could reach the strategic highway network whilst avoiding residential areas.

3.0 CONCEPT & INDICATIVE MASTER PLAN

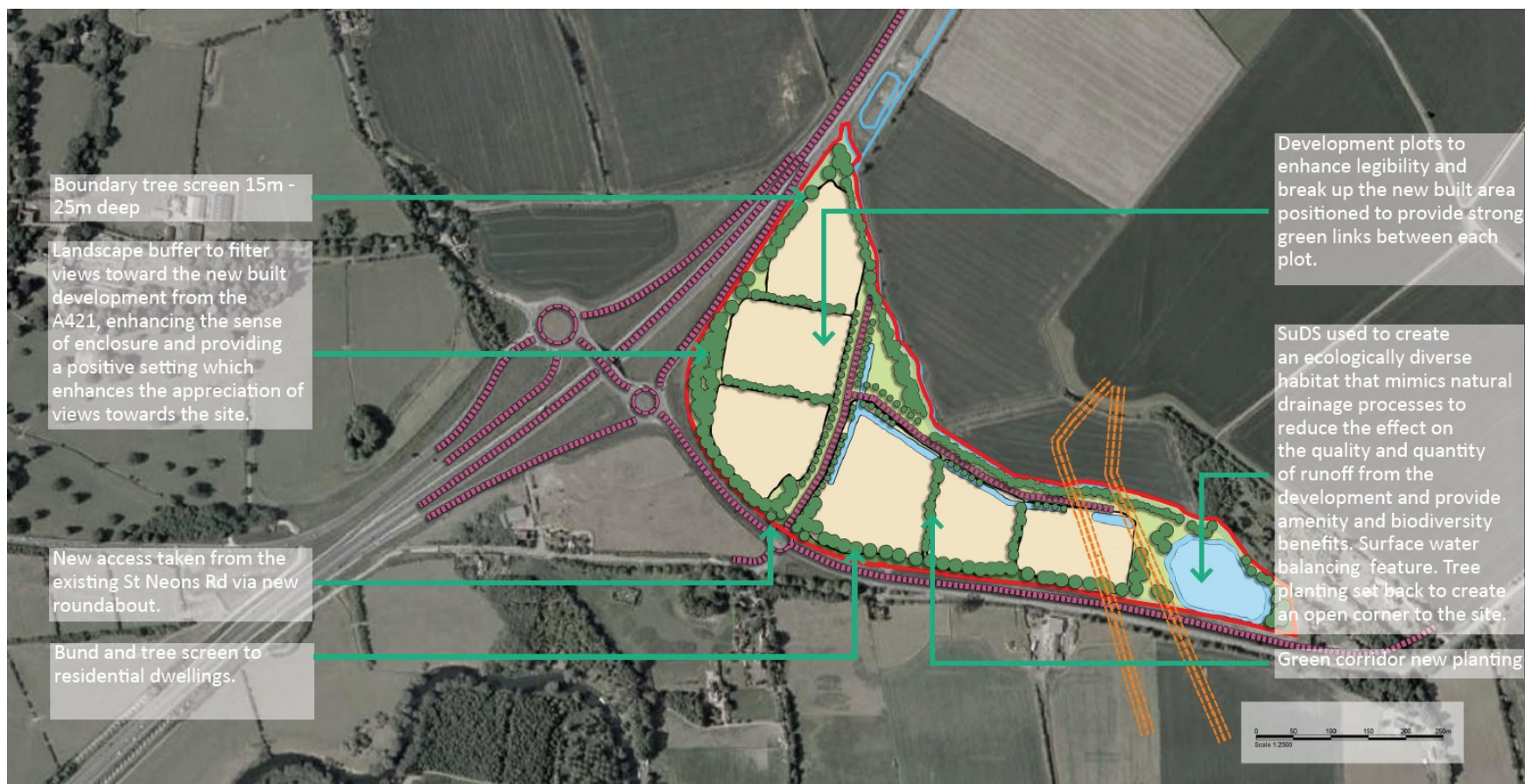
The Overall Concept

- 3.1 As local landowners, the vision for the development of the site is to create opportunity for local businesses to start up and remain in the town while they develop and thrive into successful commercial enterprises.
- 3.2 The intention is therefore to create a scheme with a range of different sized units that will accommodate their growth through various stages of development. The smaller units could be let on shorter more flexible lease terms with breaks to allow businesses to trade up to larger medium sized premises as they expand. The larger units would accommodate established businesses that would bear the lion's share of the costs of maintaining and managing a well-designed and landscaped business park in a gateway location to Bedford town.
- 3.3 This concept is also clearly defined in the indicative Master Plan.
- 3.4 Bedford continues to be attractive to multinational employers with a good labour supply and numerous successful new developments where international companies have shown confidence in the town by basing their operations here.
- 3.5 Savills advise that in 2019, 3.26m sq ft was let in the geographical area around Bedford between Luton, Milton Keynes, Northampton and Biggleswade.

- 3.6 There has been high transactional activity across Bedfordshire over the past 12 months with lettings to Amazon, Rajapack, L3 Technologies, Kramp and AF Blakemore. Elsewhere, within the surrounding market, there have been lettings to Amazon, Ball Corporation and Lightning Source.
- 3.7 This provides a strong case for demand in Bedfordshire and the potential for local businesses to locate and associate with international companies.
- 3.8 There is also increase in demand in Bedfordshire from new medium sized occupiers seeking to relocate from London to more affordable areas. Manufacturers such as Toughglaze (glass manufacturer) and Kolak (food production) are such examples with active requirements in the market.
- 3.9 Pricing, staff availability and location are important drivers as Bedford is perhaps the first location occupiers find stock, affordable rents and staff availability when looking north from London. This message is helped by a very supportive and encouraging local authority Economic Development function.

The Indicative Master Plan

- 3.10 As outlined above, the concept for this site is to provide a mix of unit sizes ranging from smaller start up through to medium and larger scale units. Access is shown to be taken from St Neots Road with landscaping and where necessary banded landscaping to the west and south to screen the proposed units.
- 3.11 A sustainable drainage basin is shown to the south east of the site which would accommodate the surface water needs of the site but also deliver biodiversity enhancement opportunities.



Extract from the Indicative Site Master Plan

Climate Change – Policy 51S

- 3.12 The Call for Sites form notes that the Council has declared a climate change emergency and seeks to ensure that development which comes forward recognises this matter consistent with the aims of current Local Plan Policy 51S.

- 3.13 This states that the Council will require new development to address climate change, adapting to anticipated future changes and mitigating against further change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions.
- 3.14 In the case of development at this site there is significant scope to introduce sustainable features which will assist in mitigating against climate change. This includes the use of green roofs, PV and smart buildings to take advantage of passive solar gain and passive solar cooling.
- 3.15 There is great potential to enhance tree planting throughout and particularly to the west and south and to ensure that drainage is wholly sustainable, with above ground transference of water to the main south eastern drainage basin which would also include planting and associated biodiversity enhancement.

4.0 OWNERSHIP & DELIVERABILITY

- 4.1 The promotion site is wholly owned by the Howbury Hall Estate. The Estate confirm that the land would be made available for development within six months of any allocation in the Local Plan.
- 4.2 There are therefore no land ownership or other technical constraints to the early delivery of development at the site.

5.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 This submission seeks the allocation of land at Howbury Hall Estate to provide a mixed B1, B2, B8. The representation is provided as complimentary to that submitted by Countryside which includes the site as part of its wider Master Plan for a westward expansion of Great Barford.
- 5.2 The site lies close to the A421 expressway and so well related to assist and contribute to delivering growth within the Oxford to Cambridge growth corridor. Further submissions will be made in this regard as part of the Estate's response to the Issues and Options consultation.