

LAND SOUTH OF ST NEOTS ROAD (A428), BEDFORD

LOCAL PLAN CALL FOR SITES SUPPORTING STATEMENT

PROPOSED ALLOCATION OF LAND FOR A GREEN BUSINESS & RIVERSIDE PARK

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 A428 / St Neots Road as a Green Business Park with permissive path access to the water meadow and riverside.
- 1.2 This statement provides a review of the location and the proposals and is set out as follows:
- 2.0 Site Analysis
 - 3.0 Concept & Indicative Master Plan
 - 4.0 Ownership & Deliverability
 - 5.0 Conclusions
- 1.3 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 ANALYSIS

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 of the estate between St Neots Road and The A421.
- 2.4 As will be noted from the plan extract opposite a substantial portion of the southern land lies within Flood Zones 2 and 3. The northern portion lies within Flood Zone 1.
- 2.5 It is proposed that the northern area (outside of the flood plain) is developed as a Green Business Park with the southern area opened up to the public as a riverside amenity area with permissive paths thereby furthering the aims of the River Valley Park.



Flood Zone map extract

Road Connections

- 2.6 The site would be accessed from St Neots Road / A428. This then provides access via the A421 (Oxford to Cambridge Expressway) 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.

Public Footpaths, Cycleways & Bridleways

- 2.7 There aren't any footpaths or bridleways which cross the site but there are a number in very close proximity which can be accessed via the adopted highway and so provide ease of access into Bedford and the surrounding residential areas.

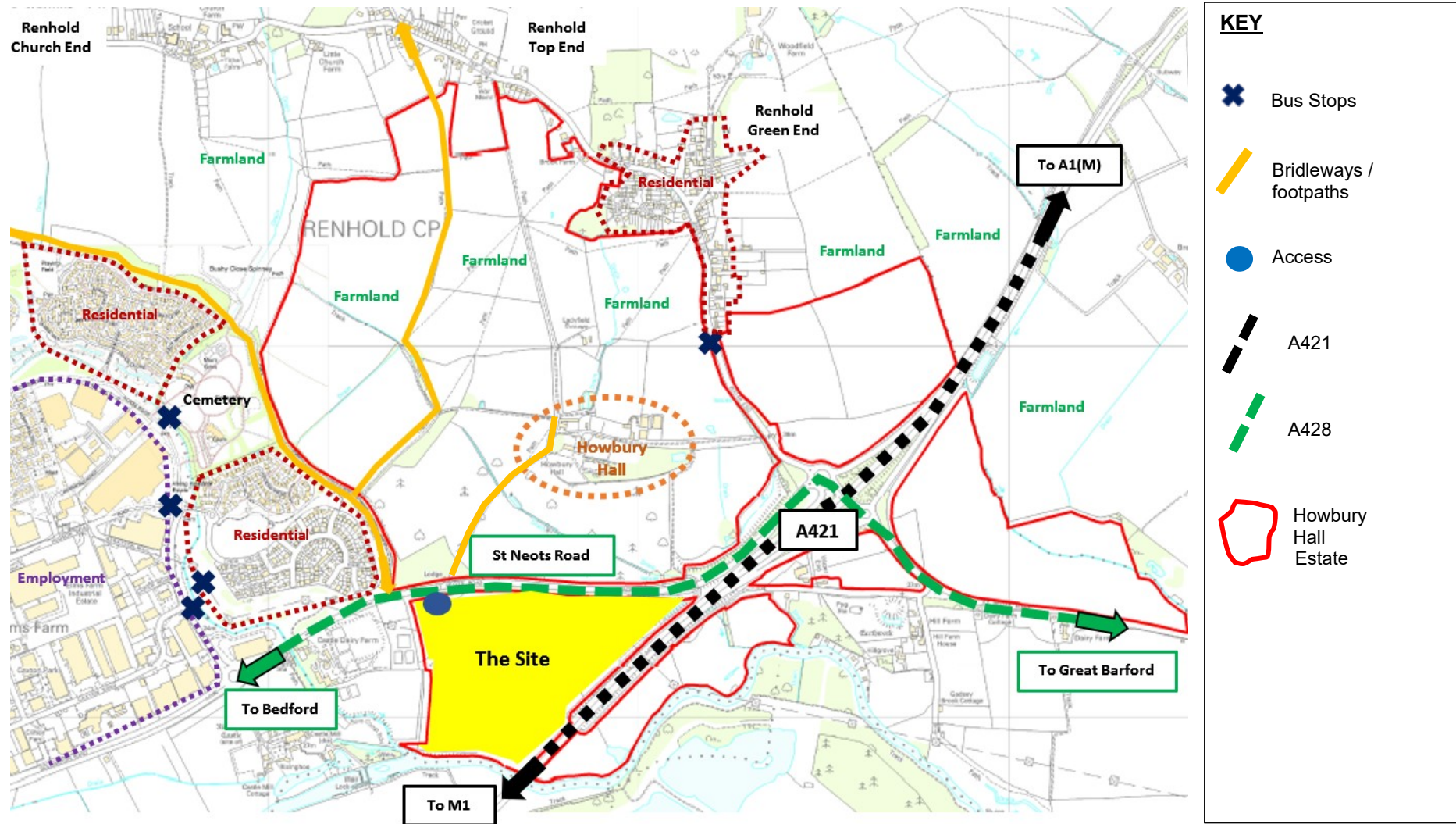
Public Transport

- 2.8 There are bus stops on Norse Road just to the north of the site. There is a regular service (Route 5 every 15 minutes during weekdays), into Bedford and also hourly services (Route X5) between Cambridge, Milton Keynes and Buckingham. There is also a local service connecting the area with the nearby villages (Route 27). There are existing bus stops just to the north on Norse Road within a short walk which provide regular services into Bedford.







Opportunities & Constraints

- 2.8 The main constraint at this site is the flood plain. However, as the flood plain is not available for development this also provides an opportunity to deliver a high quality Green Business Park in a riverside setting which would open up access to the riverside for members of the public and provide useful links to the wider bridleway and footpath network.

Opportunities & Constraints Analysis Plan



KEY

-  Bus Stops
-  Bridleways / footpaths
-  Access
-  A421
-  A428
-  Howbury Hall Estate

3.0 CONCEPT & INDICATIVE MASTER PLAN

The Overall Concept

- 3.1 The concept of 'Green' Business Parks in the UK is expanding with examples at Filwood in Bristol, Flaxby Green near Harrogate and Green Park in Reading.
- 3.2 These parks provide affordable, environmentally friendly office, workshop and storage space as a base for small businesses incorporating:
- High performance building materials to reduce energy demand by 30%
 - Energy efficient services
 - Extensive photovoltaic panels
 - Low water use appliances and waterless urinals
 - Sedum green roofs
 - Electric vehicle charging points
 - Secure cycle storage, showers and drying room plus bicycle 'spares' kit on site
 - Attractive landscaping
- 3.3 Visually Green Business Parks seek to link to the surrounding landscape and respect local biodiversity interest. Elements which can be incorporated are:
- New species rich planting.
 - Native tree planting.
 - Habitat creation including with sedum green roofs.

- Planters in the car park area will be used for local growing projects.
- Footway and cycleway links
- Encouraging the public as well as employees within the park to utilise the green spaces provided

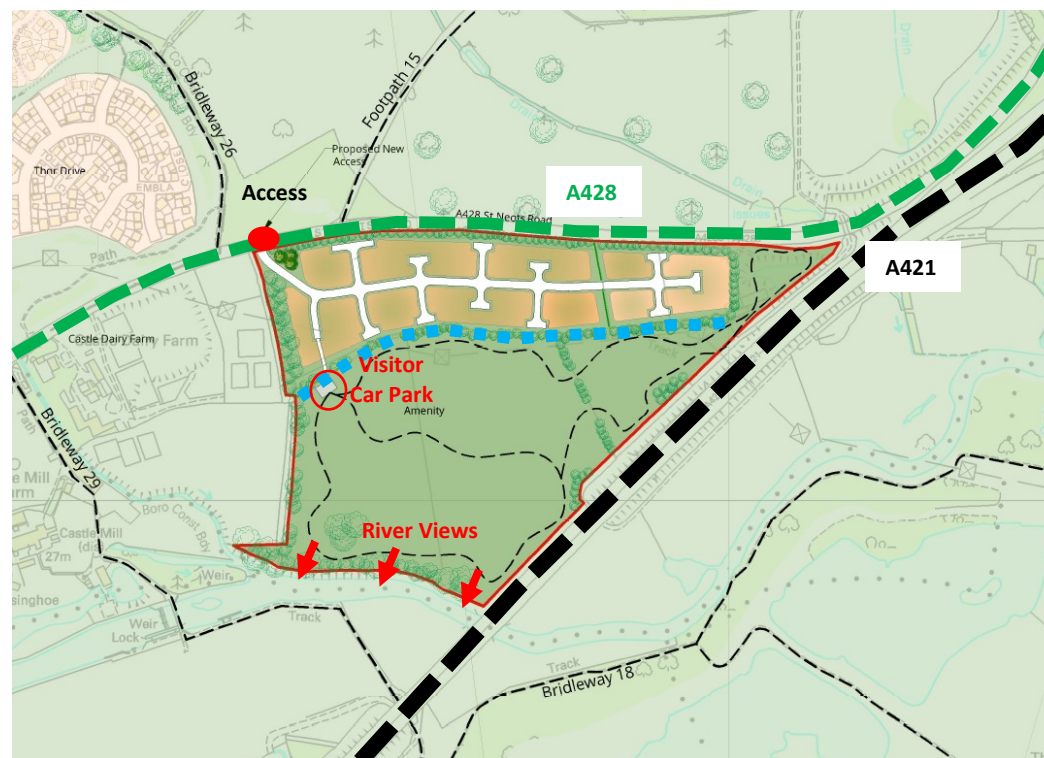
3.4 It is considered that the concept lends itself well to this site and would be of a low scale and intensity respecting the proximity to Howbury Hall and the riverside.

The Indicative Master Plan

3.5 As outlined above, the concept for this site is to provide an environmentally friendly environment for small local businesses including smaller start ups through to medium sized units.

3.6 Built development would be retained to the north of the site outside of the floodplain with permissive access provided for members of the public to access the water meadows and gain views of the river.

3.7 There are a number of brideways, footpaths and cycleways as shown in close proximity to the site which could provide links to the wider area via short stretches of public highway.



Indicative Master Plan extract

Climate Change – Policy 51S

- 3.8 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. 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.
- 3.9 In the case the whole principle of the proposal is that of a 'Green' development and there is significant scope to introduce sustainable features which will assist in mitigating against climate change as outlined above in paragraphs 3.2 and 3.3.
- 3.10 There is significant scope to enhance tree planting throughout and to ensure that drainage is wholly sustainable, with above ground transference of water and the main drainage basins 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 create a Green Business Park
- 5.2 The site also lies close to the A421 expressway and so as well as providing a home for local sustainable businesses it is well situated 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.
- 5.3 We seek the Council's favourable consideration of this submission.